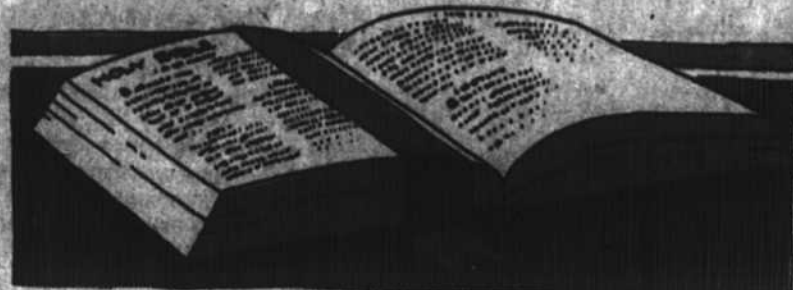


VIEW FROM THE PULPIT



The Views Expressed in This Article Are The Opinions Of The Writer.

Thanksgiving: A Day Of Feasting

By Dr. William Lee Jr., Pastor
Silver Mount Baptist Church

Thanksgiving Day is here again and thousands of people will be traveling by cars, buses, trains and planes to join family members and relatives for a day of feasting and celebrating that will be highlighted by TV, football games, parades and special services of thanks.

Every year on the fourth Thursday of November people of the U.S. pause to express their gratitude for the bounty and good fortune that they enjoy both as individuals and as a nation. Thanksgiving Day is a legal holiday, observed everywhere throughout the U.S. and in U.S. territories as well as in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. Customarily, the President of the U.S. issues a Proclamation of Thanksgiving Day, and the governors of the 50 states often add their own messages.

Although Thanksgiving is one of the most popular holidays in our nation, the idea of setting aside a day to express gratitude for good fortune did not originate in our country. In ancient times many people held special festivals in the autumn to give thanks for bountiful harvests. The Greeks honored Demeter their Goddess of Agriculture, with nine-day celebration, and in a similar fashion the Romans paid tribute to Ceres. After the crops had been gathered the Anglo-Saxons rejoiced at a "Harvest Home" which featured a hearty feast. In Scotland the harvest celebration was known as a kirk and included special church services and a substantial dinner. Since biblical days, Jews have given thanks for the abundant harvest with an eight-day Feast of Tabernacles, an observance that continues to the present time. From ancient times, it also was common for people to set aside special days on which to give thanks for military victories, for deliverance from epidemics, and for other occasions of good fortune.

Thus, since most of the settlers who came to American probably had known some form of Thanksgiving Day in their homelands, it is not surprising that they translated this custom to the new land. The first Thanksgiving Day service in what was to become the U.S. was the one held on August 9, 1706, by colonists en route to find the short-lived Popham Colony at what is now Phippsburg, Maine.

There are many days in our history that we as a people or nation celebrate, but Thanksgiving Day is wholly of our earth - and is a special



Dr. William Lee Jr.

time when we can join hands and hearts in not only expressing our thanks for all the blessings, as we do at this time of the year, but it is also a time when we can be thankful for all of our other special days such as: Christmas, New Year's Easter, 4th of July, and even the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., and others.

Nearly 365 years ago, long before we were a nation, a handful of men and women who wished to live for an idea and were to die for it, first set this day apart as a special day of thanks.

As a pastor and leader of worship for more than 30 years, I have always used as a part of my call to worship the 100th Psalms mainly because of what it has to say: Make a joyful noise unto the Lord, all ye lands. Serve the Lord with gladness: come before His presence with singing...enter into His gates with Thanksgiving: be thankful unto Him...and bless His name. With this beautiful Psalms I seek to remind us as a church that we have reason for thanksgiving every day, not just on the last Thursday in November, when we as a nation pause to share in a special day of thanks.

The Pilgrims of yester years were neither rich nor powerful, they were men and women of Plymouth; they had bought the very ground they stood on by the death of their nearest and dearest. After three long years of falling and suffering they had made a small settlement and planted a few cleared fields. Behind them lay the ocean; before them stood the forest. They had come a long way to stand between sea and forest, they had left ease and security behind. Even so, they could not know whether their

experiment in freedom would fall or succeed; they could not even be sure that Plymouth Colony would live through the next winter. It is hard for us to realize that; it was what they faced under their courage, nevertheless, cut off from all they had known, alone beyond our knowledge, they gave thanks in humble sincerity for God's mercies and the gift of corn.

Hundreds and thousands throughout our land and other lands will share this special day of thanks as a turkey day and pumpkin pie - a time of joining with families and sharing with friends. This special day does not belong to any creed or stock among us, it does not honor any one great personality. It is the whole family's day - the whole people's day the day at the turn of the year when we can all get together, think over the past months, feel a sense of harvest, and a kinship with our land. Thanksgiving is one of the most secure and friendly of all our feast days. And yet it was first founded in insecurity, by men who stood up to danger. Thanks be unto God, that spirit is still alive in 1986.

This year, may our feasting and dining be sober as we thank God together for all of His benefits shown unto us. And yet, if we know our heart, as a people, we can be grateful not in vain glory or self-satisfaction, but for the essential things of life. May we speak out from our hearts some of the real things that truly give rise to true expressions of thanks. Yes, we ought to be grateful to those before us who made this country and fought for it, who hewed it out of the wilderness and sowed it with the precious wheat of freedom. May we be grateful to all Americans, of all kind and sort and beliefs, who stood up on their hind legs and protested against injustice from the first planting till now.

Let us be thankful to the great men, present and past, who have risen from our earth to lead us, and to the innumerable many whose names are not in the histories, but without whose laughter and courage, endurance and resolution, all of our history would have been in vain.

The pilgrim did not celebrate a Thanksgiving in 1623. But in 1623, after a rainstorm ended a summer drought and saved the settlers' crops, the Plymouth populace again observed a day of thanks, probably toward the end of July, and in November, after the crops were gathered, Governor Bradford ordered that "all Pilgrims with See Thanksgiving on page 11B



During a Graduate and Professional School Expo sponsored recently by North Carolina Central University's Career Counseling and Placement Center, NCCU students Eric Jones, left, of Charlotte, and Ava Barbry, center, of Goldsboro, talked with Jacqueline

A. St. Germain of Boston's Northeastern University School of Law. Jones is a senior public administration major at NCCU; Ms. Barbry is a health education major.

First Citizens Ranks Number One

First Citizens Banks ranks number one among the nation's 150 largest banks, according to a recent study conducted by Bank Valuation, a San Francisco-based bank analysis firm.

Lewis R. Holding, chairman, said that he was pleased but not surprised by First Citizens' number one status. "In the late 1970s, we announced that our goal was to build the soundest billion dollar plus bank in the country," he said. "In 1982, I stated in our annual report that we believed we had achieved this goal."

"Four years later, we have not altered our goals or our methods," Holding said. "First Citizens remains the soundest multi-billion dollar bank in the country."

The study profiles the country's largest banks, ranking them in terms of quality and degree of credit-risk exposure. Five measures

of each bank's performance were analyzed and assigned weighted values. In order, they are: liquidity, credit risk, profitability, interest rate match, and capital adequacy.

Because Bank Valuation analysts consider liquidity "the first line of defense" for financial institutions experiencing stress, this determinant was deemed the most important. Liquidity is a bank's ability to support increased loan demand, deposit maturities and air withdrawals from its current source of funds. First Citizens received the highest liquidity rank of the country's 150 largest banks.

Credit risk exposure was considered the next important measure of a bank's strength. A bank's credit risk can be partially assessed by examining its ratio of net loan losses and or non-performing loans to total

loans. First Citizens also received the highest ranking in this area.

First Citizens also ranked highly in the areas of profitability, which measures a bank's return on average total assets; interest rate match, which indicates a bank's balance between its interest revenue and interest expense; and capital adequacy, which is related to a bank's equity to total assets and equity to total loans.

First Citizens' number one status is based on its first quarter, 1986 performance. First Citizens also received the number one ranking for the fourth quarter of 1985.

First Citizens, based in Raleigh, is a \$2.9 billion statewide financial institution serving 155 N.C. towns and cities with 316 offices.



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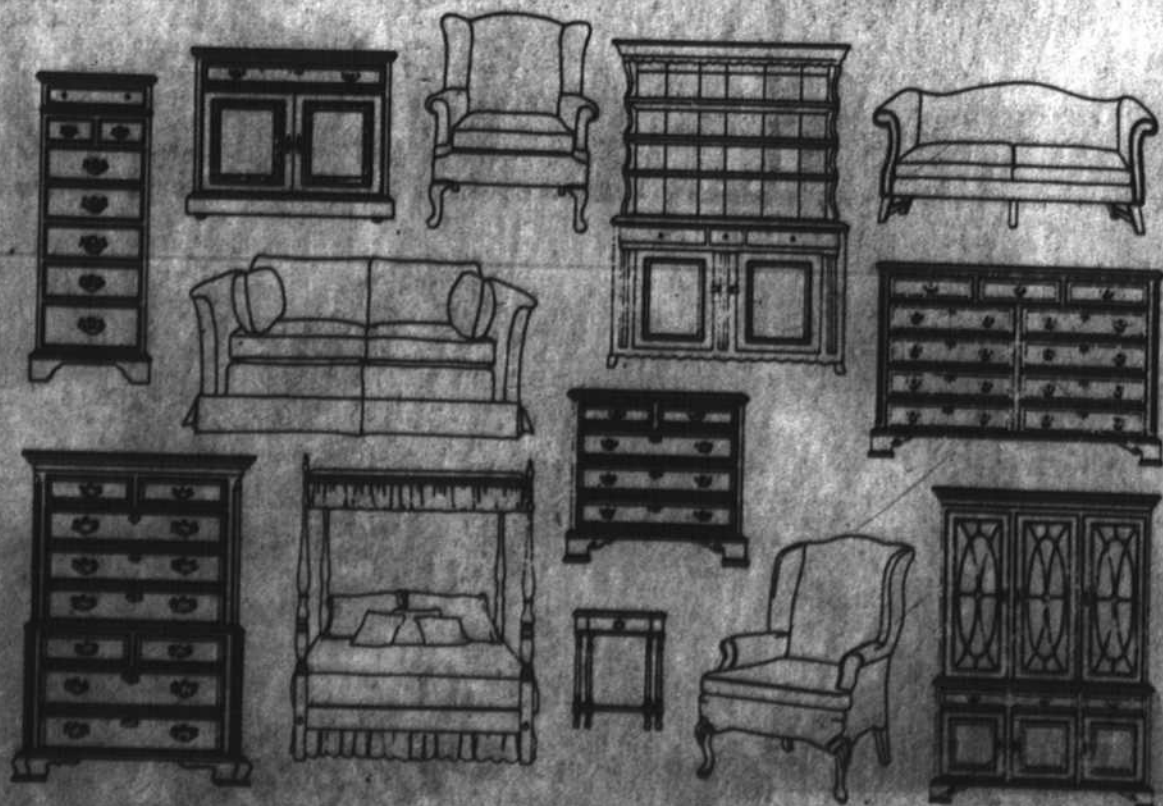
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