

Chalkboard

By

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Thanksgiving, based on my research on the web, at the web sites http://nv.essortment.com/thanksgivinghis_redw.htm and <http://www.christiananswers.net/q-wall/wal-g007.html> was first celebrated in now present-day America three hundred and eighty-three years ago at the Berkley Plantation in Virginia by thirty-eight English settlers. However, the most famous celebration is the one that occurred December 13, 1621, with the Pilgrims in Plymouth, Massachusetts who invited one hundred or so Native Americans to a three-day feast to celebrate and give thanks for a bountiful harvest and for survival itself.

In 1789 George Washington made the first Presidential proclamation declaring Thanksgiving to be a national event. Thomas Jefferson, when it was his turn in the highest office, nixed the holiday until a persistent lady and magazine editor named Sarah Josepha Hale seemingly made having such a day her personal life mission. The article I read said Ms. Hale “was concerned with her belief that the country needed to set aside a day to give thanks ‘unto him from whom all blessings flow’”. She won her case with President Abraham Lincoln in 1863 when he declared the last Thursday of November as a national day of Thanksgiving. Various presidents kept the tradition until 1941 when Congress declared the fourth Thursday in November to be the legal Holiday known as Thanksgiving.

Where am I going with this mini-history lesson? Perhaps, in what is crafted to be a weekly school article, one small step out on a limb. I think that, in this season of Thanksgiving, we should remember who is the Author of all good things. In a book, within a collection of books which I try to read faithfully, is a passage which says “Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.” In education where the state of affairs often seems to be a state of flux, I find solace in an entity who remains changeless.

From Him are all the good gifts in my life. They are easy for me to name because they each have meaning in my life. I am thankful for Regenia, Jason, and Jonathan as they are my earthly treasure and give my life whatever depth it possesses. I am thankful for the family in which I was raised, and the one in which Regenia was raised, and the values both

families instilled in me regardless of whether I always am true to practice what I was taught.

I am thankful for friends who seem to continue to like me amidst my numerous shortcomings and reasons I give them not to. I am thankful to be living in America, in Arkansas, in Gentry where in each vestiges of a better day are blended with the promise of a hopeful future. I am thankful to be able to attend church without fear or fear of reprisal. I am thankful for my job and the people with which I work and those for whom I work. I am thankful to the One who gave me a soul and for His making a plan for that soul to be saved.

Education of students, regardless of the current and necessary focus on student achievement, is more than literacy and mathematics, much more than who won what ballgame. In this present age where mankind is connected worldwide via the net in a nanosecond and where world events often seem to teeter precariously on the brink of the abyss, it is important that parents pause both to give thanks and to teach their children to give thanks. Were it no more than life itself for which we had to be thankful, so should we express that thankfulness, for to live is a gift that we could not grasp by ourselves.

I echo the words of Pilgrim Edward Winslow who summarized the Pilgrims' Thanksgiving in these words, "And although it be not always so plentiful as it was at this time with us, yet by the goodness of God we are... far from want."