



RELIGIOUS FREEDOM WEEKLY  
from  
**Americans for Freedom of Religion**

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*"Those who cannot remember the past  
are condemned to repeat it. - George Santayana*

## **Pilgrims, Thanksgiving, and a Failed Experiment: Part 2**

**Few Americans realize that New England's first form of government was collectivism (socialism)** and practiced what Karl Marx would promote two centuries later as: "each produced according to his ability, and each received according to his need." The Pilgrims, a pious and decent people, discovered that even the best men cannot thrive under an incentive-crushing system. Within two years of the First Thanksgiving, the colonists had reaped shortages and starvation.

**Writing in the *History of Plymouth Plantation*, Gov. William Bradford** said that with the survival of the colony at stake, they contemplated upon "how they might raise as much corn as they could, and obtain a better crop than they had done, that they might not still thus languish in misery." They decided to abandon the collectivist model of government in favor of a freer model. So, they "assigned to each family a parcel of land, according to the proportion of their number, for that end ..."

**A happy Gov. Bradford wrote, "This had very good success,** for it made all hands very industrious, so as much more corn was planted than otherwise would have been ... The women now went willingly into the field and took their little ones with them to set corn; which before would allege weakness and inability; whom to have compelled would have been thought great tyranny and oppression."

**Thus, the Pilgrims now wished to work because they got to keep, and then trade, the benefits of their labor. They discovered that freedom is a much greater stimulus than force.**

"Instead of famine, now God gave them plenty," wrote Gov. Bradford, "and the face of things was changed to the rejoicing of the hearts of many, for which they blessed God ... Any general want or famine hath not been amongst them since to this day."

(libertyunderfire.org; townhall.com; historyofmassachusetts.org; *History of Plymouth Plantation*)

*"Posterity - you will never know how much it has cost my generation to preserve  
your freedom. I hope you will make good use of it." - John Quincy Adams*