

the Venues

Go Deep

Holiday Traditions

Why Do We Eat Turkey on Thanksgiving?

November 12, 2017

*What product do you use on a daily basis that you most appreciate?
What topics are off limits for discussion at your Thanksgiving Table?*

The 11/22/16 issue of Christianity Today includes the article: "How to Redeem Thanksgiving." The subtitle is a partial answer of the question: "It Starts with Acknowledging the Whole Truth."

What "truth" about Thanksgiving were you taught as a kid? What do you suspect the "whole" truth is?

Dr. Randy Woodley, a Keetoowah Cherokee and professor of faith and culture at George Fox University says in the article, "Thanksgiving is a deep mythology within the American psyche...The story is so treacherous and ugly that our mythology only includes what we want to feel good about."

Why do we, in Dr. Woodley's words, "sanitize" our history?

The whole truth includes "physical and cultural genocide."

The conflicts between the Native Americans and the Pilgrims offer some help to us as we navigate the rough waters of relationships that we sail through on Thanksgiving Day.

1. Be like the Wampanoag. In 1616 there were 50,000-100,000 members of the tribe. In four short years the number had been cut by $\frac{2}{3}$ because of the plagues and diseases brought by Europeans. Yet, despite the harsh treatment of the Wampanoag by the Europeans in their past, they still reached out to these Pilgrims to teach them to plant, hunt, fish and survive.

How does the behavior of the Wampanoag sound like Jesus (Luke 6:27-28, Matt. 5:46, James 2:15-16)?

2. "All that glitters is not gold"

All that claim to be Christian aren't like Christ.

The Puritans claimed to be Christian. Yet, in the name of God, they committed horrible acts against the Native Americans using Bible verses like Deut. 11:23; Deut. 20:16-18; Joshua 6:2, 21.

One account of the Pequot Massacre of 1637 are these words, "So the Lord was pleased to smite our enemies and to give us their land for an inheritance." And these, from a pastor, "Sometimes the Scripture declareth women and children must perish with their parents....We had suffices light from the Word of God for our proceedings."

What is your reaction to the above quotes?

What do we do with those Bible verses? Are there any Bible verses that we have used to justify mistreatment of people?

What comes to your mind when thinking of people who commit crimes in the name of God?

What are some incidents of "Christian Terrorism"?

3. Empathize with people.

How do you define/explain empathy?

Some Native Americans refer to Thanksgiving Day as A Day of Mourning.

What is your gut reaction to that description?

What do we learn from Romans 12:15; 1 Peter 3:18; Matthew 7:12?

4. Be inclusive.

That's how Roger Williams lived his life. He was a Puritan, yet, "swam against the current" of theological, political, and sociological thought and behavior. While other Puritans referred to Native Americans as "savages, devils, heathen," being themselves as morally, spiritually, intellectually superior, Williams wrote, "Boast not, proud English, of thy birth and blood; Thy brother is Indian and is by birth, good."

How will this lesson/discussion change your thinking? Make you more like Jesus?