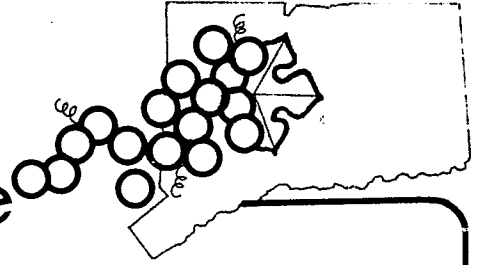




**THE
WAY**

God
JANUARY 1983



connecticut grapevine

Dear Connecticut Family of God:

God bless each and every one of you. As we move into the month of January, I would like to share with you a little story about a farmer and a preacher. This story expresses my heart for all of you who know the accuracy of God's Word.

The Farmer and the Preacher

The story goes that a preacher was driving down a country road when he came upon the most magnificent farm he had ever seen in a life spent in rural preaching. It stood out like a diamond in a garbage pail; it sparkled. While it was by no means a new farm, the house and out buildings were finely constructed and freshly painted. The garden around the house was a collection of beautiful flowers. A fine row of trees lined each side of the white gravel drive. The fields were beautifully tilled and a fine herd of fat dairy cattle grazed knee-deep in the pasture. It was all like a beautiful painting of what the ideal farm should look like and the preacher stopped to drink in the sight.

It was then he noticed the farmer, on a big, shiny tractor, hard at work, approaching the spot where the preacher stood beside his car. When the farmer was close by the road, the preacher hailed him. The farmer stopped his tractor, idled down the engine and shouted a friendly hello. And the preacher said to him, "My good man, God has certainly blessed you with a magnificent farm." There was a pause as the farmer took off his billed cap and wiped the perspiration from his face with a bandanna he wore around his neck. He studied the preacher for a moment and then shifted in the tractor seat to take a look around his pride and joy. Then he looked back at the preacher and said, "Yes, He has, and we're grateful. But you should have seen this place when He had it all to Himself!"

The preacher looked at the strong, friendly features of the farmer for a moment, smiled, and with a wave of his hand climbed back into his car and continued on his way. He heard the roar of the tractor's engine as the farmer returned to his work. And he thought, "That man has given me my sermon for next Sunday."

He thought about the fact that every farmer along this road had been blessed with the same land, the same opportunity. And each worked his farm according to his nature. And he understood that every farm, every home of every family in the country was the living reflection of the people who live there. He understood that the land we are given is not the acres we buy for a farm or the lot on which we build or buy a home; but rather, the life we've been blessed with. That's our plot of ground; that's the land we sow and from which we are then obliged to reap the resulting harvest. And the way we have sown will be reflected in every department of our lives.

The farmer he had just left would reap an abundant harvest, not just when the time came to gather in his crops, but every time he looked around his place; every time he returned from town to that white, gravel drive and the trees that lined it and the fine home and gardens that waited at the end of it. He was grateful for what he had, but he knew that it is not what is given us that makes the difference, but rather what we do with it, what we make of what we have. Yes sir, he had his sermon for next Sunday, and it would be a good one.

Every one of us is a farmer. Our lives are the plots of ground that have been given to us...free and clear. If we are wise, we will reap the abundant harvest. For the planting is left strictly to us.

By Earl Nightingale

Let's continue to sow God's Word during our concurrent Power for Abundant Living classes this January. You are God's best.

In His love and unity,

Steve Strzepek