

Christianity in Early American Charters

First Charter of Virginia (Jamestown), 1606: "We, greatly commending, and graciously accepting of, their desires for the furtherance of so noble a work, which may, by the providence of Almighty God, hereafter tend to the glory of His Divine majesty, in propagating of Christian religion to such people, as yet live in darkness and miserable ignorance of the true knowledge and worship of God..."

Charter for Plymouth Plantation, granted by King James I, 1620: "We, according to our princely inclination, favoring much their worthy disposition, in hope thereby to advance the enlargement of the Christian religion, to the glory of God almighty.

Mayflower Compact, 1620: "In the name of God, amen. We, whose names are underwritten, the loyal subjects of our dread sovereign Lord, King James...having undertaken, for the glory of God, and advancement of the Christian faith, and honor of our king and country...do ...solemnly and mutually in the presence of God, and one of another, covenant and combine ourselves together into a civil body politic..."

Massachusetts Bay Charter, 1629 (granted by King Charles I): "Where by our said people, inhabitants there, may be so religiously, peaceable and civilly governed as their good life and orderly conversation may win and incite the natives of the country to their knowledge and obedience of the only true God and Savior of mankind, and the Christian faith, which in our royal intention and the adventurers free profession, is the principal end of this plantation."

First Connecticut Constitution, 1638: "Forasmuch as it has pleased the Almighty God by the wise disposition of his divine prudence so to order and dispose of things that we the inhabitants

and residents of Windsor, Hartford and Wethersfield . . . and well knowing where a people are gathered together the word of God requires that to maintain the peace and union of such a people there should be an orderly and decent government established according to God...do therefore associate and conjoin ourselves to be as one Public State or commonwealth...to maintain and preserve the liberty and purity of the gospel of our Lord Jesus which we now profess, as also the discipline of the churches, which according to the truth of the said Gospel is now practiced among us..."

First Rhode Island document, 1638: "We whose names are underwritten do here solemnly in the presence of Jehovah incorporate ourselves into a Bodie Politic and as He shall help, will submit our persons, lives and estates unto our Lord Jesus Christ, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and to all those perfect and most absolute laws of his given us in his holy word of truth, to be guided and judged thereby. Exodus 24:3-4; II Chronicles 11:3; II Kings 11:17."

Massachusetts Body of Liberties, 1641: "The free fruition of such liberties Immunities and privileges as humanity, Civility, and Christianity call for as due to every man in his place and proportion...We do therefore this day religiously and unanimously decree and confirm these following Rites, liberties and privileges concerning our Churches, and Civil state..."

First Legislative act in Pennsylvania: "Whereas the glory of Almighty God and the good of mankind is the reason and end of government, and therefore government itself is a venerable ordinance of God...it is...intended by the Proprietary and Governor and freemen of Pennsylvania and territories belonging, to make and establish such laws as shall best preserve true Christian and civil liberty, in opposition to all unchristian, licentious, and unjust practices, whereby God may have his due, Caesar his due, and the people their due..."