



## God's Instrument

### CHARLES COLSON

**Most of us know the story of the first Thanksgiving -- at least, we know the Pilgrim version. But how many of us know the Indian viewpoint?**

No, I'm not talking about some revisionist, politically correct version of history. I'm talking about the amazing story of the way God used an Indian named Squanto as a special instrument of His providence.

Historical accounts of Squanto's life vary, but historians believe that around 1608 -- more than a decade before the Pilgrims arrived -- a group of English traders sailed to what is today Plymouth, Massachusetts. When the trusting Wampanoag Indians came out to trade, the traders took them prisoner, transported them to Spain, and sold them into slavery. It was an unimaginable horror.



But God had an amazing plan for one of the captured Indians -- a boy named Squanto.

Squanto was bought by a well-meaning Spanish monk, who treated him well and taught him the Christian faith. Squanto eventually made his way to England and worked in the stables of a man named John Slaney. Slaney sympathized with Squanto's desire to return home, and he promised to put the Indian on the first vessel bound for America.

It wasn't until 1618 -- ten years after Squanto was first kidnapped -- that a ship was found. Finally, after a decade of exile and heartbreak, Squanto was on his way home.

But when he arrived in Massachusetts, more heartbreak awaited him. An epidemic had wiped out Squanto's entire village.

We can only imagine what must have gone through Squanto's mind: Why had God allowed him to return home, against all odds, only to find his loved ones dead?

A year later, the answer came. A shipload of English families arrived and settled on the very land once occupied by Squanto's people. Squanto went to meet them, greeting the startled Pilgrims in English.

According to the diary of Pilgrim Governor William Bradford, Squanto "became a special instrument sent of God for [our] good . . . He showed [us] how to plant [our] corn, where to take fish and to procure other commodities . . . and was also [our] pilot to bring [us] to unknown places for [our] profit, and never left [us] till he died."

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When Squanto lay dying of a fever, Bradford wrote that their Indian friend "desir[ed] the Governor to pray for him, that he might go to the Englishmen's God in heaven." Squanto bequeathed his possessions to the Pilgrims "as remembrances of his love."

Who but God could so miraculously convert a lonely Indian and then use him to save a struggling band of Englishmen? It is reminiscent of the biblical story of Joseph, who was also sold into slavery -- and whom God, likewise, used as a special instrument for good.

Squanto's life story is remarkable, and we ought to make sure our children and grandchildren learn about it. Sadly, most books about Squanto omit references to his Christian faith. But I'm delighted to say that Eric Metaxas has written a wonderful children's book called *Squanto and the Miracle of Thanksgiving*. I highly recommend it. It will teach your kids about the "special instrument sent of God" who changed the course of American history.

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### For Further Reading and Information

Eric Metaxas, [\*Squanto and the Miracle of Thanksgiving\*](#) (Thomas Nelson, 1999).

Catherine Claire, "[A Glutton for Contentment](#)," *The Point*, 21 November 2006.

Hank Arends, "[Holiday, Faith Have Much in Common](#)," *Salem Statesman Journal*, 18 November 2006.

Noel Holston, "[Pilgrims' Progress](#)," *Newsday*, 19 November 2006.

Dean George, "[No Need to Apologize for Thanksgiving Myths](#)," *Indianapolis Star*, 18 November 2006.

Barbara Rainey, [\*Thanksgiving: A Time to Remember\*](#) (Crossway, 2003).

Ellen Vaughn, [\*Radical Gratitude\*](#) (Zondervan, 2005).

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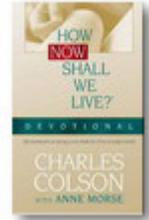
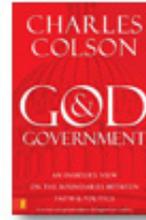
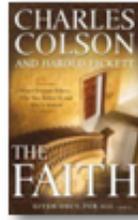
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### THE AUTHOR

Charles Colson launched Prison Fellowship in 1976, following a seven-month prison sentence for Watergate-related crimes. Since then, Prison Fellowship has flourished into a U.S. ministry of 50,000 volunteers and has spread to more than 50 countries. Beyond his prison ministry, Colson is a Christian author, speaker, and commentator, who regularly confronts



contemporary values from a biblically informed perspective. His "BreakPoint" radio commentaries now air daily across the U.S. and he has written 15 books, including [The Faith: Given Once, For All What Christians Believe, Why They Believe It, and Why It Matters](#), [God & Government](#), [Loving God](#), [Answers to Your Kids' Questions](#), [The Line Between Right & Wrong: Developing a Personal Code of Ethics](#), [Against the Night: Living in the New Dark Ages](#), and [How Now Shall We Live: A Study Guide](#).

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