

How to Plant a Rock – Nov 10, 2014



394 years ago today on Nov 10, 1620; 102 Pilgrims on board the Mayflower ship arrived off the coast of Cape Cod. Tomorrow on Nov 11 they will sign the Mayflower compact - one of the foundational documents of the United States.

The Mayflower Compact clearly stated the purpose of the pilgrim's journey across the Atlantic Ocean: for the glory of God and for the advancement of the Christian faith.

In y^e name of God, Amen. We whose names are underwritten, the loyall subjects of our dread soveraigne Lord, King James, by y^e grace of God, of Great Britaine, Franc, & Ireland king, defender of y^e faith, &c., haveing undertaken, for y^e glorie of God, and advancemente of y^e Christian faith, and honour of our king & countrie, a voyage to plant y^e first colonie in y^e Northerne parts of Virginia, doe by these presents solemnly & mutuallly in y^e presence of God, and one of another, covenant & combine our selves together into a civill body politick, for our better ordering & preservation & furtherance of y^e ends aforesaid; and by vertue hearof to enacte, constitute, and frame such just & equall lawes, ordinances, acts, constitutions, & offices, from time to time, as shall be thought most meete & convenient for y^e generall good of y^e Colonie, unto which we promise all due submission and obedience. In witnes wherof we have hereunder subscribed our names at Cap-Codd y^e 11. of November, in y^e year of y^e raigne of our soveraigne lord, King James, of England, France, & Ireland y^e eighteenth, and of Scotland y^e fiftie fourth. An^o: Dom. 1620.

http://www.gutenberg.org/files/24950/24950-h/24950-h.htm#Page_109

Today these Pilgrims would be labeled religious extremist, right wing wackos, tea party and intolerant. Their intestinal fortitude was forged from all the beatings they endured prior to 1620. They were going to need it. 45 Pilgrims the first year of their landing (1620 to 1621).

This is a very abbreviated story of these Pilgrims, not of what happened once they landed (the origination of Thanksgiving) but some of the causes that propelled them to abandoning houses, businesses, family and friends and sailing 2 months over the Atlantic Ocean in a very cramped ship to a land they knew nothing about and which they were not prepared for.

The pilgrims that landed at Plymouth Rock were part of the Puritans. The Puritans protested the excesses that they saw around them.

Historian Edward Eggleston states in his book "The beginners of a Nation" that the beginning of the early 1500's:

It was a time of pomps and royal progresses. Great historic characters went about dressed like performers in a show. Some of the queen's gowns were adorned with jewels on every available inch of space.

Edward VI set out upon a progress in 1551 with a train of four thousand mounted men.

The love of pomp was not confined to the court; every nobleman and country gentleman kept his house filled with idle serving men, the sons of neighboring gentlemen or yeomen, whose use was to "grace the halls" of their patron by their attendance and to give dignity to his hospitality.

Dress signified more to the men of the time of [Queen] Elizabeth and [King] James than it is easy for us moderns to imagine. Greatness declared itself by external display.

Men of the lowest ranks, desirous of appearing more than they were, impoverished themselves in buying expensive hats and hose.

This pomp flowed into the churches and this is what the puritans were opposed to: “pomp and ceremonialism in religious worship”

It was only in an age such as this that resistance to the celebration of rites and the observance of forms could be made a capital article of faith by the Puritan, and later by the Quaker. The wearing of surplice, the propriety of doffing the hat on certain occasions, was a matter for scruple and violent debate, for the grave consideration of the lawgiver and magistrate, and for severe penalties.



During the 5 year reign of “bloody” Queen Mary (1553 - 1558) she burned at the stake 284 persons not going along with her Catholic viewpoint. Many Puritans and Protestants left England and fled to Strasburg, Frankfort, Basel, Zurich and Geneva.

The puritans returned to England after Queen Mary died and they had a short period of peace during Queen Elizabeth reign (1558 – 1603). Many of the Puritans incorporated into the state church however there were a small sect of radical Puritans that was stiff necked, unyielding in position and uncompromising. They wouldn’t relax any of their opinions in order to cohabituate within the state church. This branch of the puritans rejected the church and was very opinionated. They argued their unyielding viewpoint to such a degree that they became an enemy of the state.

As an enemy of the state the Pilgrims faced severe retributions. The first governor of the Plymouth colony, William Bradford, wrote in his book “of Plimoth Plantation” some of the tactics of the state against the Pilgrims.

Were hunted & persecuted on every side, so as their former afflictions were but as flea-bitings in comparison of these which now came upon them. For some were taken & clapt up in prison, others had their houses beset & watcht night and day¹

All these persecuted made them consider of leaving England just as parents nowadays move to a new neighborhood to get out of dangerous surroundings or for better schools. The puritans wanted to travel over to Holland to escape from their persecutions in England.

Just imagine the amount of persecution it would take you to leave this country, your job and friends and flee to a country that you have only heard about by hearsay. You can’t speak that language and you have no idea how to support yourself when you get there. That’s what the Pilgrims were confronted with.

To make matters worse. The Pilgrims were being tormented by the state and at the same time were being prevented from leaving. All the ports were shut off for them. They had to seek secret means to escape; they had to bribe the ship’s captains and pay extraordinary rates for their passages. Some of those ship captains betrayed them by ransacking their goods once they were on board and then handed them over to the state.

The Pilgrims were finally able to hire a Dutchman to transport them because all of their countrymen were turning them over to the state. The women and children got in a small boat the night prior to the pickup and waited off the coast for the transport ship. The men were to arrive the next morning. That night the

storms blew in and the waves rocked the boat with the women and children in violently. The women and children became sea sick and begged to go closer to shore. At low tide the ship became stuck. In the morning the men arrived and some of the men boarded the transport ship before the captain noticed:

Espied a greate company, both horse & foote, with bills, & gunes, & other weapons¹

The captain raised the anchor and hoisted the sails and sailed off. The men and all the women and children who were left behind were arrested.

Those that escaped on the boat nearly lost their lives when their ship was engulfed in violent storm. The ship was in distress. They were uncontrollably tossed and turned. Waves crashed over the deck and the ship was sinking. The seamen had lost hope but the Pilgrims were praying. The ship rose from the water and was able to make it to port.

The men, women and children that were left behind in England were arrested and were bounced from one judge to another – crying and wailing over the loss of their husbands. The judges didn't know what to do with all the women and children. The pilgrims had sold their homes and had no place to go back to. The judges finally agreed to let them leave England.

Being thus apprehended, they were hurried from one place to another, and from one justice to another, till in ye ende they knew not what to doe with them; for to imprison so many women & innocent children for no other cause (many of them) but that they must goe with their husbands, semed to be unreasonable and all would crie out of them; and to send them home againe was as difficult, for they aledged, as ye trueth was, they had [21]no homes to goe to, for they had either sould, or otherwise disposed of their houses & livings. To be shorte, after they had been thus turmolyed a good while, and conveyed from one constable to another, they were glad to be ridd of them in ye end upon any termes; for all were wearied & tired with them. Though in ye mean time they (poore soules) indured miserie enough; and thus in the end necessitie forste a way for them.¹

The judges finally letting the pilgrims leave England reminded me of Luke 18:1-8 about the unjust judge because the pilgrims had been mistreated time and time again and finally the judges let them to go so that they would stop bothering them. Jesus put in a conviction in the judge's mind to release them.

KJV Luke 18:1-7

- 1 And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint;
- 2 Saying, There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man:
- 3 And there was a widow in that city; and she came unto him, saying, Avenge me of mine adversary.
- 4 And he would not for a while: but afterward he said within himself, Though I fear not God, nor regard man;
- 5 Yet because this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.
- 6 And the Lord said, Hear what the unjust judge saith.
- 7 And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them?

They arrived in Holland and stayed there 12 years, from 1608 to 1620. They soon noticed that some of their children were rejecting the parent's religion and began engaging in activities they didn't approve of. Another factor in their desire to leave Holland was that the truce between Holland and Spain was ending and war was brewing between the 2 countries.

After many negotiations with the “Company of Merchant Adventurers of London” who owned the Colony of Virginia they were able to hire 2 boats, the Speedwell and the Mayflower, to carry them over to the Americas. The Speedwell began leaking shortly into the journey which spooked many luke warm passengers. The Speedwell returned to port and all the spooked persons disembarked and went back home. William Bradford wrote that this was a sorting of the pilgrims just as in the days of Gideon when he reduced the number of his army from 22,000 down to 300 men.

Later it was revealed that the owners of the Speedwell intentionally sabotaged the ship to prevent it from making the journey:

And thus, like Gedions armie, this small number was devided, as if y^e Lord by this worke of his providence thought these few to many for y^e great worke he had to doe. But here by the way let me show, how afterward it was found y^t the leaknes of this ship was partly by being over masted, and too much pressed with sayles; for after she was sould & put into her old trime, she made many viages & performed her service very sufficiently, to y^e great profite of her owners. But more espetially, by the cuning & deceite of y^e m^r. & his company, who were hired to stay a whole year in y^e cuntrie, and now fancying dislike & fearing wante of victeles, they plotted this strategem to free them selves; as afterwards was knowne, & by some of them confessed. For they apprehended y^t the greater ship, being of force, & in whom most of y^e provissions were stowed, she would retayne enough for her selfe,¹

The rest boarded the Mayflower ship and continued to the Americas and arrived at Cape Cod on November 10. They then signed the Mayflower compact the next day.

They discovered that Cape Cod was infested with Indians trying to kill them so they boarded back on the Mayflower and set sail and found a safe harbor on December 16. On December 25 they erected the first building for them to live and store their goods.



The Pilgrim's journey to the shores of these united States demonstrates that not all intolerance, non-diversity and ill treatment is bad looking hindsight. The persecution of the Pilgrim from both the state and official state church strengthen their resolution, hardened them to face difficult challenges that they were going to face that would soon wipe out half their population. They overcame all the persecution and all the stumbling blocks and we are here today as a result of their passing many fiery tests.

The pilgrims had their eyes focused on the prize. They abandoned all to keep moving towards that goal of living in a place where they could worship in peace and keep the outside world from impacting their children. Their purpose was to advance the Christian faith and their successful planting allowed a much larger migration to happen later as Mr Bradford states:

Lastly, (and which was not least,) a great hope & inward zeall they had of laying some good foundation, or at least to make some way therunto, for ye propagating & advancing yegospell of ye kingdom of Christ in those remote parts of ye world; yea, though they should be but even as stepping-stones unto others for ye performing of so great a work.¹

They had the same zeal for the great commission that Jesus commanded the Apostles to perform:

Mat 28:18 And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

Mat 28:19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

Mat 28:20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.

Do you have that zeal? If not, why not?

Regards,

Called/Chosen + Hear + Believe + Repent + Confess + Baptize + Abide = Salvation -> Proclaim
Mt22:14 + Lk11:28 + Jn3:16 + Mk6:12 +Rm10:9 +Acts2:38 + Heb10:26 = 1 Pt 3:21 -> Mt28:19-20

This brief story doesn't do the Pilgrims justice to the level of persecutions they had to endure. To read about their journeys on-line for free:

¹ William Bradford, the first governor of the the Plymouth Colony in "*of Plimoth Plantation*"
http://www.gutenberg.org/files/24950/24950-h/24950-h.htm#Page_1

² Edward Eggleston, "*The Beginners of a Nation*"
<http://www.gutenberg.org/files/39882/39882-h/39882-h.htm>

Bloody Queen Mary: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_I_of_England

Those enemy of the state which were burned at the stake:
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Protestant_martyrs_of_the_English_Reformation