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# WINTHROP AND WILLIAMS

## *Two Views of Religious Liberty*

JOHN WINTHROP  
*From A Model of Christian Charity, 1630*

Herein are four things to be propounded; first the persons, secondly, the work, thirdly the end, fourthly the means. [1]

First, for the persons. We are a company professing ourselves fellow members of Christ. ... [2]

Secondly for the work we have in hand. It is by a mutual consent, through a special overvaluing providence and a more than an ordinary approbation of the churches of Christ, to seek out a place of cohabitation and consortship under a due form of government both civil and ecclesiastical. In such cases as this, the care of the public must overweigh all private respects, by which, not only conscience, but mere civil policy, doth bind us. [3]

Thirdly, the end is to improve our lives to do more service to the Lord; the comfort and increase of the body of Christ, whereof we are members, that ourselves and posterity may be the better preserved from the common corruptions of this evil world, to serve the Lord and work out our salvation under the power and purity of his holy ordinances. [4]

Fourthly, for the means whereby this must be effected .... we must love one another with a pure heart fervently. We must bear one another's burdens. We must not look only on our own things, but also on the things of our brethren. ... [5]

[W]hen God gives a special commission He looks to have it strictly observed in every article. ... Thus stands the cause between God and us. We are entered into covenant with Him for this work. ... [6]

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 by-word through the world. We shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God, and all professors for God's sake. 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. [7]

## *discussion* QUESTIONS

1. Winthrop explains the who, what, why, and how of the colony. Put these in your own words.
  - ↗ Who are they? [2]
  - ↗ What are they going to do? [3]
  - ↗ Why will they do it [4]
  - ↗ How will they achieve their goals? [5]
2. What is the overarching goal of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, according to Winthrop? [6]
3. According to Winthrop, what is at stake in their success or failure? [7]

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Roger Williams

From *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution, for the Cause of Conscience,*  
*Discussed in a Conference Between Truth and Peace, 1644*

The doctrine of persecution for cause of conscience, is proved guilty of all the blood of the souls crying for vengeance under the alter... [1]

All civil states, with their officers of justice, in their respective constitutions and administrations, are proved essentially civil, and therefore not judges, governors, or defenders of the spiritual, or Christian, state and worship ... [2]

It is the will and command of God that, since the coming of his Son the Lord Jesus, a permission of the most Paganish, Jewish, Turkish, or anti-christian consciences and worships be granted to all men in all nations and countries: and they are only to be fought against with that sword which is only, in soul matters, able to conquer: to wit, the sword of God's Spirit, the word of God. ... [3]

God requires not an uniformity of religion to be enacted and enforced in any civil state; which enforced uniformity, sooner or later, is the greatest occasion of civil war, ravishing of conscience, persecution of Christ Jesus in his servants, and of the hypocrisy and destruction of millions of souls. ... [4]

An enforced uniformity of religion throughout a nation or civil state, confounds the civil and religious, denies the principles of Christianity and civility, and that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. ... [5]

Lastly, true civility and Christianity may both flourish in a state or kingdom, notwithstanding the permission of ... contrary consciences, either of Jew or Gentile. [6]

## *discussion* QUESTIONS

1. What does Roger Williams mean by "persecution for cause of conscience"? [1]
2. What relationship does Williams call for between civil authorities and religious matters? [2]
3. What justifications does Williams give for his advocacy of freedom for all individual consciences? [3, 4, 5, and 6]