

"JUSTIFICATION & JUSTICE," I

This is my first Thinksheet toward Craigville Theological Colloquy VII, 16-20(21) July 90....In today's CCTimes letter, the paper apologizes for three errors: (1) My "1620 Boat People" (meaning the pilgrims among the 102 on the Mayflower) became "1,620 boat people," due to a typesetter's creativity! (2) My title was "Those Triply Joyful Pilgrims," but the editor inadvertently reduced to only doubly, by dropping this beginning of #3: "And thankful for what they accounted a God-given opportunity to create an alternative community expressive of their traditions and convictions and regulated by laws appropriate thereto." And (3) in #5, the typesetter made me a racist by converting my "Amerinds" to "Americans" after the editor had added, to my "Amerinds," "(American Indians)"--making me accuse all Amerinds of being unfriendly to the Mayflower! COMFORT: The BOSTON GLOBE is as bad, & CCT usually doesn't butcher my letters. (2Dec89, CCT repented in print.)

1. The theme should be approached both **LEXICALLY** (how are the two words interrelated in de-/con-notata in present usage?) & **HISTORICALLY** (esp. in the current Lutheran/Reformed Dialogue, which reminds me of my failure to convince the 1942 statement-of-faith committee of the National Association of Evangelicals that Reformed doctrine should not dominate over Lutheran). Personally, I'm more concerned with the former, viz, the spheres of the two words, including their mutual tangencies & overlaps.

2. To assure consideration of the wider contexts, here's a grid:

	specific	generic
justification	A	C
justice	B	D

"D" is justice in general, the generic meaning of the word, usu. including such themes as fairness & equality (of opportunity, or of access, or of power, or of possessions). This meaning is common in political rhetoric; UN speeches drip with it. This sememe is so high-energy, both in secular & in liberal-religious usage, that it threatens the Colloquy with a tyranny of "justice" over "justification," whose generic meaning ("C") is comparatively weak.

3. In fact, "justification," as Christian folk use it, is usu. religion-specific ("A"). The sememe is what you'd find were you to look up the word in a theological dictionary. Eg, Brian Gerrish's crystal-clear article in WDCT, 314-6, makes no ref. to generic meanings. The Christian-specific meaning is #6 in WNID² & #4 in RHD². Besides, meanings in other religions need looking at.

4. Except in global (both senses!) rhetoric, "justice" is culture-specific ("B"). Those Amerinds this letter refers to had & have a culture-specific meaning of "justice" widely different from those who in its mastercabin signed the Mayflower Compact, but former must live in & under the latter's definition: while there are some intratribal courts, all Amerinds in the USA are subject to Anglo law & jurisprudence, which accordingly the schools they attend should train them to be subject to. "Ignorance of the (Anglo-) law is no excuse," it pained my judge-father to have to say to Amerinds on the occasion of punishing them for not obeying "the white man's law." If your base culture is not Anglo, you do not have "minority rights" to live outside Anglo-law: you are to swallow the injustice of an imposed alien jurisprudence, & be a good citizen.

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Nourish Anglo culture in U.S.

Those 1,620 boat people, you so well say in your lead editorial today, "were not dour-faced religionists, but a people who expressed gaiety and joy." Why? Because they were thankful. Triply thankful.

Thankful for deliverance in Jesus from "sin, death and the devil." Thankful for deliverance from police harassment in the homeland, whose government sporadically came down on them for religious non-conformity, as well as being religious, serious, about their religion.

Their spirit of independence was shared by many other British, and soon a body of foundational documents -- the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and its amendments -- were added to the small American governmental shelf that began with the Mayflower Compact. That's how we got "the (Anglo-) American way of life."

That way of life is now manifoldly stressed. Your editorial adds to the stress by defining freedom as "the opportunity to make choices within the limits of laws and traditions agreed to by common consent."

Laws, yes; traditions, no. Laws are what we make them, but tradi-

tions are what they are. Thanksgiving Day is a tradition, America's only homegrown religious holiday. It's for all Americans, even though not all Americans like it. Some Americans (American Indians) wish Plymouth Rock had landed on the Mayflower. Some Hispanics, on Thanksgiving Day, are thankful not for 1620 but for Spain's earlier colonization. And some want the U.S.A. to be officially multilingual: They resent the Anglo-American cultural dominance.

Much depends on how the American people sort all this out. A recent "Nova" presenter, a foreigner whose native tongue is not English, recently said to me, "If your country doesn't nourish and honor its Anglo-Saxon roots, you're going to have to have confusion, chaos, and disintegration." I'm afraid he's right.

The fact that America can't arrive at "common consent" to support our foundational Anglo-Saxon roots should not deter our public schools from teaching and nourishing them. The great American majority has every right to expect it, and it is not an area where "minority rights" apply.

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