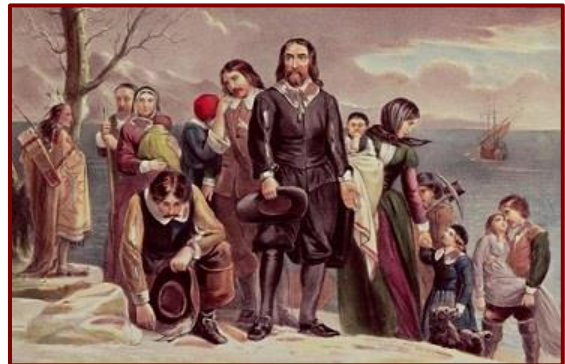


The Call to Thanksgiving

Successful organizations require successful leadership. And so it was with the colonization of America.

The Mayflower Compact was signed on Nov. 11, 1620, aboard the ship voyaging from England to the New World, by the Pilgrims (separatist Congregationalists who were fleeing from religious persecution by King James of England). The Compact was the first governing document of the Plymouth Colony.

Signing the covenant were 41 of the ship's 101 passengers, which also included adventurers, tradesmen and servants. The ceremony took place while the Mayflower was anchored in what is now Provincetown Harbor within the hook at the northern tip of Cape Cod, Massachusetts. William Bradford, an English Separatist leader from Holland, was one of the first to sign the Compact.



He was the man to step forward to lead in Plymouth Colony. After the first governor elected under the Mayflower Compact perished from the harsh winter, Bradford was elected governor for the next 30 years. In May of 1621, he performed the first marriage ceremony.

Under Bradford's guidance, Plymouth suffered less hardship than their English compatriots in Virginia. Relations with the local natives remained relatively smooth in Plymouth, and the food supply grew with each passing year.



By autumn of 1621, the Pilgrims had much for which to be thankful. After the harvest, Massasoit – the chief of the nearby Wampanoags – and about 90 other Indians joined the Pilgrims for the great English tradition of Harvest Festival. The participants celebrated for three days, dining on venison, goose, duck, turkey, fish and, of course, cornbread – the result of a bountiful corn harvest. The tradition was repeated at harvest time in the following years.

(more)

Here is Bradford's Thanksgiving Proclamation, issued on Nov. 29, 1623, calling his people to the celebration:

To All Ye Pilgrims

Inasmuch as the great Father has given us this year an abundant harvest of Indian corn, wheat, beans, squashes, and garden vegetables, and has made the forests to abound with game and the sea with fish and clams, and inasmuch as He has protected us from the ravages of the savages, has spared us from pestilence and disease, has granted us freedom to worship God according to the dictates of our own conscience;

Now, I, your magistrate, do proclaim that all ye Pilgrims, with your wives and little ones, do gather at ye meeting house, on ye hill, between the hours of 9 and 12 in the day time, on Thursday, November ye 29th of the year of our Lord one thousand six hundred and twenty-three, and the third year since ye Pilgrims landed on ye Pilgrim Rock, there to listen to ye pastor, and render thanksgiving to ye Almighty God for all His blessings.

William Bradford
Ye Governor of Ye Colony

(more)

That was a day long ago when God's people – struggling against the hardships of weather and disease, but determined to accomplish God's will in their lives – found ample reasons to thank our Lord for His blessings.

Christians today are facing a different set of difficulties as the culture is changing and biblical principles are ignored and even mocked. Our companies are confronted with a variety of challenges in the mission in which we are engaged.

Even so, we can offer God our thanks and our praise that His good hand is upon us. In Life Care and Century Park. And in our personal lives.



I will give to the Lord the thanks due to His righteousness, and I will sing praise to the name of the Lord, the Most High (Psalm 7:17 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter