

FROM THE PULPIT

Take time to give thanks to God for blessings

By Brad Bryant
FOR THE PANTAGRAPH

Whether you've gathered with friends and family this Thanksgiving weekend or spent it in other ways, I hope you have taken time to tell God "thank you" for blessing us every hour of every day.

There's a long list of items we're traditionally thankful for. But for this article, I'm going to focus on some faith-related items that for me are im-

portant, and for which I am thankful. As I share my list, I hope your list will grow too!

Thanksgiving 2011: here are a FEW things I'm thankful for:

▸ A love-based God, hearing every prayer and responding.

▸ Testimonies from people proving how God is at work among us today.

▸ A spiritual hunger: the desire to search for God, find God, and build a real relationship.

▸ Healthy church groups that help us take that

journey of relationship with God and others.

▸ Ongoing revelation: God continues to speak today.

▸ The freedom to encounter both the truth of the gospel message (good news), and misleading teachings that can hold us captive; and our right and responsibility to sort through the clutter, finding a path that leads us toward God and his truth.

▸ God giving us "life rules" to live by, not to encumber us, but to free us from the traps of this

life: to open our understanding to see and follow a better way.

▸ Angels and angelic ministry that God can send into situations that we don't know how to handle.

▸ A hope for the future, even while our world economies and governments stagger and crumble. God does have a better plan, whenever we are willing to choose to learn and follow his ways.

▸ Opportunities to attend church school, engaging in meaningful

study, dialogue, exploration with others, and with God's Holy Spirit guiding us toward new understandings.

▸ God's desire that churches not cause division, but bring followers together, working cooperatively to help make God's world a better place for all.

▸ A Christmas gift from God: Jesus, who lived among us in human form, showing us what God is like, through his mortal life, and beyond.

▸ God, who loves all

people, unconditionally, even when God doesn't like our choices, actions, relationships, habits.

▸ Understanding that all people are of great worth to God, and therefore need to be of great worth to us.

Give thanks!

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