FIRST NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH



A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR: November 2026

by Lee Shipp

IS THANKSGIVING A CHRISTIAN HOLIDAY?

Americans traditionally recognize the "first" Thanksgiving as having taken place at Plymouth Colony in the autumn of 1621. The Separatist Puritan settlers of Plymouth, known as Pilgrims, held a feast after their first harvest to thank God for their blessings. Members of the neighboring Wampanoag tribe were invited to their observance.

While the origins of the Thanksgiving holiday are often linked to stories of colonial America, George Washington's 1789 Thanksgiving Proclamation laid the groundwork for Thanksgiving celebrations on the last Thursday of November. Although Thanksgiving did not become a federal holiday until 1863, when Abraham Lincoln issued a proclamation, Washington's ideas spurred advocacy to make it a federal holiday throughout the nineteenth century.

On October 3, 1789, Washington issued a proclamation designating Thursday, November 26, as a national day of thanks. Washington desired to honor God Almighty for His powerful influence in caring for the American experiment before the Revolution, assistance in achieving independence, and help in establishing the constitutional government:

> Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly to implore his protection and favor--and whereas both Houses of Congress have by their joint Committee requested me to recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God especially by affording them an opportunity peaceably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness.
>
> Now therefore I do recommend and assign Thursday the 26th day of November next to be devoted by the People of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being, who is the beneficent Author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be-- That we may then all unite in rendering unto him our sincere and humble thanks--for his kind care and protection of the People of this Country ...
> Given under my hand at the City of New York the third day of October in the year of our Lord 1789.

Abraham Lincoln issued the proclamation that began the annual holiday Americans celebrate. As previous Thanksgiving Days celebrated God's power in preserving America during times of war and hardship, Lincoln would broaden the proclamation to thank God for all His benevolence toward the American people: ABRAHAM LINCOLN - THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA – A PROCLAMATION 1863:

> The year that is drawing toward its close has been filled with the blessings of fruitful fields and healthful skies. To these bounties, which are so constantly enjoyed that we are prone to forget the source from which they come ... No human counsel hath devised nor hath any mortal hand worked out these great things. They are the gracious gifts of the Most High God, who, while dealing with us in anger for our sins, hath nevertheless remembered mercy. ... It has seemed to me fit and proper that they should be solemnly, reverently, and gratefully acknowledged, as with one heart and one voice, by the whole American people. ... I do therefore invite my fellow-citizens ... to set apart and observe the last Thursday of November next as a day of thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the heavens.

Another interesting note: just before this Thanksgiving proclamation, Lincoln called for a national day of repentance. On April 30, 1863, President Abraham Lincoln issued the Proclamation for a National Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer.

> We have been the recipients of the choicest bounties of heaven. We have been preserved, these many years, in peace and prosperity. We have grown in numbers, wealth and power, as no other nation has ever grown. But we have forgotten God. We have forgotten the gracious hand which preserved us in peace, and multiplied and enriched and strengthened us; and we have vainly imagined, in the deceitfulness of our hearts, that all these blessings were produced by some superior wisdom and virtue of our own. Intoxicated with unbroken success, we have become too self-sufficient to feel the necessity of redeeming and preserving grace, too proud to pray to the God that made us! It behooves us, then to humble ourselves before the offended Power, to confess our national sins, and to pray for clemency and forgiveness.

On the Lincoln Memorial are inscribed the words Lincoln so wanted the Republic to remember:
"… that this Nation, UNDER GOD, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth." At the opposite end, on the north wall, his Second Inaugural Address invokes "God," the "Bible," "providence," "The Almighty," and "divine attributes," stating: "As was said 3000 years ago, so it still must be said, 'The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether.'"

If you are to celebrate Thanksgiving, do so knowing and appreciating that God supernaturally birthed this nation for purposes and end-time intentions necessary to fulfill His will. Nations do not rise by the whim of men; God holds their rise and fall in His hands. Though it is obvious that America is a post-Christian nation, we must reject the notion and the revisionism that seek to convince us that the Christian God and the Christian Bible were not the foundation of this republic.



In 1776, Patrick Henry wrote, "It cannot be emphasized too strongly or too often that this great nation was founded not by religionists, but by Christians; not on religion, but on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For that reason alone, people of other faiths have been afforded freedom of worship here."

Therefore, in Abraham Lincoln's view, Thanksgiving was not merely a giving of thanks to some generic god but a call for the American people to give thanks to the Christian God.

In an age when fewer people understand their own history, may I share the thoughts of those who sired this nation and on which they based their hopes. Lest anyone suggest that we are not a Christian nation, feel free to arm yourself with this information.

On your phone, take photos of these quotes so you may be prepared to answer the demonic scourge that has brainwashed our public.



Did you know that 52 of the 55 signers of the Declaration of Independence were orthodox, deeply committed Christians? The other three believed the Bible was divine truth, affirmed the God of Scripture, and accepted His personal intervention. This same Congress formed the American Bible Society. Immediately after drafting the Declaration of Independence, the Continental Congress voted to purchase and import 20,000 copies of Scripture for the people of this nation.



Consider these words from George Washington, the Father of our Nation, in his farewell speech on September 19, 1796. “It is impossible to govern the world without God and the Bible. Of all the dispositions and habits that lead to political prosperity, our religion and morality are the indispensable supporters. Let us with caution indulge the supposition that morality can be maintained without religion. Reason and experience both forbid us to expect that our national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle."

George Washington wrote his prayers in a book preserved for centuries. Here is one of his prayers: "Oh, eternal and everlasting God, direct my thoughts, words and work. Wash away my sins in the immaculate blood of the Lamb and purge my heart by the Holy Spirit. Daily, frame me more and more in the likeness of thy son, Jesus Christ, that living in thy fear, and dying in thy favor, I may in thy appointed time obtain the resurrection of the justified unto eternal life. Bless, O Lord, the whole race of mankind and let the world be filled with the knowledge of thy son, Jesus Christ.”



John Adams, our second president, also served as chairman of the American Bible Society. In an address to military leaders, he said, "We have no government armed with the power capable of contending with human passions, unbridled by morality and true religion. Our constitution was made only for a moral and religious people. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other."

Our first Court Justice, John Jay, stated: “that when we select our national leaders, if we are to preserve our Nation, we must select Christians. "

John Quincy Adams, son of John Adams, was the sixth U.S. President. He was also the chairman of the American Bible Society, which he considered his highest and most important role. On July 4, 1821, President Adams said, "The highest glory of the American Revolution was this: it connected in one indissoluble bond the principles of civil government with the principles of Christianity.”

Calvin Coolidge, our 30th President of the United States, reaffirmed this truth when he wrote, "The foundations of our society and our government rest so much on the teachings of the Bible that it would be difficult to support them if faith in these teachings would cease to be practically universal in our country."

In 1782, the United States Congress voted this resolution: "The Congress of the United States recommends and approves the Holy Bible for use in all schools."

James Madison, the primary author of the Constitution of the United States, said: "We have staked the whole future of our new nation, not upon the power of government; far from it. We have staked the future of all our political constitutions upon the capacity of each of ourselves to govern ourselves according to the moral principles of the Ten Commandments."

And the Supreme Court ruled:

> Our laws and our institutions must necessarily be based upon and embody the teachings of the Redeemer of mankind. It is impossible that it should be otherwise; and in this sense and to this extent our civilization and our institutions are emphatically Christian … This is a religious people. This is historically true. From the discovery of this continent to the present hour, there is a single voice making this affirmation … we find everywhere a clear recognition of the same truth … These, and many other matters which might be noticed, add a volume of unofficial declarations to the mass of organic utterances that this is a Christian nation. – Supreme Court Decision, 1892.Church of the Holy Trinity V. United States.

As I conclude, consider the warning put forth by Peter Marshall:

> The choice before us is plain, Christ or chaos, conviction or compromise, Discipline or disintegration. I am rather tired of hearing about our rights and privileges as American Citizens. The time is come; it now is, when we ought to hear about the duties and responsibilities of our Citizenship. America’s future depends upon her accepting and demonstrating God’s Government.

For a nation’s concerns, could you imagine a promise more wonderful than the one given in 1 Timothy 2:1-8? Through prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks, we may lead a QUIET AND PEACEABLE LIFE in all godliness and honesty. We are encouraged to pray for our leaders, kings, and all who are in authority over us.

Presidents can be saved and born-again! World leaders, judges, and even preachers can be melted by God's power until they fear the Word of God and practice justice, integrity, and godliness.

We can have quiet and peaceable lives, but not without prayer! You want to help your nation? Populate the Prayer Meeting, not the worship concerts. Many believers will go to see superstar preachers and singers, pay hundreds of dollars to sit in the nosebleed section to hear them sing, but so few will go see Jesus in a Prayer Meeting.

Are we a Post-Christian nation because of the Woke? No! We are Post-Christian because the Church sleeps. The radicals are taking over because the Righteous are in the dark. “Awake thou that sleepest, and Christ shall give thee light” – Paul to the Ephesians.

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