



Eucharisteo

This is the greek word Paul uses in, Romans 16:3-4 *Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom*

*not only **I give thanks**, but also all the churches of the Gentiles.*

As Christians and as Americans, we have much to be thankful for. Indeed, we are commanded *in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.* I Thessalonians 5:18

While there are many things wrong with this country, it is still the best country in which to live. There is still much to be thankful for. As we celebrate thanksgiving, we think of the Pilgrims and Puritans who came to this country to seek freedom.

For a change, I would like to consider others, besides the Pilgrims, who did this (one of whom happens to be my ancestor, John Luken).

In June of 1683, John Luken joined 12 other fellow Quaker men, and their families (33 total people), and immigrated to America aboard the ship CONCORD which left from Gravesend, England on 24 July 1683. The immigrants aboard were all from the region called Krefeld that lies in the lower Rhineland Valley about 3 miles from the Rhine River. The Krefeld region was later annexed to Prussia, a German state in 1703. These families immigrated as a result of the severe persecution they, as Quakers, experienced at the hands of the Dutch Reformed Church and others. They landed at Philadelphia 6 October 1683 (total travel time of 69 days). This ship was the first ship of Germans to arrive in the New World. The ship included passengers composing 13 families. The founder of Germantown, PA. -Frans Daniel Pastorius- was aboard. Pastorius was an agent of The German Company who had purchased a large tract of land from William Penn who had been granted the land to be named Pennsylvania by King Charles II of England.

Closely connected to the growing importance of Germantown was William Rittenhouse an 1686 arrival. This first elected Mennonite pastor and bishop also made economic history by founding America's first paper mill (1690). His paper was then also used by another famous Germantowner, Christopher Saur, the printer of the first American Bible (1743). This 1,272 page German volume antedates by 40 years the printing of the first English-language Bible in America.

Pastorius and his Germantowners were appalled by the incompatibility of slavery with Christianity. They are credited with the first protest against Negro slavery as early as 1688. Even though this did not change the fate of Afro-Americans in general, it set the standard for German religious communities. None of them would ever engage in slave-holding, and almost all secular German communities lived up to the Germantown declaration as well.

I believe that nearly all of us have ancestors who fled to this country because of one sort of persecution or another. I am sure that they celebrated thanksgiving with a real thankfulness to God in their hearts. They had much to be thankful for.

Like our ancestors, we not only need to thank God for what He has so bountifully given us. We must also be willing to stand up and work to keep this freedom we enjoy. We are experiencing, today, an increase in animosity toward Christianity. We need to take care that our children or grandchildren do not have to flee the U.S. for the sake of religious persecution! Paul gives us some advice in this respect.

*Therefore I exhort first of all that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and giving of thanks be made for **all men, for kings and all who are in authority**, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and reverence.* I Timothy 2:1-2

Give thanks but also pray for our country and its leaders!

Wayne

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