THis is Thanksgiving time; our gratitude should certainly be boundless.

Twenty-four years ago this month, I landed in a hospital for the last
time. Then and there I received the gift of sobriety. Like all who have
since joined AA's ranks, I was given a chance to choose what I would
do with my new life. Just like most AAs of today, I chose to try to pass
my gift on to the next suffering applicant.

This simple practice of trying to give of one's self without demand for
reward (at least sometimes!) has brought incredible blessings—more than
my share, I guess. Every practicing AA comes up, however, with just
about the same general list of them.

First we receive sobriety, which is the chance to go on living. We try
to bring that chance to others and watch them come alive. We slowly
discover that our lives have a purpose because God has a plan for us; a
plan that we grow little by little toward His likeness and image.

Then follows the conviction that we live in a universe filled with His
love—a creation that makes sense. As this vision comes clear we can
begin to live in harmony with ourselves and with our fellows. We are
going someplace; our destiny becomes secure.

Next we begin actually to welcome our growing pains. Suffering is no
longer a menace to be evaded at any cost. When it does come, no matter
how grievously, we realize that it too has its purpose. It is our great
teacher because it reveals our defects and so pushes us forward into the
paths of progress. The pain of drinking did just this for us. And so can
any other pain.

Our Twelve Traditions are a prime example of what pain has done for
us since we sobered up. Every single AA Tradition was evolved from the
immense growing pains of AA's early years; each rests securely upon this
foundation. For this reason only, we now have our Twelve Traditional
principles that can spell unity, brotherhood and service for all time
to come.

What people in this very troubled world of 1958, could possibly have
more reasons to be grateful at Thanksgiving than we of Alcoholics
Anonymous!