



Pastor's Comments

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Northampton Assembly of God

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An American Thanksgiving

Even before that first Thanksgiving celebration in 1621, and before the harsh winter of 1620 from which fewer than half of the Pilgrims survived, the Pilgrim Fathers began the first efforts toward self-government. There in the hold of the tiny ship Mayflower, bobbing on the cold dark waters of the north Atlantic, and facing the rocky shores of a vast wilderness, our Pilgrim forebears drafted and signed a covenant to "...bind ourselves together in a civil body politic." Realizing that the Atlantic storms had driven them far north of the jurisdiction of the Virginia charter, they understood that to begin a community without government meant lawlessness, with each person becoming a law unto himself. They ceded a portion of the sovereignty of their God-given rights to leaders of their own choosing. Thus **for the first time in the history of the world, free men compacted to govern themselves, under God.**

Over 150 years later, in 1776, a Virginia gentleman named Jefferson, after enumerating some of the God-given rights of which men were the recipients, penned these words, "...to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed." A few years later, in 1787, in a very different venue from the Pilgrims, the sweltering hot streets of center city Philadelphia, another compact was signed by 55 men. In 1791, 10 amendments were added to this recent covenant. In the last of these, the framers declared that "The powers not delegated to the United States by the Constitution, nor prohibited by it to the states, are reserved to the states respectively, or to the people." For the first time, a limited government created by the consent of the governed was established for an entire nation.

Let us pray that many Americans will join us in gratefulness to God, grantor of our rights and liberties.

—Submitted by church member, Carl Edwards