Document A: ‘City upon a Hill’ (Modified)

The only way to provide for our posterity is to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with our God. We must be knit together in this work as one man; we must take care of each other with brotherly affection.

We shall be united in the bond of peace, the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, so that we shall see much more of his wisdom, power, goodness and truth.

We shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall [behave badly] and cause God to withdraw his help from us, we shall [invite] the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us.

Therefore let us choose life, that we, and our [children], may live; by obeying his voice, for he is our life, and our prosperity.

Vocabulary:
Posterity: future generations
Prosperity: wealth

Source: John Winthrop (1588–1649), lawyer and leader of the 1630 migration of English Puritans to Massachusetts Bay Colony, delivered this famous sermon aboard the Arbella to settlers traveling to New England.
Document B: ‘The Divine Right to Occupy the Land’ (Modified)

The Bible says: “I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more.”

The settling of a people in this or that country is the Lord’s decision.

Now, God makes room for a people in three ways: First, He drives out the heathens before them by waging war on the inhabitants.

Second, He gives a foreign people favor in the eyes of any native people to come and sit down with them.

Third, He makes a country empty of inhabitants where the people will live. Where there is an empty place, the sons of Adam and Noah are free to come and live there, and they neither need to buy it nor ask permission.

Vocabulary:
Heathen: a term used at this time to describe anyone uncivilized and who did not believe in God
Appoint: assign; decide on
Inhabitants: people who live in a certain place

Source: Puritan leader John Cotton gave the following sermon to members of his congregation who were immigrating to America in 1630. Cotton became a respected and influential clergyman in the Massachusetts Bay Colony.
Puritans Guiding Questions

Document A:

1. **Sourcing**: Who was John Winthrop speaking to in this sermon? What do you think is the purpose of this sermon?

2. **Contextualization**: Imagine what his audience might have been thinking and feeling as they listened to him on the ship. Describe it below.

3. **Close reading**: What is the main idea of this speech? What do you think Winthrop means when he says, “We shall be as a City Upon a Hill?”

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Document B:

1. **Sourcing**: Who was John Cotton speaking to in this sermon? Why is he speaking about settling in a new land?

2. **Contextualization**: In this sermon, who are the ‘inhabitants’ in the new land? Who are the ‘foreign people?’

3. **Close reading**: What does Cotton say that God will do for the foreign people when they arrive in the new land?
Corroboration: Using evidence from Document A and Document B, answer the question below:

*Were the Puritans selfish or selfless?*
Before leaving England in 1630, John Winthrop and other Puritans attended church services and heard a sermon preached by Rev. John Cotton. In the sermon “God’s Promise to His Plantation,” the Rev. Cotton said that the Puritans were God’s chosen people. In 1633 Cotton left England and settled in Boston.

**Primary Source**

The placing of a people in this or that country is from the appointment of the Lord. . . . When either He gives them to discover it themselves, or hears of it discovered by others, and fitting them. . . . He carrieth them along to it, so that they plainly see a providence of God leading them from one country to another. . . . He makes room for a people to dwell there. . . . Now, God makes room for a people. . . . when He casts out the enemies of a people before them by lawful war with the inhabitants. . . . [Or] when He makes a country, through not altogether void of inhabitants, yet void in the place where they reside. Where there is a vacant place, there is liberty for the sons of Adam or Noah to come and inhabit, though they neither buy it nor ask their leaves. . . .

**Contemporary English**

God places a people in this or that country. God either lets men discover a country themselves or, upon hearing that land has been discovered by others, God sends them to it. The settlers can plainly see the influence of God leading them from one country to another. God makes room for a people to live there when he drives those who live there away by a just war. Or, God permits his people to settle on land that is vacant even though it is in an inhabited country. Where there is vacant land, there is liberty for the people who honor God to come and live there even though they neither buy it or get permission to settle there.

Questions

1. If you were a Puritan getting ready to settle in New England how would you react to Rev. Cotton's sermon?

2. What rights do you have from God to settle this new land?

3. How must you deal with the native people of North America?

4. What advice do you think Rev. Cotton would give Puritan settlers in New England after the Pequot War of 1636?

Vocabulary

- providence of God: God’s will; by fortune of God
- sons of Adam or Noah: children of God (in this sense, Christians)
- void of inhabitants: unsettled; no one living there
A Model of Christian Charity

John Winthrop left England in 1630 with a group of Puritan settlers bound for New England. After arriving in Salem, Massachusetts, and before leaving the ship, Winthrop wrote a statement describing the ideals on which this new Puritan colony should be based.

Primary Source

... Whatever we did, or ought to have done, when we lived in England, the same must we do, and more also, where we go. . . We must bear one another’s burdens. We must not look only on our own things, but also on the things of our brethren.

... Now the only way to avoid this shipwreck, and to provide for our posterity, is to... do justly, to love mercy, to walk humbly with our God. For this end, we must be knit together, in this work, as one man. We must entertain each other in brotherly affection. . . . We must delight in each other; make others’ conditions our own; rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work... The Lord will be our God, and delight to dwell among us... He shall make us a praise and glory that men shall say of succeeding plantations, “may the Lord make it like that of New England.” For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us. So that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken, and so cause Him to withdraw His present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world... We shall shame the faces of many of God’s worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land whither we are going.

Contemporary English

Whatever we did, or ought to have done, when we lived in England, we must do the same here, and more also, where we now settle. We must take up another’s burdens. We must look out for our neighbors and not only think of ourselves.

The only way to avoid problems and to provide for those that will follow us is to be just and merciful and to be humble in the sight of God. To do this we must work together as if we were one man. We must treat other settlers as our brothers. We must enjoy each other. We must make others’ problems our own. We must rejoice together, mourn together, work and suffer together, always remembering that we are one.

The Lord will be our God, and be happy to live among us. God will have others who set up colonies in the future look to us with praise. They will call upon God to make their settlements like ours in New England. We are a chosen people and we must make our colony to be a model for all to come after us. We are to be a city upon a hill and everyone will look to us so. So if we do not honor God in this settlement we have begun we will cause Him to abandon us. We will have brought shame on ourselves. Our prayers will become curses and we will be driven out of this good land.

Questions

1. According to John Winthrop, what rules must settlers in this new colony follow?

2. How are settlers to show their Christian charity?

3. Why does he say that this colony is like “a city upon a hill”? How were Puritans to live?

4. Why was the colony to be an example for others to follow?

5. What will happen if settlers do not honor and serve God?

6. What can you learn about Puritan beliefs from Winthrop’s “A Model of Christian Charity”?

7. What evidence do you have from the study of the Puritan colony to determine if settlers followed Winthrop’s advice?
Forefathers’ Song

“Forefathers’ Song” was originally sung in the 1630s but not written down for over 100 years. The song is in the Massachusetts Historical Collection along with a note that says the words of the song were written by someone who heard a 96 year-old woman singing the song. The lyrics of the song give an accurate account of life in the Massachusetts Bay colony.

New England’s annoyances you that would know them,
Pray ponder these verses which briefly doth show them.
   The place where we live is a wilderness wood,
Where grass is much wanting that’s fruitful and good:
   Our mountains and hills and our valley below,
Being commonly covered with ice and with snow;
And when the north-west wind with violence blows,
   Then every man pulls his cap over his nose:
But if any’s so hardy and will it withstand,
   He forfeits a finger, a foot or a hand.

But when the Spring opens we then take the hoe,
   And make the ground ready to plant and to sow;
Our corn being planted and seed being sown,
   The worms destroy much before it is grown;
And when it is growing, some spoil there is made
   By birds and by squirrels that pluck up the blade;
And when it is come to full corn in the ear,
   It is often destroyed by raccoon and by deer.

And now our garments begin to grow thin,
And wool is much wanted to card and to spin;
   If we can get a garment to cover without,
Our other in-garments are clout upon clout:
Our clothes we brought with us are apt to be torn,
   They need to be clouted soon after they’re worn,
But clouting our garments they hinder us nothing,
Clouts double are warmer than single whole clothing.
If fresh meat be wanting to fill up our dish,
We have carrots and turnips as much as we wish:
And if there's a mind for a delicate dish
We repair to the clam-banks, and there we catch fish.
Instead of pottage and puddings and custards and pies,
Our pumpkins and parsnips are common supplies;
We have pumpkins at morning and pumpkins at noon,
If it was not for pumpkins we should be undone!
If barley be wanting to make into malt,
We must be contented, and think it no fault;
For we can make liquor to sweeten our lips,
Of pumpkins and parsnips and walnut-tree chips. . . .


**Vocabulary**

- **clout**: to cover or to patch
- **pottage**: a thick soup of vegetables and meat