

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

Transcript 1

David: You know, we, as Americans, are really blessed, because we really do have a very strong religious heritage. I don't think there's any discussion or debate about that. We look at our artwork or the Pilgrims and the Puritans, etc., and there's no question that we have a very strong religious heritage in America.

Now what I find interesting is the way we now portray our heritage. I've recently been appointed in my state to the committee of 15 individuals that oversee the writing of history textbooks for all the students in our state. And as we go back and look over what we had, say 50 years ago, and what we have today, it's radically different. One of the things that you'll see in some textbooks today--not all--but they will at least mention the Pilgrims and Puritans, that they were a religious group.

What you will not find, however, is things like this: the Mayflower Compact. Now the Mayflower Compact, for 150 consecutive years after the ratification of the Constitution, you could find this in any American history textbook, because it's a very important document. This is the first government document created on this country. First one created right here and what's significant about it is its content. Now it's two paragraphs long--it's 200 words long--but we haven't been able to find this in a history textbook in nearly 50 years. Wonder why it's disappeared? It's real easy. You know what the Mayflower Compact says? It says, those people came here to propagate the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. That was their goal and that's what they were gonna pursue in America.

Now the problem with that is, we're talking about a government document here with a lot of evangelical language in it. And most people today are willing to concede that religion's okay if you keep it in private. Keep at home or keep it at church, but let's not get in the public market with this. You don't want it at school. You don't want it in the courthouse. You don't want it in the public arena and therefore, those aspects of our heritage that are religious and also show public religious expression, we pretty much ignore today. And this is a good example of the Mayflower Compact.

You'll also find that we have a lot of debate today even over our holidays. And there's no question that holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas, that these are religious holidays. There's also no question that they now end up in courts. And so, we don't have Thanksgiving anymore; we've got fall break in our schools. We don't have Christmas; we have winter break. We don't have Easter; we have spring break. We've got all these things, because we don't want to talk about our religious heritage.

And on top of that, most people don't even realize that for 150 years in America's history, again after the ratification of the Constitution, the Fourth of July was even considered a religious holiday. If you look at our government proclamations on that day, it was a day when we said, "People of America, we need to stop and thank God Almighty for what He has done in this nation, that He has raised this nation up to propagate the gospel across the world." The Fourth of July was considered a religious holiday for 150 years in America.

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

You see, even in previous generations, we fully expected our military and our political leaders to be highly religious. You've probably seen lots of pictures of George Washington kneeling in prayer. And the reason you've seen so many of them is there's so much evidence to that. You have so many eyewitness testimonies of ... of people like General Henry Knox and people like General John Marshall and people like General Marquis de Lafayette. You've got the eyewitness testimony of all sorts of congressional leaders, Charles Thompson, etc. You've got the testimony of his own children, his own family, his own ministers.

There's so much out there and isn't it interesting ... interesting that today George Washington has become one of our leading deist Founding Fathers? "Why, he didn't even believe in God. He wasn't religious." Now why that? Well, you find that, that has a great impact on public policy. You see you wouldn't really want it to appear that someone with the credibility of George Washington might actually endorse public religious expressions. So, what we do is make him into a nonreligious individual.

And you see, this affects our policy very much. The portrayal of our history affects what we have right now as current public policy. And there's no question that we have a strong religious heritage in our ... in our background, that it's not just a private religious heritage; it's a public religious heritage. But there's no question that our policies no longer reflect that today, just as our textbooks do not.

Now, I don't say that lightly. We're very involved in the legal arena. We've been involved in several cases of the U.S. Supreme Court. I want to share with you a few recent federal court cases showing how we've kind of changed our policies to reflect now what we show or don't show in our textbooks.

This federal court case is called *Warsaw v. Tehachabee*. It comes from a federal court in California. This federal court ruled that it violates our form of government--violates the U.S. Constitution--for a cemetery to have a cross in the cemetery. Simply having a cross in the cemetery is way too much public religious expression. Let's not get this out in public where people can see it.

And then we've got things like this one. This is called *Brittney Kaye Settle v. Dickson County School Board*. This case came out of Dickson County, Tennessee where that Brittney Kaye Settle, a sophomore in high school, was given the same assignment everyone else in her English class received and that is, write a research paper. Don't care what you write about, but use four sources. Now given that latitude to choose her topic, a lot of kids chose spiritual topics, albeit not Christian topics. One student wrote about reincarnation. One student wrote about the occult. One student wrote about spiritualism. But Brittney Kaye Settle decides she's going to write about the life and times of Jesus Christ. For choosing that topic, she was awarded a zero and it was upheld all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. Write about anything else you want to, but writing about Jesus in public school, well, that's too much religious expression.

And then, there's cases like this one. This is called *Ingebretsen v. Jackson Public Schools*. This came out of Mississippi. Senator Roger Wicker, of MI, who is now a

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

freshman U.S. Congressman, said, "You know, the courts have given us so many goofy rulings that the kids in our state are confused. They don't even know if it's okay to pray if they want to pray. I mean, they don't even know that student-initiated voluntary prayer is permissible and we need to clarify that for them."

So, they passed this state law in Mississippi to clarify for teachers and superintendents and all the kids, that if a student wants to pray, a student can pray. Voluntary student-initiated prayer is absolutely constitutional. Well, obviously, someone didn't agree with that, because it did end up on court. And on January the 10th, the Fifth Federal Circuit Court of Appeals handed down their decision and said, "No." They said, "You've got this all wrong." They said, "Student-initiated voluntary prayer is not constitutional. A student can't pray if a student wants to pray." They said, "As a matter of fact, we will permit a student to pray in only one setting and that is high school graduation."

And the court said, "Now the reason for this is very simple." They said, "High school graduation is a once-in-a-lifetime event. And since prayer is also a once-in-a-lifetime event, it goes together real well (Laughter) with a high school graduation." (Laughter). Federal court case.

And then, you've got this case, which is called Jane Doe v. Santa Fe Independent School District, which also dealt with whether kids could pray at ... at school. Could they have graduation prayers? And this court said, "Graduation prayers? Absolutely fine. No trouble with that, as long as you pray the right way." I'll just read to you out of the court case. It says:

This court will allow prayer if it's a typical nondenominational prayer. The prayer can refer to God or the Almighty, but the prayer must not refer to Jesus. And make no mistake: This court is going to have a United States marshal in attendance at graduation. If any student offends this court and mentions Jesus in the prayer, that student will be summarily arrested and will face six months incarceration. Anyone who violates these orders is going to wish that he or she had died as a child when this court gets through with it. (Groans)

Don't you just love free speech? Six months in jail for mentioning Jesus in a public prayer.

What's ... now I could show you hundreds of cases like this, but what's the basis to all these cases? Without exception, they all are built on the sound ... same foundation. They say, "You know, we're doing this because our history demands it. This is simply our heritage. What we're doing in this case, this is exactly what our Founding Fathers wanted when they gave us the First Amendment of the Constitution. We're just following our history."

And this really is the difficulty we have today. We don't even know our own heritage, particularly in this religious arena. Uh ... you see, 50 years ago, we were talking about people in our textbooks like this man. His name is Gouverneur Morris. And that's the name and a face that unfortunately, few people recognize today, but he's a very important Founding Father. He is the final man to sign the Constitution of the United

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

States. That's his signature across the bottom. He is the most active member of the Constitutional Convention. He spoke on the floor of the convention 173 times. That was more than any other Founder.

Now here you've got the most active Founding Father at the Constitutional Convention. You got [sic] the final Founding Father to sign the Constitution and today, nobody knows his name or his face. But I guarantee you, you will recognize his handiwork. Do you know that Gouverneur Morris is the man who physically wrote the Constitution of the United States and doesn't it make just a little bit of sense that the guy who wrote the Constitution might understand the intent for the Constitution? I mean, maybe that's a stretch, but it certainly seems to make sense. (Laughter)

But why is it nobody ever hears about Gouverneur Morris today and he's the guy who penned this thing? Well, when it comes to faith in Jesus Christ, when it comes to public religious expression, religious activities in general, Gouverneur Morris, like so many other[s] of those Founding Fathers, is absolutely politically incorrect.

Now I've got to stop here to point something out. I read a Supreme Court case recently, where one of the justices said, "Hm, 200 years ago was a long time. We really can't be sure what these guys wanted 200 years ago." (Groans) Now if you've never heard that time clouds intent, you'll hear it. And when you hear, you reject it. That's absolute nonsense. If you will simply go down to the public library and when you get there, you start looking for the writings of George Washington. Get there and count those volumes--one, two, three, four, five volumes, six, seven, nine volumes, 10, 11--97 volumes of the personal writings of George Washington. Now that's a man with an opinion on every subject under the sun.

And you see, that's characteristic of the other Founding Fathers. Two-hundred and fifty Founding Fathers, you've got people like James Madison, with 18 volumes of writings and John Quincy Adams, with 23 volumes and John Adams, with 33 volumes and Benjamin Franklin with 40 volumes, Hamilton with 60 volumes, Jefferson with 60 volumes. These guys wrote it all down. It was all put down, so that all generations in the future would be able to know exactly what they believed.

And Gouverneur Morris was no different. You see, in 1789, when the Constitution was ratified, the very next two years consecutively, 1790, 1791, Gouverneur Morris authored two works on the Constitution. You know what he told us? He said, "Religion is the only solid basis of good morals. Therefore, education should teach the precepts of religion and the duties of man toward God." Now that's nowhere close to the national policy we have today, but then again, what does he know? He just wrote the Constitution. You see, but this is the irony of not knowing our own heritage, not knowing what was in our background, not knowing what the intent was. The same way, another Founding Father to have a lot of fun with is this man, James Wilson. Now you can always recognize James Wilson, because of the glasses he wears. Anytime you find a Founding picture with those glasses, you've found James Wilson.

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

James Wilson is the next-to-last man to sign the Constitution. That's his signature right above Gouverneur Morris's, the second from the bottom there. Now he is the second-most active member of the Constitutional Convention. [He] spoke on the floor of the convention 168 times and so, here he is, the second most active. He signs the Constitution. When George Washington becomes President, he puts James Wilson on the U.S. Supreme Court as an original justice on the Court. So, here he is, one of our leading justices on the Court. And in 1792, he authored America's very first legal commentaries on the Constitution.

You know what this Founding Father, the second-most active member of the Convention, this leading attorney of the day told us in those legal commentaries? Look what he said in his legal writings. He said, "Human law must rest its authority ultimately upon the authority of that law which is divine."

He starts out by saying, "You cannot separate God's law from civil law. Those two things are inseparable. Human law must rest on that which is divine." He says, "Far from being rivals or enemies," he said, "religion and law are twin sisters. They're friends; they're mutual assistance. Indeed, these two sides just run into each other." That's a great description of where we are today, a word description, because today, they do run into each other. It's like a head-on collision.

I mean, you do something religious in the courtroom and you're in a lot of trouble, as evidenced by the case that we had at the Supreme Court not long ago, called *Commonwealth v. Chambers*. And that case came out of Pennsylvania. A man named Carl Chambers was convicted by a jury for taking an axe handle and brutally clubbing to death a 71-year-old woman to steal her Social Security check.

Not only was he convicted by the jury, he was sentenced to death by that jury. And yet, the Court overturned his conviction, because they pointed out that despite all the evidence and all the witnesses and all the testimony, something terrible had happened in the courtroom. They said that in a statement of less than five seconds, the prosecuting attorney had mentioned seven words out loud from the Bible. And the Court said, "We can't have that. So, despite the evidence, despite the brutal nature of this crime, you mentioned a Bible verse, now we've got to reverse the murder sentence of this brutal murderer, because you mentioned a Bible verse in the courtroom."

You see, today law and religion are enemies. They don't get along, but back then, they were like two yoke of oxen, pulling in the same direction, never to be separated.

And then another Founding Father I have a lot of fun with, because he speaks to a very contemporary issue is this man, William Samuel Johnson. William Samuel Johnson, signer of the Constitution, you'll see his signature there under the Connecticut signers. William Samuel Johnson was not only a signer of the Constitution, he was one of America's leading educators. He's the first ever president of Columbia College in New York. [It] still exists today. And as a leading Founding Father, as a prominent educator, he was very often asked to address public school graduations. Now, please don't think that public schools are something new in America. We've had public schools in America

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

for over 300 years. At his time, they were over 100-years-old, and so it was not unusual that he would address public school graduations.

Well, it's interesting to see what he did at those graduations, because as I've already pointed out to you, today we have a lot of trouble with what we can and can't do at graduations. I've shown you the legal cases on it and a lot of that dates back to a Supreme Court case that occurred in 1992 called *Lee v. Weisman*. It's a case in which we were involved and that case came out of Providence, Rhode Island, which is a ... a city that's had public schools for over 300 years. And they wanted to do there what they've done every other year and that was have invocations and benedictions at graduation.

Now that particular year, they went to Rabbi Leslie Gutterman. They said, "Rabbi, would you deliver the invocations and benedictions for us this year?" The rabbi said, "Be happy to." After the rabbi agreed to deliver the invocations and benedictions, the school officials went to him and said, "Now, Rabbi, we need to remind you of a few simple things here. No. 1, this is a secular city; No. 2, this is a secular meeting; No. 3, we need for you to pray a secular prayer." How would you pray a secular prayer? (Laughter)

I mean, what is a secular prayer? That's an amazing request. And that's what he said, "Secular prayer." Well, bless his heart, he knew what they wanted. They wanted a politically correct, nonoffensive prayer that offends no faith. So, he tried his best to accommodate that. He came back with an admittedly bland prayer. [As a] matter of fact, it was so bland, that when this case was challenged and taken to district court and in district court there were actually discussions over whether or not he had prayed. They weren't even sure it was a prayer when they got into court. (Laughter) I mean, it was ... it was that bland.

Now what had happened was it was graduation, so he addressed these kids on their civic duties and responsibility and patriotism and justice and all these great things. But he made the mistake of invoking the G word. He mentioned that three-letter "God" word, one time right at the very beginning and for mentioning that word, it went all the way to the U.S. Supreme Court. The hearing that year was November the 5th, 10 o'clock in the morning. One hour later it was all over and done with and when the Court rendered its decision the following June, by a 5 to 4 margin, we lost the case.

By a 5 to 4 margin, the U.S. Supreme Court said that if a student were to hear the public acknowledgment of God, if a student were to hear God mentioned aloud in public, the Supreme Court said that would constitute not only religious, but also psychological coercion against that student. So, with that ruling, of course, that went across the nation and schools started corralling what they did in mentioning God at graduations, etc.

And what happens with this is a public perception in the minds of many in ... in ... in the public community that it's unconstitutional to do this at graduation. That must mean those who gave us the Constitution didn't want this going on. Too many people associate what ... what is ruled by the Court as the original intent of the Founders.

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

Now I want to go back and show you what William Samuel Johnson did at his public school graduation. Again, it's recorded in his writings. And he said, "Students," he said, "you this day have received a public education, the purpose whereof has been to qualify you better to serve your Creator and your country." We paid for your education with tax dollars to teach you how to serve God and country, to teach you how to live by the precepts of God's Word. He continued. He said, "Now, you are sensible." He said, "Your first duty is you were sensible of those you owe to heaven, to your Creator and to your Redeemer." He said, "Let these be ever present to your minds and exemplify it in your lives and conduct." And for the rest of his oration, he went through specific Bible verse after specific Bible verse. The very next one he used, he said, "Students, we are told in Acts 17:28, that in Him, we live and move and have our being." He said, "I want you to remember that apart from Jesus Christ, you can do nothing in your life." And he went that way for verse after verse after verse.

Now I guess it's unfortunate that somebody didn't tell him that what he was doing was unconstitutional. I guess he just didn't realize that. You see, this is the irony. If we did the exact same religious practices of those who gave us the document, today they'd be struck down under that same document, supposedly by their authority.

Now how has this come to be? Well particularly in the last three decades, we've really seen that the changes in textbooks, and in the rhetoric, etc. And we're told basically, that America is a secular nation, created on a secular document by secular people, who wrote that secular document and that's why it's to remain secular today. And that's why we're not supposed to have this public religious expression.

A great example of that is this article right here that ran not long ago in the L.A. Times [FYI: Los Angeles Times]. [It] ran across the nation, picked up on wire service. It's by Steven Morris. It's called "The Founding Fathers Were Not Christians," and it's a big emphasis on the word "not." And that's the point he makes. He said, "Look, we have here...the guys who founded this nation were atheists, agnostics, deists. They didn't even believe in God. The document they gave us reflected that. That's why we're a secular nation and that's why we're not supposed to have this public religious expression today."

Now that's also all over universities. I speak at public universities across the nation. In the last three years, I've had students come to me on a regular basis telling me that in their American History classes, university level, not only are they now taught, but they are now tested that not one single one--not even one of our Founding Fathers--even believed in God; that they were all atheists and agnostics and deists. And you consider what that does for our public policy 15 years from now, when these kids become our local and our state and our federal leaders. I mean there's no reason they shouldn't accept this. They're being taught that. They're being tested on it.

Now 15 years later, they're in office and a question of religious expression comes before them. How do you think they'll rule? "What do you mean, can you have a Nativity scene in public? Of course not. The guys who gave us the Constitution didn't even believe in God, much less Jesus Christ. No way would they have wanted a Nativity scene in

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

public. And by the way, what in the world are we doing with 'In God We Trust' on the money? They never would have wanted that." And on it goes. And you see, this is how the perception of history affects public policy, so we need to deal with this for just a moment.

Now what you see here on the screen in front of you, these are the 56 atheists that signed the Declaration of Independence (Laughter), well, current ... current portrayal. Now I will quickly acknowledge that neither Jefferson, nor Franklin, neither one of these two guys right here is a Christian. Now Jefferson's gonna fight me on this, because in his own writings on several occasions he says, "I am a Christian; I am a true Christian; I am a true follower of Jesus." I've got to disagree with him, because, you see, by any orthodox definition, he doesn't fit.

Now he thought that Jesus was a great prophet sent by God, just like Moses or David or Samuel. And you better pay attention to the teachings of Jesus, just like any other prophet. But was Jesus divine? Oh no, He wasn't divine. He wasn't the Son of God or the Savior of the world. So, by an orthodox definition, despite what Jefferson calls himself, I've got to say that today we would not qualify his definition as Christian. So, let's say that Jefferson and Franklin are not Christians. Beyond those two, you prove to me that anyone else up on that screen is not a Christian, much less that he's an atheist or an agnostic or a deist and you [sic] got your work cut out for you.

Let's start over here on the right side of the screen. Now you see this Founding Father right there, sitting above the table? That atheist Founding Father right there is the Rev. Dr. John Witherspoon. (Laughter) Minister in Congress? You know that sends a lot of people through the roof today to imagine a minister sitting in Congress. That's the way it was back then. As a matter of fact, of the 56 individuals who signed the Declaration of Independence, 27 had seminary degrees. That's not bad for a bunch of atheists to have seminary degrees. (Laughter) That's fairly impressive. I mean, that's like saying the U.S. Congress today is made up of half pastors. That'd blow our mind, but that's the way it was back then. Well, the Rev. Dr. Witherspoon here is responsible for two American translations of the Bible.

This tall guy on the right, right here, Charles Thompson, also responsible for an American translation of the Bible--the Thompson's Bible. Over here, this man, right below the guy with the hat, this man is Benjamin Rush. He's the founder of America's very first, America's original Bible Society.

This man right here, off the elbow of John Adams, his name is Francis Hopkinson. Now he's a church music director. He's a choir leader. He authored America's first purely American hymnbook. He took the 150 Psalms and set them all to music, so that we could sing the Psalms like David sung the Psalms.

And then over here, this man on the far right. Now this man is Thomas M'Kean. He's the governor of Delaware and the chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, serving in two states at the same time. Now when the chief ... chief justice of the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania, a number of cases came before him, a number of jury

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

decisions came before him, a number of jury sentences came before him. And if a[n] individual in his courtroom was sentenced to death by a jury, there's a practice that he did. And you can find this in a law library. Go to the public law library; any county has it. Get out the cases and look at what Thomas M'Kean did in his courtroom.

Now 1778 is a great example. There's a case called *Respublica v. John Roberts*. In that case, the jury found John Roberts guilty of treason and the jury sentenced John Roberts to death for that treason. So, Chief Justice M'Kean in his courtroom reads this. He said, "Hm," he says, "The jury's found you guilty of treason. The jury has sentenced you to be executed for that treason." He folded it up. He set it down. He said, "John Roberts," he said, "with this sentence, this means that you have very few days left to you upon this earth." He said, "It behooves you, therefore, in this period of time to make peace with your Maker. You need to find a remission of your sins through the shed blood of the Lord Jesus Christ. You need to call for someone who can lead you to that relationship with Jesus, whether it be a minister or a friend or just the sacred Word of God." He said, "You're about to launch out into eternity and you're not prepared to meet God. So, let's work on that right now." Now I have always found it impressive that you can get an atheist to deliver an altar call in the courtroom. (Laughter) I mean, that just never ... never ceases to amaze me.

Audience: (Applause)

David: And you gotta consider, people like myself, I'm called the radical religious right and quite frankly, I don't know that I've got the guts to deliver an altar call from behind the bench of a court room. Now, if I'm the radical religious right and I don't have the courage to do that, what's that make them who had the courage to do it, who did it on a regular basis? You see, this is [sic] public records. This is what's still in our law libraries, but again, we just hear nothing of this side of our heritage or our history.

David Barton *(continued)* Transcript 2

Now you have the same amount of fun when you get over to the 55 [sic] atheists of the Constitutional Convention. I mean, that's the same ... same amount of fun. We can start right over here with this man. This is Abraham Baldwin. He's the founder of the University of Georgia, but he's America's youngest theologian. For seven years he was a chaplain in the American Revolution. At the age of 23, he received a professorship of divinity at the Yale University. Right here, this man with his arm outstretched, is Charles Cotesworth Pinckney. This man right here, bending over the table, is John Langdon. Those two Founding Fathers founded the American Bible Society, the same American Bible Society that still exists in America today, the same Bible Society that over the last five years has given out millions of Bibles in Eastern Europe as the walls have come down. This [was] started by those two atheist Founding Fathers.

And by the way, it was not just him. You also have this one right here, Rufus King, who is an original manager of the American Bible Society. And then you have people here, like James McHenry, who's the founder of the Baltimore Bible Society, only today we call it the Maryland Bible Society. I keep going through the names, but these individuals,

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

our Founding Fathers, founded 121 different Bible societies in America. That's not bad for a bunch of atheists to found so many Bible societies.

And then you've got people here like Roger Sherman, right here. You got [sic] over here John Dickinson; you have Jacob Broom, all considered leading theologians of the day, wrote large doctrinal treatises on the leading tenets of Christianity. I keep going through name after name, face after face. I'm sure their own works, their own handwriting, their own declarations ... and we don't even have to take it from the Founders forward. Let's go from the present back.

I've told you that the American Bible Society was started by these guys. But let's look at other societies that we have today that we enjoy, other activities, organizations that we, as Christians, participate in. Let's take Sunday school. Now where did Sunday school get started in America? [In] 1791, they formed the American Sunday School Union, by the signers of our documents. They formed that movement in America. The first-ever president of the American Sunday School Union was Francis Scott Key, the man who authored the "Star Spangled Banner." For 52 consecutive years, he was president of the American Sunday School Union. His two great loves: America and gettin' kids in Sunday school to teach them about Jesus Christ.

Who were the original officers of the American Sunday School Union? Well, Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, John Marshall, Supreme Court Justice Bushrod Washington, revolutionary hero and general, Marquis de Lafayette, etc., etc. You just go down through the list of the officers who ran that organization over the years. It's incredible to see how many of our Founders were there.

And then, everybody's aware of evangelization and witnessing and passing out tracts, etc. The American Tract Society, you probably heard of that. That's one of the leading tract distribution companies in America today. It's not a new company. The American Tract Society was formed by our Founding Fathers. [As a] matter of fact, I have a number of the original tracts, written by our signers of the Declaration, our signers of the Constitution, for the American Tract Society, for the purpose of evangelization and witnessing. Passing out tracts in America's nothing new; our Founding Fathers started it.

I can go through society after society after society that we still have today, take you back to the roots and show you the original founders of those societies were these gentlemen right here. [As a] matter of fact, if you just go into their writings, you don't even have to do the stereotypes. Just start individually getting into their writings.

For example, people like Sam Adams. Sam Adams, the father of the American Revolution, the governor of Massachusetts, look what he declared in his writings. He said, "I rely upon the merits of Jesus Christ for a pardon of my sins." That's not bad for an atheist. I mean, that's fairly impressive. (Laughter) But see this is [sic] the declarations you find all over their writings.

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

In the same way, John Dickinson, a signer of the U.S. Constitution, John Dickinson declared, "Rendering thanks to my Creator, to Him I resign myself, humbly confiding in His goodness and His mercy, through Jesus Christ, for the events of eternity." And then, you get into people like Charles Carroll, the signer of the Declaration of Independence. Charles Carroll was the final surviving signer. He was the last of the 56 who signed to pass away. Look what he declared in his writings. He said, "On the mercy of my Redeemer I rely for salvation and on His merits, not on the works I've done in obedience to His precepts." I mean, these are clear evangelical declarations.

And then John Jay. Now John Jay--original chief justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, the governor of New York, one of the three Founders most responsible for us having the Constitution today--John Jay is also one of the original founders of the American Bible Society. He's the second president of the American Bible Society. Look what he declared. He said, "Unto Him who's the author and giver of all good, I render sincere and humble thanks for His manifold and unmerited blessings and especially for our redemption and salvation by His beloved Son. Blessed be His holy name."

And on it goes, declaration after ... and these guys are supposed to be atheists and agnostics and deists? It's just that we haven't seen their writings and these are available in public libraries. But when's the last time any one of us has taken the time to sit down and read it [sic] or to even check what our kids are being taught in our textbooks?

I think one of the best overall depictions of the religious nature of the Founding Fathers is a painting that was commissioned in 1848. That painting was commissioned, based on the writings of the Founding Fathers on what they said happened on the morning of September the 7th, 1774]. And if you want to know what that morning was, you go to the public library. You get out the official records of Congress. You open it up and you read it and you'll find that September the 7th, 1774 is the original U.S. Congress. We're just beginning the U.S. Congress.

As you read in the official record, you'll notice that they opened with prayer. And as you continue reading, you'll kind of say, "You know, that's not a dinky little prayer. That's serious prayer they had," and that's why so many of 'em wrote about it, because according to the historical records, the opening prayer in Congress lasted for three hours. (Laughter) Now, may I point out, that's not bad to get atheists to pray for three hours? (Laughter) I mean, by and large, we can't get Christians close to that, but our atheist Founding Fathers prayed for three hours and so many of 'em wrote about it.

You see, this is where, when we knew our history, we had totally different national policies. If you'll go back to the U.S. Supreme Court records, you start in 1789 and go for the next 160 years, unalterable policy in America. [As a] matter of fact, a great case to read is the 1952 case of *Zorach v. Clauson*. Again, you can get that out of your local law library. You can read it [and] check it out, just like you check out a book out of the library and read it.

And that case, in 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court said, "Time out; wait a minute, stop." They said, "Are you suggesting that we should separate religious instruction from public

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

education?" The Court said, "Inconceivable! That'd violate all of our history, all of our law, all of our tradition, all of our precedent. No way we're going to separate religious instruction from public education." Isn't that amazing! In 1952, the U.S. Supreme Court still thought it was utterly inconceivable to do that? And just four decades later, we're now giving out six months jail sentences to kids who pray in the name of Jesus at school.

We've come a long way in a short period of time. And a lot of the change centered around a year ... 10 years later, 1962. In this year we had a new Supreme Court--the Warren Court, probably the most judicially active court we've ever had. And they started a war against religious expression in public.

You see, that year, in the case *Engel v. Vitale*, they said, "You know, this thing about praying in public, we can't let you do that. This thing about prayers at school has got to come to a grinding halt." And so, it is that Americans have been faithfully taught that this is the chief reason the Founding Fathers gave us the First Amendment. Why, the Founding Fathers, they found school prayer reprehensible. It was repugnant to them. They didn't want it. That's why they gave us the First Amendment.

Real simple question: If the Founding Fathers were so opposed to prayers at school, then why in the world didn't they stop it? Why were they constitutional for 170 consecutive years, before the Warren Court discovered that we don't need this anymore? But the Warren Court didn't stop there.

The very next year, in '63, *Abington Schempp* [FYI: *Abington v. Schempp*] and *Murray Curlett* [FYI: *Murray v. Curlett*], the Court said, "You know, this thing about reading the Bible at schools, well, we can't let you do that anymore. The Founding Fathers would never have wanted the Bible read at schools."

Now our organization, WallBuilders, we've been very blessed. We have been able to collect in our possession, some 70,000 writings that predate 1812. [We] have thousands of the founders original writings--their own handwriting, their own signatures, etc. And one of rarest works in our collection or in any collection in America--[as a] matter of fact, any collection in the world--is this one right here.

This is the first ever Bible printed in the English language in America. Now do you know when it was printed? Seventeen eighty-two. Do you know who printed this Bible? The Congress of the United States. Con ... wait a minute, 1782, that's when our Founding Fathers were in Congress. Why would they have printed a Bible?

Well, it tells you right in the opening here that this is a Bible, "for the use of schools." You want to tell me the Founding Fathers didn't want the Bible in schools? I hold here in my hand the Bible they printed for the use of our schools. Twenty thousand were originally printed; there are 52 still remaining in the world today. But this is absolute proof the Founders wanted the Bible in schools and their records are clear on this Bible and what they intended and etc., etc. And yet, the Court says, "Oh, no, the Founding Fathers would never have wanted this."

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

Well, you see, it was the massive series of cases that the Court popularized the phrase we now hear so much. The Court said, "Now the reason we're doing all this, you realize, is that the First Amendment mandates the separation of church and state." And certainly, as we read the First Amendment, it says very simply, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." I don't think I see that separation phrase you're talking about.

You see, what sends these guys through the roof is not only is that phrase contained nowhere in the Constitution, there's another phrase contained in the Constitution that causes them a great deal of grief. You see, the Constitution requires that everything said on the floor of the House and the Senate be recorded in public records for our public consumption. We, the public, can go to it any time, 207 consecutive years of Congressional Records. We can read about any debate that's ever happened in Congress, which means we can go back to when they framed the First Amendment.

You see, these are the 90 Founding Fathers that framed the First Amendment and James Madison, standing right there in the center of them. It's in the records of Congress, from June the 7th through September the 25th of 1789; for months, these 90 Founding Fathers went after it, argued, debated. "We'll allow this, but we won't permit this. Now this is okay, but not this." Back and forth, for months and month and months. You know what's amazing? In the entire discussion, framing the First Amendment and ... and again, that's the amendment the Court says, I mean, separation of church and state and much of the discussions on the First Amendment by the 90 Founding Fathers who gave us that amendment, not even one--not one single one of those 90 Founding Fathers--ever even mentioned the phrase "separation of church and state" in months of discussions. It does seem like if that had been their intent for the First Amendment, somebody would have said something about it. [The] phrase doesn't appear one time.

What was their intent? Well, you'll find that when they reached August the 15th, 1789, James Madison summed it up. He said, "What we want in America is, we want here what we couldn't have in Great Britain. You see, we don't want the situation where that the federal government make[s] us all one denomination. We don't want to all be Catholics or Anglicans or anything else. We want our ability to choose our own denominations." And that's why the First Amendment says that Congress shall make no law respecting that establishment. We can't have an establishment of religion stood up by Congress. We can't all be Anglicans or Catholics, whatever the federal government wants. That's the intent of the First Amendment.

James Madison said it was to prevent the establishment of a single national denomination. Now that's their concept of church and state--separation of church and state--and we all agree with that. But to say that that means you can't have Bible readings in public or a cross in a cemetery, etc., etc., nonsense. Not even Franklin would have gone for that interpretation.

And you've got to admit, it's a pretty strange interpretation, whereby the actual wording of the First Amendment, which says, "Congress shall make no law," is now interpreted

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

to mean the same thing as a Rabbi mentioning God or a student mentioning Jesus in a prayer. You want to tell me what kind of interpretation it takes so that Congress means the same thing as a minister or a student? And that making a law is the same thing as saying "God," or praying a prayer? That's a pretty strange interpretation, even if you know nothing of the history, to read what we have in the Constitution today and look in the interpretations we have so far from what the Founding Fathers intended.

You see, we've absolutely reached the point of the absurd. And we knew that, particularly, one year where the three cases came to the Court that year on the same issue and the issue was simple. Can kids see this while they're at school? Now you recognize that immediately as the Ten Commandments.

But I'll point out to you, at least in my experience, if I want to find a copy of the Ten Commandments hanging somewhere, I don't go to a church. I've addressed, literally, hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of churches in which I've spoken. I've only found three churches that have the Ten Commandments hanging. If I want to find a copy of the Ten Commandments, I head straight for a government building. I can go to a courthouse or a legislature. I just go to the U.S. Supreme Court in Washington, D.C. Engraved in stone in two separate locations are the pictures of the Ten Commandments.

Now why is it that the Ten Commandments hang in the government buildings and not the religious ones? Because even from a secular view of history, the Ten Commandments have formed the basis of civil law in the Western World for 10,000 years. And that's where we get our civil prohibitions against murder, theft, perjury and that's why they hang in our courthouses.

Now we thought, "Surely, you're not gonna tell us that these kids can't see what's hanging inside the U.S. Supreme Court." And the Court said, "Well, actually, we are." They said, "Do you realize that if the posted copies of the Ten Commandments were to have any effect at all, that it would be to induce the schoolchildren to read them and if students were to read the Ten Commandments, they'd meditate on them and if they were to meditate on them, they'd respect and obey them and that would be unconstitutional. We can't have students obeying religious teachings at school." So, they don't see it; they don't obey it and now we got [sic] a problem we don't know how to stop.

You see, we go back to the logic of previous generations, people like Robert Winthrop. Great statesman, speaker of the House of Representatives. He explained it perhaps as clearly as anyone ever has. Robert Winthrop said, "Men, in a word, must necessarily be controlled either by a power within them or a power without them, either by the Word of God or by the strong arm of man, either by the Bible or by the bayonet." And see, that's the only two ways to control human behavior. One is internal restraints applied through the Word of God. And two is, if somebody's not gonna do it from the inside, you better learn to carry a baseball bat with you, 'cause you're going to have to beat it into 'em from the outside. It's either internal self restraint or it's external coercion.

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

Now in America, what do we rely ... rely on today? Oh, the courts have told us, "The Bible, well, that's unconstitutional. You can't do this internal restraint stuff." So, what do we do? We rely on external force. We're passing laws at an incredible rate, trying to make people act right, think right, speak right, behave right, do right. We're passing laws till we're blue in the face. It's not gonna make a flip of difference, 'cause if you can't handle the inside, you'll never handle the outside.

You see, it's what ...

Audience: Applause

That's what Jesus tells us in Scripture. Jesus says, where does all crime come [from]? Where does murder and theft and hate [come from]? It all comes from the inside. See, that's what the Founders understood. That's why they did this. This was the textbook of our schools, given us by the Founding Fathers, published by the U.S. Congress. It's amazing to see the changes we've gone through. And I think that maybe Daniel Webster just really nailed this down solid.

Daniel Webster, in the speech that he gave when he delivered the speech on the cornerstone at the U.S. Capitol, the addition there, he looked at the cornerstone and he said, "That rock is not the foundation of American civil government." He said, "This right here is." He said, "The cultivation of the religious sentiment represses licentiousness." He said, "This inspires respect for law and order. This gives strength to the whole social fabric." He said, "The sum of my argument actually is very simple." He said, "Whatever makes men good Christians, makes them good citizens."

You see and that's the truth. The police aren't having to arrest good Christians for drive-by shootings and armed robbery and gang violence and such. Good Christians make good citizens and that's what we knew and that's why we never allowed the separation of those basic principles from society. That's the whole key to a self-governing nation and self-governing individuals and the key to individual self government is right here and this is ... it's what we knew and recognized for years and year.

Now, You've seen where we were. You've seen where we are, and the obvious question is: How do we get back to the sound principles that we had for generations in America? I mean, how do we get back even to the principles of the Supreme Court that was [sic] recognized in 1952? Well, I think the advice for that is given very well by one of our Founding Fathers. This man is William Paterson. He's a signer of the Constitution from New Jersey.

But William Paterson was also placed on the U.S. Supreme Court by George Washington. And Paterson had the distinction of still serving on the Court two decades after he had helped author the Constitution. I mean, 1806 and '07 and '08, he's still on the Court and as the distinguished Founding Father, as the leading jurist in America, he was very often asked to address a number of civic groups and legal groups and judicial groups and his speeches are recorded.

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

And he had this speech that he liked to give and in this speech he said, "Two decades America has already become a world's leader." He said, "People come here from all over the world to see what makes us great." And, indeed, the records of that time show so many foreign individuals coming here to say, "What is it about America that's caused them to become a world power so rapidly?" Well, Paterson said, "Constitution." He said, "This document right here has helped us become a world's leader." And he was gratified and humbled by that, because he is one of the few guys who helped write that thing.

But then he had this warning. He said, "However," he said, "as great as this document is," he says, "this document will neither guarantee that America retains good government, nor will it guarantee that we have sound policies in America." He said, "As good as this document is, it does not guarantee the future of America." He said, "If, at any time, you ever coupled bad leaders with this document," he said, "this document is worthless in the hands of bad leaders."

Now, let me show you how this works. Let's go back to that 1992 Supreme Court case, *Lee v. Weisman*. Remember the case? Can you have invocations, benedictions at a public graduation? Our arguments in that case were very simple. We did the historical arguments. We said, "Guys, here are the signers of the U.S. Constitution that prayed graduation prayers at public school graduations. [As a] matter of fact, they didn't just pray prayers. Here's some of the sermons that they delivered at public school graduations. [As a] matter of fact, it wasn't like they had trouble with religion in general, 'cause here's the Bible they printed for the use of our schools, etc., etc." [We] went through the history. Well, we still lost the case 5 to 4.

Now Justice Souter, who voted against us, in his concurring opinion, acknowledged the arguments. He said, "Well, we've seen here that the Founding Fathers participated in graduation prayers; that they condoned graduation prayers; they even advocated graduation prayers." Souter said, "That just goes to prove the Founding Fathers didn't understand the Constitution." (Laughter) Yeah, thank you, David Souter.

Now you tell me, how good is the Constitution in the hands of judges like that? Do we have any of the original religious liberty guarantees we had at the beginning? No. Why? Because he's not about to let God be mentioned in public. Why, that's psychological coercion. See, he doesn't like that. He doesn't like public acknowledgment of God to those principles. Therefore, he interprets that document the same way and that's what Paterson said. If you put bad leaders with this document, this document's worthless in the hands of bad leaders. And that's what we found.

And that's why Paterson said, "The key to maintaining sound government in America is given us by God in His sacred Writ." Now the interesting thing about this is for the righteous to rule in America, there's only one way that they get there. This, according to John Jay, America's the first nation in the history of the world to belong to the people. Now you'll find that in Exodus 18:21, the Scriptures call for choosing out leaders of tens, leaders of fifties, leaders of hundreds and leaders of thousands. Choose your local, your county, your state, your federal leaders, but as John Jay pointed out, America is the first

David Barton: THE FOUNDING OF AMERICA I-II

nation in the history of the world that got to do that. We got to choose everything from dogcatcher through U.S. President. Everybody else had parliaments that was by hereditary entry. Everybody else had monarchs or kings or dictators, but we, the people, got to choose this one. This is the government that belonged to us.

You see, and that's why Patrick Henry pointed out in ... on the back of the Stamp Act Congress writings that he had, he wrote out Proverbs 14:34: "Righteousness exalts a nation, but sinners are a reproach to any people." He said, "Reader, remember this, and in thy spirit encourage virtue and practice it in thyself and promote it in others." He said, "the only key to America being sound are these principles right here," which puts it all back on us.

You see, if America remains righteous, it's because we, the people, demand that it remain righteous. But if America ever goes wicked, it's because we, the people, let it go wicked. And it'll be we, the people, not our leaders, who'll answer to God for the national wickedness, because the nation belongs to us. There is no title on the U.S. Constitution except "We the People," and that was what they were so proud of, was this is a stewardship government.

And that's what it's gonna take, committed people getting in and saying, "It's time to get involved in all these different arenas." Time to get involved in education, time to get involved in the media, time to get involved in politics, time to get involved in law, time to get involved in government. We've held ourselves out long enough. You see, we are the salt; we're the preservatives. If we don't get in any of these arenas, they go rotten real fast. It's totally up to us whether these things turn around. (Applause) God bless you. Enjoyed being with you.

Audience: (Applause)

+ + +

CBD Link: <http://family.christianbook.com/Christian/Books/product?sku=5008189>