

**A Critique of David Barton's  
*Original Intent—The Courts, the Constitution, and Religion***

Aledo, TX: [www.WallBuilders.com](http://www.WallBuilders.com), 2005, 132p., loads of pictures

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This following is the full version of the critique,  
that was originally intended for chapter 12.D of the first edition  
and 4.A of the Revised Second Edition

**[Character Counts](#)  
[Freemasonry USA's National Treasure](#)  
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**[A. David Barton's Original Intent Attempts to Revise History](#)**

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**1. Barton Not a Straight Arrow**

This section is repeated on the online section dealing with Barton's *The Question of Freemasonry and Our Founding Fathers*. Part of the reason for condensing it in the book, in addition to

shortening the book, is because Barton was far too stealthy to take seriously, once one does look at his material. He truly caters to the innocent, and we give him far too respect in including such a lengthy demolition. Plus—here, the whole world can see. And see for free, though he is charging \$6 and \$7 for booklets half this long (but he does have lots of pictures).

[www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton Freemasonry.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton_Freemasonry.pdf)

I sent Barton a copy of the first version of *Character Counts* in 2006, and was snubbed in January of 2008; he claimed he did not receive the book; I sent another copy to the address he listed as agent for his new 2008 WallBuilders LLC.<sup>1</sup>

A new attack on Freemasonry comes more from a sucker punch, and such can hurt, if properly delivered. The multiple Christian Right establishment agendas have placed an emphasis on the Christian faith of our Founding Fathers, and we are proud that Christianity was the major faith of choice during the founding of the USA. I do not know anyone who disputes that popularity of Christian beliefs during the decades before and after 1776.

But is dead wrong to assume Christianity was the sole reason for the founding, and the irony here is that the very diversity of Christian belief systems *prior* to 1776 is the proof of the major reason for the 1776 Declaration of Independence—sheese, I almost feel pulled here, but *independence* was the reason for the Declaration, and the *Unitedness* of the States was the reason for the Constitution. And in this context, it is so terribly wrongheaded to exclude Freemasonry. Most of these Christian establishment revisionists exclude Freemasonry, when not cursing it; but at least one, David Barton, has placed a new and unique twist on

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<sup>1</sup> See [www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton.pdf) for our dialogue. He claimed no to have received the book I sent by registered mail a year ago, so I sent another, this time to address listed for him as agent of WallBuilders LLC at the Texas comptroller’s office, **426 Circle Drive, Aledo, TX, 76008**; and anyone can check the USP tracking #EB-882315748-US. See his incorporation <http://ecpa.cpa.state.tx.us/coa/Index.html> under tax id #17522695232.

See [www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2005/751/627/2005-751627779-025074e8-9.pdf](http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2005/751/627/2005-751627779-025074e8-9.pdf) for his Form 990 for his WallBuilders Presentations non-profit for 2005; direct public support was \$1,146,760 with expenses at \$1,157,499 (“Program Services” at \$863,534 and “Management” at \$291,766).

Freemasonry unseen in the literature and out of the circuit completely with the best literature. We will show that shortly, after a brief look at his business.

As we saw above in his *Question of Freemasonry* in Part One (4.D), Barton twisted Freemasonry to serve his establishment agenda in a smooth for of market-based history making.<sup>2</sup> Obviously, his attack on Freemasonry in that itsy bitsy book is a sideline to his larger business, WallBuilders LLC, and the little book reveals more about his business than he intended.

Barton has made inroads all over the country, even to the point of being hired by the Republican National Committee (RNC) in 2004 to hold “300 RNC-sponsored lunches for local evangelical pastors.”<sup>3</sup> Barton’s *America, To Pray or Not to Pray?*, 6th edition, came out in 1991 and his *America’s Godly Heritage* came out in on tape in 1992 under the WallBuilders.<sup>4</sup> His major work, *Original Intent—The Courts, the Constitution, and Religion*, came out in 2000 under his WallBuilder Press imprint, that also now publishes all his books, booklets, and some school curriculum.<sup>5</sup> Barton has been at this for a long time, at least since the early 1990s, and has had critics of his historical revisionism for that long.<sup>6</sup> David Barton

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<sup>2</sup> See volume 1, chapter 4.D for our demolition of David Barton’s *The Question of Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers* (WallBuilders, 2005; \$7.95) in our Frankenstein exposé.

<sup>3</sup> See [www.SourceWatch.org/index.php?title=David\\_Barton](http://www.SourceWatch.org/index.php?title=David_Barton) for a good review and links. And at Barton’s web site/store [www.WallBuilders.com/ABTOverview.asp](http://www.WallBuilders.com/ABTOverview.asp), this is said about him, “He has received numerous awards including several Who’s Who honors, two Angel Awards for excellence in media, and the George Washington Honor Medal. He has spoken to numerous state legislatures, consulted with both state and federal legislators on various bills, and has written amicus briefs in cases at the U. S. Supreme Court.

<sup>4</sup> David Barton, *America, To Pray or Not to Pray?: a Statistical Look at What Happened when Religious Principles Were Separated from Public Affairs* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilder, 1991; 239p; LOC 94172358) and *America’s Godly Heritage* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilders, 1992-1996; 2 sound cassettes; LOC 2004581249; published 1st 1993, 3rd edition published in 2007 by WallBuilders Press.

<sup>5</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent—The Courts, the Constitution, and Religion* (Aledo, TX: WallBuilders Press, 2004, 1st 2000; 534p.). See [www.WallBuilders.com](http://www.WallBuilders.com) for his books under the WallBuilders Press imprint, and *Drive Through History—America*, “perfect for home schooling”: [www.WallBuilders.com/store/product230.html](http://www.WallBuilders.com/store/product230.html).

<sup>6</sup> See this article [www.PositiveAtheism.org/writ/founding.htm](http://www.PositiveAtheism.org/writ/founding.htm) that sums up what some found in 1996.

is listed as the president and founder of WallBuilders.<sup>7</sup> So he has been doing business in Texas for almost twenty years now, being *hired* in 2004, but you will look in vain on his web site to find out *when* he started his business.

Under what name has he been doing business? Another secret?

Barton has been doing business from Texas under WallBuilders (earlier WallBuilder, now printing under WallBuilder Press), yes, since 1991 at least, when the 6th edition of his *America* was registered at the Library of Congress. He has been trying to build walls for twenty years. It *appears* as a ministry—his mission and he has a 5.01.c.3—and his primary market is unashamedly the Christian Right in the distribution of Christian values. But his business is a for-profit business; just look at the huge price of his booklets. There is nothing wrong with starting a business, and all businesses evolve. But it is not clear how long or under what name Barton has been doing *business*.

Yes, on September 7, 1978, he started a 5.01.c.3, WallBuilder Presentations, and the tale of the tap says some strange things. From his 2005 Form 990, he took in just over a million in “direct” public support and expended just over a million, for nearly a 100% spent of the donations, apparently, but just what *charity* or tax exempt *service* he was providing is hard to figure.<sup>8</sup> This is a *charity*, a non-profit—you know—for the benefit of humankind, and tax exempt. And the RNC hired him to do 300 lunches in 2004, and in 2005 he lists his expenses for 350 “presentations” that made up the bulk of his 2005 “expenses” from the tax exempt donated funds. Hmmm? I just don’t get it, and there is no explanation that defines what charity is going for on his web site, other than to help him re-establish Christian values in government. Define irony here for me: he makes a million-plus in tax-free donations and spends nearly 100% of that on a mission to *fight* separation of church and state.

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<sup>7</sup> See [www.WallBuilders.com/ABTbioDB.asp](http://www.WallBuilders.com/ABTbioDB.asp), accessed 1-25-8.

<sup>8</sup> His Form 990 for 2005 his direct public support at \$1,146,760; his expenses were \$1,157,499 (“Program Services” at \$863,534 and “Management” at \$291,766).

See [www.GuideStar.org/FinDocuments/2005/751/627/2005-751627779-025074e8-9.pdf](http://www.GuideStar.org/FinDocuments/2005/751/627/2005-751627779-025074e8-9.pdf) for the whole enchilada, or [www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton\\_2005\\_Form\\_990.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton_2005_Form_990.pdf).

That should be *clear* on his web site, and yet you will not even find the full name of his 5.01.c.3 there. You will look in vain to find out when his WallBuilders Press started, as though that was a secret, and Barton's web site does *not* tell when he started any of his *businesses*. Apparently he was self-employed or something; not even the Parker County Courthouse has a record of any business registered under the Barton name. But—strangely—he just got his Texas charter for his new *for-profit* WallBuilders LLC on January 2, 2008.<sup>9</sup> Why do you start a for-profit company after so long as a non-profit?

What *business* name was using for his *for-profit* items, like his high-priced little booklets, and reprints of ancient classics? Don't know. But on his 2005 Form 990, Barton does list a \$6,995 digital scanner, with a total \$54,035 of office and computer equipment used 100% for his *ministry*.<sup>10</sup> You must see that there is *for-profit intention* for his booklets (for what non-profit use are they?). His high-priced booklets are clearly \$500 dollar hammers he uses to fund his WallBuilding. And a \$7,000 digital scanner? What does that do? Scan soup for the poor? Or scan books to help the RNC lunches?

These are not questions I can answer clearly. But I did not see anything but a big business enterprise on his web site, and he did not want to talk about his errors or his being caught in his occulting. But in the light of *charity*, that is given to him, I question to high heaven the *tax exemption process* itself that would allow someone to be funded to cater almost exclusively to the wealthy for the purpose of changing the government.

I think he would make more money helping people do the same.

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<sup>9</sup> At <http://ecpa.cpa.state.tx.us/coa/Index.html>, you can see his Texas charter by entering either WallBuilders or his tax id 17522695232: the officers are David Barton, president, Cheryl Barton, secretary and director, and C. G. Barton, director and board.

David Barton is the registered agent: 426 Circle Drive, Aledo, TX, 76008.

<sup>10</sup> See [www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2005/751/627/2005-751627779-025074e8-9.pdf](http://www.guidestar.org/FinDocuments/2005/751/627/2005-751627779-025074e8-9.pdf) for the whole enchilada, or [www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton\\_2005\\_Form\\_990.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton_2005_Form_990.pdf), page 25 of his 2005 Form 990, his supplemental Form 4562, Section 179 Deductions Before Limitations and Special Allowance.

His WallBuilders is so big now, that his “Research Department at WallBuilders receives hundreds of emails and letters, therefore it may be several months or more before a response is sent.”<sup>11</sup> And I apparently got through with special handling, after I e-mailed him from his web site these criticisms, wondering about the advance copy of this book that I sent him over a year ago. You can see from Barton’s e-mail that he checked with his “Executive Director who scoured the logs of the mail room and shipping and receiving departments,” but to no avail.<sup>12</sup> Sounds like a big for-profit *business* to me.

I found out that David Barton is on the advisory board of the Providence Foundation, a Christian reconstructionist that mirrors WallBuilders.<sup>13</sup> In a revealing article on Belief.net, Barton networks across the nation advocating the USA is a Christian nation in its founding.<sup>14</sup> In an interview with Pat Roberson, who asked about “proof” that the USA was founded as a Christian nation, Barton said this:

There is a lot of proof. Not the least of which is a great Fourth of July speech that was given in 1837 by one of the guys who fought in the revolution, who became a president, John Quincy Adams. His question was why is it in America that the Fourth of July and Christmas are the most celebrated holidays? His answer was that at Christmas we celebrate what Jesus Christ did for the world [with] his birth, and on the Fourth of July we celebrate what Jesus Christ did for America, since we founded it as a Christian nation.<sup>15</sup>

Yes, from 1837 and John Quincy Adams. And that is how Barton rationalizes more often than not, occulting other stuff that he does not like. From a Christian perspective, yes, God brought about the USA, and in Islam, providence plays the same role, for *all* people are in submission to the will of Allah. Adams can interpret history

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<sup>11</sup> From [www.WallBuilders.com/ABTcontact.asp](http://www.WallBuilders.com/ABTcontact.asp), accessed 1-25-8.

<sup>12</sup> See [www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton.pdf) for our brief e-mails.

<sup>13</sup> From [www.ProvidenceFoundation.com/mission.php#](http://www.ProvidenceFoundation.com/mission.php#) accessed 1.25-8,

<sup>14</sup> From [www.BeliefNet.com/story/154/story\\_15469\\_1.html#cont](http://www.BeliefNet.com/story/154/story_15469_1.html#cont) accessed 1-25-8.

<sup>15</sup> From [www.BeliefNet.com/story/154/story\\_15469\\_2.html](http://www.BeliefNet.com/story/154/story_15469_2.html) accessed 1-25-8.

inside of his faith as we all do, but ignoring what the Founders did is as bad for Adams as it is for Barton.

Is that his example of how he wants to re-build America, with dual corporations with semi-secret histories, and tax exemption that *supports* the molesting indicated below?

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At first glance, it looks like David Barton has put together something unique in his WallBuilder.com business, even important. But on a closer look, you will see a man who abuses quotes and manipulates, and uses rather poor rhetoric in the process. It is not a surprise then that he does not access much modern scholarship, or that his work is not seriously considered by modern scholarship; it is rather lonely, except for the market he has cultivated.

If you just trust Barton to lead you straight, he makes a case for Christian original intent in our USA Constitution that seems to have *just* been discovered. Remarkable—*what a discovery*—but only if you *trust* him. He seems innocent. When you check his stuff, things go awry, and quick. After the following, here is one conclusion upfront—many other Christians have seen some of the following and *not* shared it with Barton. Far too many have allowed Barton his illusion of scholarship because of politics, because patriotism is popular—a good and needed virtue—and because there is some appetite for “Christian USA” that seeks to make being patriotic Christian or being Christian a good USA citizen.

We can see in Washington’s writings a few Christian statements, and they are very *few* among the tens of thousands of extent documents on his life. What, now, what precisely does Barton and others want to establish from the few Christian faith writings of Washington? Washington’s life is perhaps the most documented life of the 18th century, indeed, one of the most documented in human history. By all accounts, Washington was at the top of the list in 1790 and remains to this day the single most pivotal person in American history.

Washington is crucial to Barton and others, even “the Foundingest Father of them all” according to renowned historian Joseph J. Ellis said, “the most ambitious, determined, and potent

personality of an age not lacking for worthy rivals.”<sup>16</sup> The more you know about Washington, the more connected he becomes to the kind of nation that was established. *Newsweek* ran an excerpt from *American Gospel—God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* in which Jon Meacham related, “In a treaty with the Muslim nation of Tripoli initiated by Washington, completed by John Adams, and ratified by the Senate in 1797, we declared ‘the Government of the United States is not, in any sense, founded on the Christian religion.’”<sup>17</sup> If Barton had found a quote of Christian establishment by Washington, his case could be sealed and the rest of history would bear that out. But what does Barton have to say about this quote on the *non*-establishment of the United States upon Christianity by his own best Christian Founding Father? Not a peep.

Barton knew about it—he has the largest private library of about 70,000 items of the era—but he addressed his market, not the real concerns. That quote of non-establishment is critical to Barton’s entire ministry, and vastly more important than his spook-house sections. Avoiding that quote in both his *Original Intent* and his *Question of Freemasonry* was cunning or cowardly, like so much other blather, and if left unchecked his cunning will affect the perception of Freemasonry in the eyes of the innocent until his ways and means are thoroughly vetted.

Unlike Barton, it was clearly the intent of our Founding Fathers that a man could be a full citizen and not have to be a Christian, and Ben Franklin is one such man. And Jon Meacham’s *American Gospel—God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* serves this up at the right time in a most generous manner.

On the other hand, David Barton twists and molests, and that is wrong for a Christian. And then makes a million-plus dollars off it. Ten thousand Christians ought to call him to account. Check the following and see for yourself whether it merited Barton’s attention. Barton strives to *rebuild* a wall of Christian foundations, because he does not like the immorality today. But that is no excuse to be

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<sup>16</sup> Joseph J. Ellis, *His Excellency: George Washington* (2004; 320p.): xiv.

<sup>17</sup> *Newsweek* (4-10-06): 54, from Jon Meacham’s *American Gospel—God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation* (NY: Random House, 2006; 399p.).



immoral, and then to do so under the guise of Christian innocence; that would be of no consequence, except that he is wanting to take the government back through his immoral tactics. I had enough, so I called him out, but he ran behind his busy schedule and mail department that gets too much to handle.<sup>18</sup> See if the following was reason enough to snub.

It is immoral to deceive the innocent and to dirty the lives of good men. Barton *intended* to deceive Christians as a Christian for the purpose of making money, and in his Freemasonry book he slams the character of a million Christian Freemason men today too. Nasty.

This is market-based history making that needs vetting.

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## **2. David Barton's Revisionism of Freemasonry**

Both David Barton's non-profit and LLC WallBuilders have developed a unique foothold in the Religious Right market on the foundations of our country.<sup>19</sup> The academic anchor to his business is his *Original Intent*.<sup>20</sup> Just as the first version of *Character Counts* was being finalized, Barton released his little book, *The Question on Freemasonry and Our Founding Fathers* ([critiqued here](#)), which is dependent upon his *Original Intent*. In Barton's *Original Intent*, he gave a single negative sentence on Freemasonry after a dubious chapter on revisionism in Unitarianism:

This same failure to account for historical changes is also revealed in the analysis of many contemporary writers concerning the Founders and their involvement in Freemasonry—an organization which has also undergone a similar radical transformation over the years since its early introduction into America.

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<sup>18</sup> See [www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton.pdf](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton.pdf) for our brief e-mails.

<sup>19</sup> See [www.WallBuilders.com/ABTOverview.asp](http://www.WallBuilders.com/ABTOverview.asp).

<sup>20</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent—The Courts, the Constitution, and Religion* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.).

Revisionists either reveal their own laziness by failing to define terms according to original usage or they deliberately omit those meanings in an attempt to reach a conclusion different from that which was originally intended.<sup>21</sup>

That is all on Freemasonry in his large *Original Intent*, and I sent him a copy of the first version of *Character Counts*—to no avail. Barton’s statement above was tucked in before that chapter’s closing statement about Barton’s own self-validation from his use of original sources. In the light, those two sentences describe his own book far more than he intended. It would have been considerate if Barton had given one footnote about the “many contemporary writers” that he claimed to analyze on the Founders’ involvement in Freemasonry and a “similar radical transformation.” And Barton did that again in his book focusing on Freemasonry, alluding to *many writers* but not giving them.

Barton is a threat to Freemasonry’s integrity, because he is tricky (or sloppy). His own credibility in the eyes of those innocent of much history and in the eyes of those disgruntled over immorality (a good number) have gained him an audience; people are listening to Barton. So when he corkscrews Freemasonry, especially for those who know nothing about it and more so for those who have been duped the SBC experts (who make up a large share of his business market), then Freemasonry takes a sucker punch.

It is not Freemasonry that is “failing to define terms.” As seen in several and in the SBC squeaks, many will not define the Paganism they allege, and several mix Universalism without distinction and respect, and without a single interview. Then there are Christian establishment documents, where, like Barton, they participate in the very revisionism they deride. They deny Freemasonry any significant part, and then claim Freemasonry has radically changed without a note on what has changed. They corkscrew all manner of things. Worse, in all the anti-Mason literature, no one substantially reveals how the symbols reflect character counting in every facet of

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<sup>21</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent—The Courts, the Constitution, and Religion* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 316.

Freemasonry; they occult the best and hope people never see their occulting ways or read the original sources.

Most of these efforts to show the Christian foundations of the USA come from a defensive point, because we have lost some morality in some quarters. Yet that loss does not entitle anyone to revise history or leave out important elements, and that includes Freemasonry's role. On Christianity and Freemasonry's influence in America in the late 1700s, Yale University's Sterling Professor of Missions and Oriental History Kenneth Scott Latourette said,

While by no means anti-Christian, Freemasonry, which flourished in this period [1780's], tended to adopt Deist views. It spread from Great Britain to the Continent and there for many became a center of opposition to the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>22</sup>

Latourette includes the *Age of Reason* and the Enlightenment confidence in the mind of humankind itself: "Now, by the use of reason he [humankind] was achieving emancipation and there was nothing that, with this tool, he could not hope to accomplish."<sup>23</sup> The Enlightenment revealed that human beings could think, had inalienable rights, and could envision a future. At the same time, Voltaire (1664-1778) attacked hypocritical Christian faith, and David Hume (1711-1776) departed from the faith. These contrasted with the Great Awakening Christian revivals (1720-40s). The Enlightenment ideas of Locke, Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu, and others spread from France to the USA, and some of the ideas origins in Christianity.<sup>24</sup> Latourette's context is much wider than

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<sup>22</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (1953; 1,516p.): 1003.

<sup>23</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (1953; 1,516p.): 1003.

<sup>24</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (1953; 1,516p.): 1007, Enlightenment ideas "could be traced to both Roman Catholics and Protestants. Centuries earlier, Augustine [354-430 A.D.] had declared that man should not have dominion over man, for the man is a rational creature, made in God's image. The Jesuit cardinal, Bellarmine [1542-1621], had said that it depended on the consent of the people whether kings, consuls, or other magistrates were to be established in authority over them, and that if there was legitimate cause the people should change the kingdom into an aristocracy, or an aristocracy into a democracy. In England, largely through the efforts of radical Protestants, more effective control of the nation over the king had been established. In the newly constituted United States, mainly through ideas formulated and propagated by Protestants, progress had recently been achieved towards a democracy. Out of a desire to weaken her ancient foe, Great Britain, France aided the Thirteen Colonies to obtain their

David Barton's single mischievous statement on Freemasonry in his *Original Intent*, and Barton does not give the Enlightenment the light of day.

We will touch the Enlightenment, the French and American Revolutions, and their interweaving with Freemasonry in 1776 later. For now, notice that Freemasonry has not changed in its essential principles since 1717. It is still a fraternity that has always valued liberty and equality from 1717, in 1776, and still today. Contrary to Barton, Baylor University President Emeritus Herbert H. Reynolds said,

the reason that the foes of Freemasonry would like to see its influence destroyed or diminished lies in their knowledge that Masons have always been staunch supporters of individual religious liberty for every human being and that we take an exceedingly dim view of demagogues, like some ... would like to turn America into a church state run by their particular brand of religionists.<sup>25</sup>

Freemasonry respects the conscience, and David Barton and others occult that.

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### **3. Tree of Freedom and Barton's Revision of History**

Our country was founded upon the live-oak tree of freedom with her twin branches of significant liberty and equality reaching into the sky, and some have tried to clip the contribution of Freemasonry.

In between the occulting, I liked several portions of David Barton's *Original Intent*. Perhaps better than any work to date, its best parts revealed that many of our Founding Fathers hailed from

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independence, and the ideals expressed in their Declaration of Independence had a marked effect on the French."

<sup>25</sup> Herbert H. Reynolds, "Straight Talk," *The Scottish Rite Journal of Freemasonry Southern Jurisdiction* (February 1993): 47; in 1993 and for this article, Reynolds was the president of Baylor and introduced the comments of Baylor President Emeritus in his article for this journal, titled, "A Religious Quality, But Not A Religion...."

Christian principles. It is irksome to many Christians that the faith of our Founding Fathers has been downplayed in some modern history books. Yet not all things in Barton are what they first appear; there are some smoke and mirrors.

Very similar to Barton and marketing the same audience, Christian Coalition's Ralph Reed quoted Alexis de Tocqueville on religion's central place in America. But Reed's "quotations are not always accurate"; similar to Benjamin Franklin, Tocqueville believed "that religion is essential to the health of republican liberty," and Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore observed,

[Ralph] Reed apparently closed the pages of [Tocqueville's] *Democracy in America* too soon. Had he read further, he would not have missed Tocqueville's point that it is dangerous for religion to tie itself to political institutions and to topical political controversy. Religion's considerable influence, Tocqueville insisted, lies in directing "the customs of the community" and in "regulating domestic life." Involvement in political debate about partisan issues is death to this mission.... If religion were to throw itself into this fray ... Where would be the respect which belongs to it, amid the struggles of faction? And what would become of its immortality, in the midst of universal decay?<sup>26</sup>

David Barton shares quarters with Ralph Reed and several hundred other minor league players that argue for a Christian re-establishment today, but an establishment not yet undefined by those making the millions of dollars. The minor leaguers will tell you, though: they want the death penalty in the Old Testament reinstated, even to stone a rebellious teenager, and they want to be the judges.

Freemasonry made contributions to our USA's foundations with its vast array of character counting symbols, then as today, more than any other institution on earth. Freemasonry fostered *concrete* contributions; there are more emblems of virtue than there are of the Cross in the concrete in Washington, D.C. Yes, you can see Moses

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<sup>26</sup> Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore, *The Godless Constitution: The Case Against Religious Correctness* (NY: W.W. Norton, 1996): 21, quoting from Alexis de Tocqueville, *The Republic of the United States of America and Its Political Institutions: Reviewed and Examined* (Henry Reeves, trans.; NY: A.S. Barnes & Co., 1851).

and the Ten Commandments and some Scripture, and they are next to statues representing virtue taken from Greek and Roman gods. Throughout, Freemasonry never excluded Christianity nor competed with it in the hearts of the Founding Fathers; certainly, there was no contradiction in their minds. Consistently, then as today, Freemasonry in its own written principles admits a lower place, because the man's faith, family, and duty to country come *before* Freemasonry. That age-old consistency is occulted from the Christian establishment folks, of which Barton is a leader.

Barton's *Original Intent* has become popular with the Religious Right, because it was written especially for them. It is readable, has a good looking bibliography. It purposed to prove that our Founding Fathers meant to establish a Christian nation; that was its purpose, but not truly the discovery of the record. Barton tries to prove the USA was *established* of as Christian nation with several Christian-like quotes. There is no doubt that some felt this country blessed of God. That is a Christian belief, that God raises and lowers nations. But there is a huge difference between *proving* the point of intentional establishment and the *discovery* of the historical record. Barton proves his point on the beliefs of several founders, but he denies the words in Constitution and further occults the historical record when he leaves out the larger contest of religious liberty and the Freemasonry contributions.

Barton twists the entire historical record to favor Christian establishment in 1789, as though Christianity was more important than freedom of religion in our USA Constitution. But, *ooops*, the founders just forgot to place God in the Constitution. And in subtle ways, Barton uses "religious" as a synonym for "Christian" in his writing, because he never gives a droplet on the rights of other religions, and at nearly every corner he reads more Christianity into some quotes than the quotes allow. Granted that the God of most persons in the Thirteen Colonies would have been the Christian God, there is Benjamin Franklin and others who value "religion" like they value virtue, but who cannot be considered Christian. Barton says this about his business:

WallBuilders is an organization dedicated to the restoration of the constitutional, moral, and religious foundation on which

America was built—a foundation which, in recent years, has been seriously attacked and undermined. In accord with what was so accurately stated by George Washington, we believe that “the propitious [favorable] smiles of heaven can never be expected on a nation which disregards the eternal rules of order and right which heaven itself has ordained.”<sup>27</sup>

That is wonderfully *religious*—even blithely so—and it indicates Washington’s favor to boot. Barton means *Christian* foundation, and not a multi-religion freedom, but he just will not say so. That is clear in his writing, where he finds Christian statements, and even praises Benjamin Franklin’s value of religion. But Barton does not allow the clearly 21st century connotations of “religious” to include any other religion. There were no other significant religions in the Thirteen Colonies, but it is still a twist of the English language for Barton to avoid that religious freedom meant then what it means today—freedom for all religions, not just Christianity. Barton does not say that explicitly, because Barton has to deal with his own findings that discovered the terms “religious” and “religion” far more broadly used than the term “Christianity” was used. In a way, Freemasonry has used “religion” and “religious” consistently for hundreds of years to reflect *all* religions, while Barton and Barton alone (as far as I can tell) is using “religious” in the main to refer to Christianity in his marketing. That is deceitful or just sloppy, and our case will grow toward the former.

So we can see that Barton’s business *is* “dedicated to the restoration of the ... religious foundation.” But he denies any other religion any space today in his books as he forwards a clearly evangelical Christian faith, and that is his market too; you do not see Barton taking his “religious foundation” message to the Buddhist or Muslim markets, or even much to the Catholic. That is not even subtle, for all of his books and paraphernalia are turned to Christian values and advertisements. The real question then and most certainly today—Did the Founding Fathers determine in 1789 and then 1791 with the First Amendment to forbid the passing of any law that restricted only Christianity? Or did they protect all

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<sup>27</sup> This was culled from [www.WallBuilders.com](http://www.WallBuilders.com) on December 15, 2004.

“religious” practice? Barton solely defends Christian freedom, and leaves out all other religions.

Barton does not distinguish between the meaning of “religious” then in the Thirteen Colonies and today in the USA. And I think Barton avoids that distinction on purpose. Barton is interested in the Christian establishment of our USA, yes, and does not give any credible space for even Universalism, and nothing whatsoever for Buddhism or Islam. For him, Christianity is the *right* way, the truth, and the life. Barton mixes his discoveries of the words “religious” and “God” with other Christian words in a cake he advertises as our Founding Fathers’ cake, but Barton does not allow other religions today the same claims to freedom that he is pushing for Christianity. He does not *say* that, but he *is* WallBuilding in *our* government *without* a droplet of true respect for the rights of other religions. In other words, Barton is a Christian forwarding a Christian agenda and forwarding Christianity as the true way—which all Christians believe—but Barton tows in “religious” *today* into a WallBuilding effort that will include Christianity and—without saying so, but is in practice—excluding all other religions. This *was* founded as a Christian nation, he says, by *original* intent, even though they forgot to put that in our precious Constitution in 1789, and really forgot that in our First Amendment in 1791.

I do not think this is mere sloppy work. I believe Barton knows what he is doing. He is marketing the Christian values while avoiding all other religions in his “religious” foundation—a misuse of the very term “religious”—knowing all the while that “congress shall make no law” refers to all religions today, but somehow the others religions do not merit the same level of respect from a government standpoint. Barton cranks out a little high-priced booklet every six months, but avoids all other religions in his “religious” establishment.

The purpose of his book, *Original Intent*, is to show the Christian intent, and no other, and that is Barton’s secret intent. The religious foundation is the Christian foundation, and Barton is on a Christian mission dressed in the garb of generic “religious” foundation to hide his Christian mission. Is it lying to get a passport as an English teacher in China, when your true purpose is to spread



Christianity via a teaching license? That is Barton's agenda, except it is more subtle, in that he is trying to change the government itself, not just spread the gospel. It is more sly.

At least Freemasonry then in 1789 was more clear in its plurality, for, not being a religion, it fostered a true respect for all religions without requiring anyone to sacrifice a droplet of their own absolute differences; they all agreed in the belief in God and immortality, and beyond that the Freemason was trusted to pursue his own faith. That was true then, as today, and the proper way to look at "religious" foundation without confusion. Freemasonry was the only institution in the 1700s that respected true "religious" freedom among all the Christian variants, and included other religions in their view of "religious" freedom *before* 1789. That is a far more clear precedent for not placing God in the Constitution than any other extent institution in the 1700s. Hiding that is occultic; twisting that is immoral.

Barton, by intention I believe, is confusing the use of "religious" to force out of it more Christianity than our Founding Fathers intended. Clearly, the context of Barton's web site makes the quotes of Washington appear far more evangelical than even Washington's words indicated. Barton reads Christian establishment *into* Washington's use of the word *religious*. With just a smidgeon of knowledge of Freemasonry principles (and it not a religion), then Washington's words lean more to Freemasonry's value of the universality of morality and "eternal rules" than Washington's words support Barton's cause of "restoration of the ... religious foundation."

Why is the *religious* foundation *not* in the Constitution? Why? And why does Barton deflect *religious* as nearly synonymous with *Christian* establishment without a hint of the other religions implied in the term *religious*?

Beware of the word "restoration of the ... religious foundation," for Barton and others in the Religious Right do not betray how viciously some Christians controlled other Christians prior to 1776. Does Barton mean a *restoration* to compulsory church attendance? Does he want the legislative the ability to *banish* because someone does not believe in his view of baptism? Of course not, for he could

never sell that. But he is looking at some kind of restoration of Christian control over government, and Barton becomes occultic in how he circumnavigates the *control* he wishes without ever using the word control. And if one Christian would banish another Christian in the 1700s, you can guess what they would have done with a Buddhist or Muslim or Pagan. And the Christian Puritans did kill witches in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.<sup>28</sup>

Barton certainly does want to recover and rebuild the “religious” foundation of the 1700s, for he says that a hundred times—that is his widely published mission and market. Only his version of the 1700 “religious” foundation resembles today’s Christian evangelical more than the reality of the 1700s, and he has made a million dollars from it.

Barton does *not* use “religious” establishment to mean all religions, by intention I believe, because his secret agenda is the exclusive Christian foundation. Therein, Barton intentionally uses “religious” duplicitously to include the moral values of all religions but not truly the freedom for all religions. He certainly has not invested a syllable in favor of all religions in his numerous tracts. In other words, Barton covers the Christian establishments of the 1700s, because that would not serve his purpose, just as he covers Freemasonry’s respect for conscience.

It is all in the name, and Barton’s business name says it all—WallBuilders—“We have chosen this historical concept of ‘rebuilding the walls’ to represent allegorically the call for citizen involvement in rebuilding our nation’s foundations”<sup>29</sup>—a nice allegory, the call to rebuild “the walls.” Just how serious is Barton about discovering our country’s foundation? Goodness, there is an abundance of records for 1750-1800; our country does date from

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<sup>28</sup> *Random House Encyclopedia* (NY: Random House, 1983): 2591, s.v., Salem, Massachusetts.

<sup>29</sup> This was culled from [www.WallBuilders.com](http://www.WallBuilders.com) on December 15, 2004: the context of which was, “In the Old Testament book of Nehemiah, the nation of Israel rallied together in a grassroots movement to help rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and thus restore stability, safety, and a promising future to that great city. We have chosen this historical concept of ‘rebuilding the walls’ to represent allegorically the call for citizen involvement in rebuilding our nation’s foundations. As Psalm 11:3 reminds us, ‘If the foundations be destroyed, what shall the righteous do?’”

1776 and 1789; the USA is still young, and came into existence in an era where writing and printing were established industries of recording and publishing.

What does *rebuild* the walls mean? Actually, Barton tries to revise the historical foundations, and then re-build upon his revision. His goals are clear:

WallBuilders' goal is to exert a direct and positive influence in government, education, and the family by (1) educating the nation concerning the Godly foundation of our country; (2) providing information to federal, state, and local officials as they develop public policies which reflect Biblical values; and (3) encouraging Christians to be involved in the civic arena.<sup>30</sup>

Barton has been successful in all three. He is good at marketing. On #1, he is only partially right, but becomes suspect when he leaves out so very much that should have been crucial to a discovery of our Founding Fathers' original intent. Just what does "Godly" mean to him? It means a Christ-like life to Christians in the USA, but the life of a good number of our Founding Fathers would not be considered "Godly" by today's standards. Washington *liked* fine wine and frequented taverns, and would have been considered a liberal in today's fundamental churches. Yet his values and integrity are greater than several in the Religious Right, because Washington would not twist or corkscrew or occult like they do so often, and he sure did not deny Freemasonry's value.

If Barton had thought about it, he might have named his business differently, because he has to do some rhetorical gymnastics to avoid confusion of his "WallBuilders" from the more established metaphor of the "Wall of Separation" between church and state. His "WallBuilders" came from Nehemiah's rebuilding of the wall of Jerusalem. But Barton's metaphor is strangled: Barton wants to help *restore* or *rebuild* a Christian foundation or "wall" like Nehemiah rebuilt the walls to Jerusalem. Ok, then tell me more about the wall! Come now! We are not only short of bricks in his wall, but confusion increases when Barton goes to great lengths to

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<sup>30</sup> This was culled from [www.WallBuilders.com](http://www.WallBuilders.com) on December 15, 2004.

destroy the sense of the more established metaphor of Wall of Separation. What is that?

So Barton is wall-building, metaphorically, something like a Christian *wall* or *establishment* and a *wall of separation* of sorts that—in his mind—is a Christian wall against the rest of the world, while *at the same time* he is trying to destroy the Jeffersonian Wall of Separation. His anchor is the *rebuilding* of what we had in the 1700s and the ghost of intent that came *before* 1789. Look at Barton's book, booklets, and web site for yourself and see if you can discern more clarity. Barton *is* building a wall, *while* destroying a wall. Or he is simply trying to *move* the Jeffersonian Wall of Separation out to include Christianity in government control and exclude all other religion or non-religion. Yes, Barton *is* building a wall, but he himself is not clear—not yet—on who will be *inside* and *outside* of his own religious-Christian wall.

Barton tries to *rebuild* a wall in the 21st from the original sources of the 1700s, as though Jefferson's Wall of Separation metaphor was not source material, and Barton does this without any precedent for a *wall* other than Jefferson's.

What is that? It would be baloney but for the attention Barton is getting, and the money he is making. Barton has gotten others to help, even in our USA Congress. Yet among all of his little booklets, where is Barton's *wall* going to be built? Who is included and excluded? A good man would tell you that straight up! Instead, we have what appears to be a manic search of the original source material for every speck of evidence for Christian *intention* behind a written USA Constitution that excluded God in 1789 to say that they really meant to establish God but did not write that in—hmmm.

A police detective at the scene of a crime tries to capture *all* the evidence. The next step is to piece together what happened, and the honest detective lets the evidence lead where it may. We would call the detective crooked if he or she purposely left evidence behind that impacted intent or history—that impacted the discernment of the truth—and we would charge obstruction of justice. That is precisely what Barton did in his *Original Intent*, made a bunch of money off it, and then does that again in a more sly fashion in his itsy bitsy *The Question of Freemasonry and the Founding Fathers*.

By Barton's pick-and-choose evidence collection, we could have *constructed* a better case for a deistic or Pagan nation.

History is distorted by Christians to give Christians a privileged status by government empowerment. And the anchor of their rationale is the *intent* over the *written* Constitution. Is there a clearer way to understand Barton's *Original Intent*?

Do you want to know the *roots*? Or do you want to know what some folks are trying to magically turn *into* roots?

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#### **4. Our Christian Roots**

I like the idea of a Christian nation, being Christian, but there is a lot more to the founding of this country. Colonial America was already a group of Christian colonies prior to the American Revolution. I suspect every colony had a church, but that is not clear. Christianity was the faith of choice, even for those who never went to church or truly lived a godly life.

Barton and others used Puritan sources, and rightly so, but Barton used them as though there was a great continuity between the Puritans and the late 1700s. In a couple of high-priced booklets Barton showed a pretense of godly heritage in a spiritual tour of the capitol in a couple dozen biography briefs.<sup>31</sup> But goodness gracious, only a couple dozen. Yes, Christianity made an impact upon the century before our USA was founded in 1789, but contrary to Barton and others there was not a clean continuity between the Pilgrims and Puritans of the 1600s and the Christians of the late 1700s. It was not until after the Great Awakening (1720-40s) that Christian values really spread throughout the Thirteen Colonies. Perhaps few have said this as clearly and authoritatively as Yale University's Sterling Professor of Missions and Oriental History Kenneth Scott Latourette:

In the Thirteen Colonies, Christianity presented a much greater variety than in any country east of the Atlantic.... In this is

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<sup>31</sup> David Barton, *Our Godly Heritage* ..... *Spiritual Tour* .....

foreshadowed the even richer variety which was to characterize the United States.

In spite of the part which Christianity had in initiating and shaping the Thirteen Colonies, in 1750 the large majority of the white population were without a formal church connexion. It has been estimated, although this may be excessively low, that in 1750 only about five out of hundred were members of churches. The overwhelming proportion of the settlers came to the colonies for economic or social rather than religious reason motives. They were mostly from the underprivileged and by migrating to the New World sought to better their financial and their social standing. They were from countries where baptism and confirmation or its equivalent were social conventions which in some places were required not only by custom but also by law and where attendance at church was expected or made a legal obligation.... away from the patterns of the Old World, most of the population were in danger of being largely de-Christianized. From heredity and to some degree, particularly in New England, by local custom, remnants of Christianity survived among the unchurched in ethical standards and religious ideas. That was especially the case in the new settlements away from the coast, on the westward-moving frontier.<sup>32</sup>

That says in one paragraph what Barton and others fumble around with for many pages. The major impact of Christianity was upon the *values* of the culture itself, and often not upon the spirituality of the Thirteen Colonies up to 1750.

Professor Latourette describes the religious milieu of the Thirteen Colonies before the ratification of our USA Constitution.

As a result of the factors we have briefly mentioned [immigration, Great Awakening, slavery, missions], there was arising in the Thirteen Colonies a distinctive Christianity. Predominantly Protestant and having its roots in the Old World, in the New World it was being modified. In it the extreme forms of Protestantism were relatively more prominent than anywhere

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<sup>32</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (1953; 1,516p.): 954-55; on the Great Awakening, 957-62.

on the other side of the Atlantic. Because of the varied sources ... Christianity presented a greater variety than in any one country in Europe. Partly for this reason and partly out of profound conviction, especially in Pennsylvania and Rhode Island, there was more religious liberty than in Europe. It was by no means complete. In more than half of the Thirteen Colonies one or another church was either fully established or given special preference, but even in them enforcement of that status was more difficult than in most countries in Europe and by 1750 was weakening. The separation of Church and state was foreshadowed. This also meant that the principle of volunteerism, the support of the Church not by public taxation levied on all, as was the practice in Europe, but by free will offerings by the membership....

This extreme Protestantism ... was helping to shape the nascent nation. Even though those with a formal church membership constituted only a small fraction of the population, ideals and institutions were being moulded by their faith. Moral standards were set by it.... All the colleges founded before 1750 had their beginnings in the zeal of earnest Christians and most of them were closely connected with the churches. The Protestantism of the Thirteen Colonies was laying the foundations for the democracy which found expression in the American Revolution and the United States. For example, in New England the clergy were preaching the rights which come from nature and nature's God, the theory that all men are born free, and the duty of resistance to encroachments on those rights, and the popular element in government. While many of the clergy looked askance at pure democracy, the radical Protestantism which predominated in the churches of the Thirteen Colonies, seeking as it was to carry through the distinctive principles of the Reformation, salvation by the faith of the individual and the priesthood of all believers, underlay and permeated the democracy which characterized the United States.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (1953; 1,516p.): 962-63; see also W.W. Sweet, *Religion in Colonial America* (Charles Scribner's Sons, 1942; 367p.)

That is clear. The Christianity of the Pilgrims and Puritans did not spread far, and after the Great Awakening, the Christianity that spread was different in polity (pastors, discipline, finances), still in the minority, but similar in theology.

Certainly, our country had Christian roots, thinly spread they may been from the 1600s to 1789. The majority of the colonies were Christian imperial *colonies*. They had to be, or that colony’s first migrants would never have gotten a charter. One could not book passage while in disfavor with the church-state coalitions. The charters and trans-Atlantic passage were *granted* from one Christian in a majority sect to a minority Christian sect, and often to exploit the minority economically. Atheists and Pagans would have had trouble avoiding death and would have been tossed overboard if discovered in route. There were few public Pagans then, because it was against the law. Freedom of conscience—no, *nada*—but you were *free* to give obedience to King George and *free* to be hung for not giving obedience. You were *free* to think anything you want, but you could not say it.

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## **5. Our USA Born Out of Wedlock from British Oppression**

From 1750 to 1789, the Christianity of the Thirteen Colonies mingled seamlessly with Freemasonry values. The trend was already spreading in a few colonies to place all churches into the position of “legal equality”; in 1791, the First Amendment was adopted.<sup>34</sup> It is noteworthy that *the* institutional precedent for treating all faiths equally in freedom of conscience was Freemasonry, who had been cutting the wood for the fires of freedom for decades. Freemasonry was a senior ally in freedom’s march, and Reformed Christianity and Enlightenment values came into play as independent colleagues but not necessarily first.

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and L. A. Weigle, *American Idealism* (Yale Univ. Press, 1928; 356p.) on which the latter Latourette says about one third of this is of the Colonial period.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, 1045.



Our country's religious foundation came from across the Atlantic as colonies, and they would have remained colonies if the Christian British Empire had exported justice right along with Christianity and Freemasonry. But the Christian example of the British Isles to the colonies was sour and full of extortion. It was not the colonialists' Christianity that spurred the first movements to demand liberty and equality, for the Bible encourages submission. Even prior to Patrick Henry's charge, *give me liberty or give me death*, many Christians wanted to try and work things out with Christian King George III. In the colonies, the reigning Christian sect sometimes ruled with vicious murdering jealousy. *Roots*—some demand! A respect for an individual's conscience was outlawed a lot of the time. Sometimes Christian leaders ruled like a communist party looking after the “collective good”—on behalf of God, of course. The Christian colonies usually did *not* forward religious liberty or equality or respect for conscience, while in Freemasonry equality had been constituted since 1717 in England and crossed the Atlantic and slowly spread throughout the Thirteen Colonies.



There was no conflict between a man's Christian faith and his Freemasonry membership in England, France, or the Thirteen Colonies. They blended seamlessly most of the time.

Even though many held Christian worldviews, our Founding Fathers birthed a country out of wedlock from the repeated *Christian* British Empire's *raping* of justice. In a way, the USA was conceived by rape; we got tired of it, and something beautiful was born. After a Declaration of Independence in 1776, our beloved Constitution's first draft of 1787 went through vigorous debate, the Federalist's Papers, ratification in 1789 and the unanimous election

of George Washington as President in 1789, and the Bill of Rights and their final ratification in 1791. And religious liberty was a key component, *not* religious control; the establishment of freedom not the establishment of religion. Our country was founded upon freedom, not religion, with most of them trusting in the Christian God to guide. Our country was essentially *founded* in 1789 with the election of Washington under a Constitution that guaranteed freedom, especially freedom of religion and of speech. They knew about religious establishments, and did not want them. They wanted freedom of conscience, and freedom of conscience means little without freedom of speech.

Freedom was the major root of our country's foundation. Unique in the course of human affairs, the live-oak tree of freedom spread its twin branches of significant liberty and meaningful equality to the sky for all persons. As that live-oak tree grew, almost in proportion, it leveled the three estates of royalty, clergy, and commoners into one estate where all people were created equal and had equal rights to life and liberty. Our beloved Constitution of 1789 guaranteed that the nation would not become another *religiously* biased or controlled government; the two political estates—royalty and clergy—were permanently placed on equal ground with every other person (women and others would come later). It was not Christianity then or now that truly tried to level the playing field, not as much as Freemasonry then and now. From the beginning, equality and liberty were hallmarks of Freemasonry, even as Freemason William Preston expounded upon Freemasonry in 1772:

Though merit be always respected, and honour rendered to whom it is due, the same principle governs all.—A king is reminded, that although a crown may adorn his head, or a scepter his hand, the blood in his veins is derived from the common parent of mankind, and is no better than that of the meanest subject.—The wisest senator, or the most skilful subject, is taught, that, equally with others, he is by nature exposed to infirmity and disease; and that an unforeseen misfortune ... may impair his faculties, and

level him with the most ignorant of his species. This checks pride, and incites courtesy of behavior.<sup>35</sup>

Recall that Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry* was "the most popular Masonic book in England for some seventy-five years."<sup>36</sup> Preston's *Illustrations* followed the Freemasons to America and qualifies as original source material for the USA's roots in the late 1700s—by any standard, but especially Barton's. A good detective would *need* that to discern the times. And George Washington laid the cornerstone of the U.S. Capitol in a Freemasonry ceremony in 1793, which we will look at soon. This undresses two grossly distracting elements in Barton's *Original Intent*.

FIRST grossly distracting element—Barton leaves out the Freemasonry.

SECOND grossly distracting element—Barton revises Washington.

See [www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton\\_Washington\\_Inaugural.htm](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/Barton_Washington_Inaugural.htm)

Hold on to your seat, for this is quite a ride. The second we placed on-line, as it deals more with Barton's method than anything relevant to Freemasonry.

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## **6. First Distraction in Barton's *Original Intent*— Freemasonry Absence**

The first grossly distracting element in David Barton's *Original Intent* is how he totally leaves out the Freemasonry membership of so many of his own premium Founding Fathers. Barton indicates many of the motives and spiritual backgrounds and near-spiritual backgrounds of many. Sometimes we get the impression that Barton wants to describe George Washington and Patrick Henry like they

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<sup>35</sup> Every "s" was an "f" in the original and was translated here; William Preston, *Preston's Masonry 1792* (Reprint): 56. See also Colin Dyer's *William Preston and His Work* (1987; 290p.) that contains section William Preston's *Illustrations of Masonry, A New Edition* (1st 1772, 1775).

<sup>36</sup> John Hamill & Robert Gilbert, *Freemasonry—A Celebration of the Craft* (1992; 256p.): 241; see *Illustrations of Masonry. A Facsimile Reprint of the 2d ed. of 1775* (1973; 303p.).

were 21st century evangelicals or fundamentalists. Some have sold the Religious Right rank and file a pre-revolutionary persona alien to our Founding Fathers. Some would have us believe that none of them smoked, chewed, drank, or cussed, and always had on a bow tie, a white wig, and spoke only in King James English.

David Barton's mammoth research is *the* proof that among the Founding Fathers there existed a few true Puritans and evangelical type Christians. He used original source material, he said. If Barton was right, then he would not have had to study as much, because there would have been a tonnage of original source material. In his *Original Intent*—Is that *all*?

Barton did *not* go into how pervasive Universalism (the Christian belief that everyone will be saved) was during the Founding Era in the colonies, much more pervasive than Barton indicates. So much so, there was a convention on Universalism led by Hosea Balou (1771-1852) in Philadelphia in 1790, and they formed a convention in 1793 and adopted a creed in 1803. Against that Universalism, the influential work of Jonathan Edwards, Joseph Bellamy, Samuel Hopkins, Jonathan Edwards the younger, Timothy Dwight, and Samuel Hopkins fortified general Protestant beliefs in conversion.<sup>37</sup> These are our spiritual roots.

There is a huge difference between Universalism and the overwhelming majority of Barton's audience, who are mainly a conservative Protestant, SBC, and Republican market. Nor does Barton indicate a difference between Universalism's and Protestantism's impact any more than he gives a hint of difference between the Christian *living* of those special to him in the Founding Era and today. Then he has the gall to call Freemasonry a kind of Universalism in his new book, *Question of Freemasonry*, as though it was a religion, but somehow also Pagan—I guess a Pagan Universalism, but Barton does not distinguish himself there either.

If our country was founded as a decisively *Christian* nation, then, certainly, David Barton should have found a good number of ministers who were also Founding Fathers. Instead, take a look at Barton's 268 Founding Fathers in his *Original Intent*. There is an

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<sup>37</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (1953; 1,516p.): 1043-44.

astounding revelation that Barton hides or is not aware of, and he does not serve it up well. Contrary to Barton's own purpose, his own research indicates only a few, *only* 268. I think he should have given 268 *lists* of church roles; that would have said something. Yes, he is only trying to find the *leaders*, but the point still rocks.

There's more. Goodness, 268 is an easy number to work with. In a closer look at Barton's own Founding Fathers, there are only 188 that are truly Founding *Fathers*, and—hold your breath—76 or 40% were Freemasons! See Chart 8 below.

**Barton's Founding Era 1760-1805 & 268 Important Bio's**

See Appendix 5 for Itemized List & More Light

**Only 188 of 268 are Founding Fathers**—85 of 268 attorneys  
**164 of 268 Founding 1776 Fathers<sup>38</sup>**—69 of 164 are attorneys  
**24 of 268 Founding 1789 Fathers<sup>39</sup>**—16 of 24 are attorneys  
10 of 268 Founding Children, <16 by 1789<sup>40</sup>

**76 Freemasons in Barton's Founders**

**76 of 188 Founders Freemasons, 40%**  
**69 of 164 1776 Founders Freemasons, 42%**  
**8 of 24 1789 Founders Freemasons, 33%**

**48 Clergymen in Barton's 268**

26 Founding Fathers Clergy  
27 ≥16 Years @ 1776—1 of 27 Not Founding Father<sup>41</sup>  
21 Not Founding Fathers - 1 lived in 10th Century  
5 of 21 born before Columbus sailed - 10 died before 1700  
15 died before 1776 - 5 of 21 <16 @ 1789, 2 of 21 born after 1800

**Outside Founding Era 1760-1805**

80 of 268, 30% Not Founders  
37 of 268 Not Founders, Not Born 1760<sup>42</sup>  
38 of 268 Not Founders, Born After 1773<sup>43</sup>  
5 of 268 Not Founders, Not Resident<sup>44</sup>

**Chart 8. Barton's Founding Fathers in *More Light***

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- <sup>38</sup> Men 16 Years Old+ in 1776.  
<sup>39</sup> Men Born 1761+ & Before 1774: 16 Years Old+ by 1789.  
<sup>40</sup> Founding Era - 1760-1805 - Born 1775, Not *Founders* But Children *at* Founding, < 16 Years Old by 1789.  
<sup>41</sup> Bishop Richard Watson (1781-1833), English Clergy.  
<sup>42</sup> Outside Barton's Founding Era- Born *Before* 1760.  
<sup>43</sup> Outside Barton's Founding Era as Adults- Born *After* 1773, Children, *Less* Than 16 Years in 1789.  
<sup>44</sup> Founding Era - 1760-1805 - 16 Years Old & Older in 1776 - But NOT Founders or New Residents.

See appendix 5 for more details on Chart 8 and fuller references. Those numbers have a bearing upon David Barton's and the Religious Right's concern over *original* intent in our Constitution. In appendix 5, we insert Barton's 268 Founding Fathers along with Tim LaHaye's 54, next to two lists of 33 Founding Era Freemason military generals and 85 *other* Freemason Founding Fathers *not* mentioned in Barton or LaHaye. Those were easy; we could have listed more.<sup>45</sup>

Only 188! Barton did not or could not determine the church membership of most of his own 188, and the inclusion of 188 men in a Christian book does not make them evangelical Christians, not simply because of a few Christian sentences. Barton does not say that, but the implications sprout out all over Barton's book that imply *Christian* if a person is recorded as *saying* something god-like—especially Washington. Goodness, as a prison chaplain, I have heard a lot of verified Pagans and hundreds of convicted felons *say* Christian things. A man saying Christian things is not proof he is a Christian, not in 1776 or today. You do not even have to look closely to discern that in Barton's book, just turn a few pages. His quotes do force the question—Is that all? If those are all he could find, then he has proven Christianity a minor force, not a major force.

In Barton's two little booklets, *Our Godly Heritage* and *Spiritual Tour of the U.S. Capitol*, he gives some biography briefs, and—you count them—there are only about a dozen that Barton himself indicates are outstanding Christians. Another couple of dozen, we can assume are godly because they lead missionary and Bible societies. They do need missionary and Bible societies because they need to *spread* the gospel, not because the gospel is rooted. And Freemasonry helps.

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<sup>45</sup> See for starters William R. Denslow's *10,000 Famous Freemasons* (1957, 4v.), Hubert Stewart Banner's *These Men Were Masons: a Series of Biographies of Masonic Significance* (1934; 258p.), George W. Baird's *Great American Masons* (1924; 109p.), Ronald E. Heaton's *Masonic Membership of the Founding Fathers* (1965; 164p.), *Justices of the Supreme Court identified as Masons* (1968, 41p.), Heaton's *Masonic Membership of the General Officers of the Continental Army* (1960; 56p.), Ronald E. Heaton and James R. Case's *The Lodge at Fredericksburgh: a Digest of the Early Records* (1975; 95p.).

What is more astounding on our Founding Fathers' *original* intent is that 40% of Barton's own list of Founding Fathers were Freemasons. *Barton's* choices! I am so pleased that 40% of Barton's own Founding Fathers were Freemasons! See the breakdown in Chart 8 above, as well as meltdown of Barton's credibility.

There were more Founding Fathers and Founding Mothers, but not many more truly significant leaders (part of Barton's point). The numbers above cannot be seen as a closed set; the number of leaders is a finite number we cannot calculate exactly. Yet common sense indicates there were thousands of *Founding Fathers* of some sort, many that were (and were not) Christians, Freemasons, and Christian Freemasons and not written anywhere. The point is with *disrespect* to David Barton's own shuffling and rationale. In all of Barton's books, we do not even know if 2% of any of his own choices were Baptists or Presbyterians. We know the majority were Congregationalists. Yet Barton defends Christian *original* intent without much dissection of the Christians or Freemasonry.

Barton needs to interface with Professor Kenneth Scott Latourette's *A History of Christianity*, at least, but so much more, before he makes so many categorical statements.<sup>46</sup>

What *do* we know? We know that Freemasonry more than any other single institution played a role in the lives of the leading Founding Fathers. Ironically, now thanks to Barton, 40% of his own were Freemasons. That overshadows Barton's idea of an evangelical original intent. Superlatives fail us here. Is that malignance in Barton's hiding? Several of the most significant by all accounts—like George Washington and Benjamin Franklin—were clearly, unashamedly, and very well-connected Freemasons.

Similar to Barton, Tim LaHaye of the overwhelming successful *Left Behind* series makes George Washington and Benjamin Franklin his most influential Founding Fathers.<sup>47</sup> In Christian establishment politicking, both leaders Barton and LaHaye agree: Washington and Franklin rise to the top as the *most* significant, and

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<sup>46</sup> Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of Christianity* (1953; 1,516p.).

<sup>47</sup> Tim LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (1987; 268p.): 125-143. See [www.LeftBehind.com](http://www.LeftBehind.com).



both were leading Freemasons! Outstanding that they agree on those two Freemasons. After Washington and Franklin, three of LaHaye's next five "most-influencing Founding Fathers" were also Freemasons<sup>48</sup>; that's 4 of 7 and remarkable. Then LaHaye gave three more lists, for a total of 54 Founding Fathers, and 24 or 44% of those were Freemasons (see appendix 5). From both Barton and LaHaye, those are astounding percentages of Freemason membership in their own Founding Fathers, and it is likewise astounding cover-ups in what they left out on Freemasonry—or *left behind*. Are Barton and LaHaye interested in *all* of the history? Did they calculate to leave behind Freemasonry?

Our Founding Fathers were certainly thinking ahead in 1789, but did not believe they could determine forever what lay ahead. They planted a live-oak tree of freedom—a seedling—and nourished its two main branches of liberty and equality. And 200 years later, look how large she has grown, we are still nourishing and pruning and protecting and defining how that wonderful tree shall prosper and grow.

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## **B. Founding Fathers *Not* Evangelicals—That Impacts Intent**

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There are few things as certain as the enormous influence of George Washington and Benjamin Franklin upon the founding of the USA. Both of them were Freemasons. Yet none of our Founding Fathers were *evangelical* as we know the term today. Most of them would brandish a sword to defend liberty and take a drink with equal alacrity. George Washington enjoyed Madeira, a white or amber-colored fortified wine from the Island of Madeira<sup>49</sup> (or

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<sup>48</sup> Tim LaHaye, *Faith of Our Founding Fathers* (1987; 268p.): 125-143: 1751-1836, James Madison; 1752-1816, Gouverneur Morris; **Mason** 1721-1793, Roger Sherman; **Mason** 1757-1804, Alexander Hamilton; 1763-1816, George Mason. See appendix 5 for more and the complete list.

<sup>49</sup> Madeira Island group is in the region of Portugal, in the North Atlantic Ocean, with Madeira the largest and the region's capital, 34 x 14 miles, with deep ravines and rugged mountains. It allegedly had the world's first sugarcane plantation, and its Madeira wine has been exported since the 17th century. (*Encyclopædia Britannica*, 2005).

likewise made), and perhaps shared a glass with some of the troops at Valley Forge, or bourbon or rum with a toast and a prayer. It was not unusual to see Christian men in church *and* at the tavern, and unashamed. That is unlike today, where there are many more Christians ashamed of the beer they enjoy (and others who are not, like Joe Bob). Colonial life allowed for fewer hypocrites, and we have seen the affects of alcoholism today in a way they did not.

The general alcoholic abstinence of the leaders of Christian evangelicalism and the Religious Right takes us down a different road all together with respect to David Barton's agenda in his *Original Intent*. We are talking about Christian values, and Barton does not at all distinguish between the Christian values of his own Founding Era and those of today. The difference between the values of the Founding Era Christians and today's Christians also impact *original* intent, and that difference is also impacted by Freemasonry principles and activity.

I am not defending alcoholism or even totally disparaging social drinking (have friends who do and do not), but clarifying that many today have tried to make our Founding Fathers appear far more *20th-century-evangelical* Christian than they were. That is a transference that fails the moment one takes a closer look at it. Few to none of our Founding Fathers were anything like the Christian Religious Right fundamentalists of our day. (And some today would not be fundamentalists if it did not pay so well.) Most of our Founding Fathers smoke and drank and tavern-frequented, and would in those liberties be considered liberals today.

Was George Washington a Christian liberal by today's evangelical standard? Sure he was. Even today, not every Christian *witnesses* and says *grace* at every meal; and today, you are evangelical if you do, and somewhat liberal if you do not *witness* and say *grace*. But outward form does not prove inner character. On a deeper level of scrutiny, what was Washington's view on the Bible in the hundreds of thousands of pages of original Washington era correspondence? No syllable seems to have been left unearthed on his life. Sure Washington was a Christian liberal, but not *liberal* where character counts most of all. There was a difference between then and today that Barton and others are occulting. Yet—rather

easy to see—Freemasonry is illuminating across the entire ethical and revolutionary landscape of colonial and revolutionary America, revolutionary France, and the revolutions of South America in the 1700s. Occulting helps no one.

Influencing our Founding Fathers, the basic tenets of *Freemasonry* were there in a powerful fashion, character counting all the way through. In symbols and allegorical illustrations, Freemasonry treasured equality, the nobility of justice, and freedom of conscience that all supported the Declaration of Independence. One can say that Freemasonry was the first truly pluralistic institution in the USA, even before pluralism existed. The exact balance between the motivating forces of *faith* and *fraternity* is impossible to discern in 1776. Determining the balance today is made all the more foggy when folks like SBC expert Bill Gordon ignore so much, when powerbrokers like Paige Patterson forgo the intellectual work to substantiate themselves, and when David Barton and his ilk occult the pervasiveness of Freemasonry in the Thirteen Colonies. Occulting character counting helps no one.

### **C. How Barton Misses Some of Our Founder's *Original Intent***

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1. Barton Rebuilding a Wall while Tearing Down a Wall (?)
2. Barton's Confusion on Pluralism
3. Barton's Revisionism Not so Subtle
4. Barton on Oath Taking ... SBC Move Over Please!
5. Christian Original Intent—Not in Our Constitution

#### **1. Barton Rebuilding a Wall while Tearing Down a Wall (?)**

With the above chapters and the sections of this chapter in mind, let me show you how Barton wonderfully supports us. Barton does a good job of reinforcing in his *Original Intent*. He artfully sets into place a series of paving stones that lead up to his pivotal chapter 8, "Rewriting Original Intent." In his chapter 1, Barton quotes the first amendment and indicates the problems of application caused by the Supreme Court, and then closes with a quote from Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist on the metaphor on the wall of separation between church and state; Barton says,

The public’s current understanding (actually, misunderstanding) of the religious provisos of the First Amendment has been shaped by a phrase which does not even appear in the Constitution!

Yet, while all must truthfully concede that these words are not actually found in the Constitution, many nevertheless still argue that they accurately reflect the intent of the Framers—that is, while the words [wall of separation between church and state] are not there, the concept of a complete separation was frequently demonstrated during the Founding Era. Is this assertion correct?<sup>50</sup>

What a great question that is—*is this assertion about complete separation between church and state correct?* That question is the fulcrum upon which much rests today, and people want to curse or thank Jefferson for it; and a lot pivots upon the word *complete*. All agree that there needs to be some separation, for “congress shall make no law” is clear. What we are debating is the extent of separation inside of the rock-solid context of “no law” and the issues of freedom of speech interlacing between “no law” and the degree of separation.

In chapter 2, Barton takes us on a likewise well-paved pathway that essentially says our beloved Constitution needs to be interpreted on the basis of the *original* intent of the framers. That seems obvious: if the words as written in the Constitution cannot make a clear application to today’s problems, look at what the Founding Fathers *intended* by the words. On the first amendment, it was Thomas Jefferson who used the words *wall of separation* between church and state. Certainly Jefferson’s words are as important as the words of all of the other Founding Fathers. Barton makes a case that Christianity was the intent, quoting several, noting that many of the “Founders had entered the Revolution” to “ensure that all Christian denominations were placed on an equal footing.”<sup>51</sup> Is that so? They left God out of the Constitution to place “all Christian denominations” on “equal footing”? Goodness, it was a Christian nation, you need to declare it *Christian*. Our Founders were not

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<sup>50</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 20.

<sup>51</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 29.

squeamish, and there was no ACLU or even any Muslims to confound them. At the very minimum, they could have included God in the Constitution, that could have included all flavors of Christians and Muslims and others. Barton gives reverence to Catholics, but it is a strained reverence, and he totally ignores Freemasonry and skirts the Enlightenment encyclopedias.

Can you see the mixing of his rebuilding of “religious” foundations—WallBuilding—with Christian establishment? That is not sloppy work, but just underhanded. There is barely room for Catholics, and no room for other religions. He does not say that; it’s subtle, but there. There were not any non-Christian religions of significance in the Founding Era Thirteen Colonies. But there are today. The anti-Masons need reference here, as none of the Founding Fathers confused Freemasonry with being a religion like the anti-Masons do today. Yet Christian Freemason lodges were in almost every town, and more of the Founding Fathers were Freemasons than they were a part of any other single outfit.

Remember the paving stones on Barton’s path led to the re-establishing of a Christian nation, WallBuilding. I say that because Barton is doing some fancy historical revisionism on the *original* intent of the Founding Fathers in their writing of the Constitution. Barton quotes several other outstanding people who are *not* Founding Fathers, including Justice Story in his 1871 *Commentaries* who said the First Amendment was not meant “to countenance, much less advance, Mahometanism, or Judaism, or infidelity, by prostrating Christianity; but to exclude all rivalry among Christian sects.”<sup>52</sup> Here, Barton all but admits the exclusion of all other religions, but he just does not go there. He is just WallBuilding.

Then Barton quotes Benjamin Rush who indicates a preference for religion to be taught in school: “Such is my veneration for every religion that reveals the attributes of the Deity, or a future state of rewards and punishments, that I had rather see the opinions of Confucius or Mohamed inculcated upon our youth than see them grow up wholly devoid of a system of religious principles. But the religion I mean to recommend in this place is that of the New

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<sup>52</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 31.

Testament.”<sup>53</sup> That is a nice touch, a good quote, but does not fit his WallBuilding. Barton just uses it to support the teaching of Christianity in the schools, because in his dozens of booklets, there still remains to be seen anything by Barton on freedom of religion. But still, the quote of Benjamin Rush, says something more than Barton intends; Rush states the precise qualifications for entrance into Freemasonry: “attributes of the Deity, or a future state of rewards,” the *only* requirements to enter. Do not think that a light connection then or today, for those have been the public requirements for 300+ years, and Freemasonry is the only institution that has those.

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## 2. Barton’s Confusion on Pluralism

Most importantly, Barton says, “America was pluralistic and tolerant of other religions *only* because it was a Christian nation” (bold italic his).<sup>54</sup> Really? *Pluralistic* and *tolerant* in the same sentence—that is not right. And since when has a Christian nation ever been pluralistic? Since when has a nation *ever* been Christian and failed to clearly declare itself Christian? There have been many Christian nations that were unashamed to call themselves Christian ... *in* writing. And most of the Christian nations have been among the most *intolerant*; and prior to 1789 the Thirteen Colonies were *intolerant* of other Christians. What does Barton mean? But that is less important than where Barton and others are going? What is he rebuilding? But of all the things Barton says, that quote slams common sense, because it makes nitwits out of our Founding Fathers. Why on God’s good earth would the USA be afraid to call itself Christian by the men who risked their lives to found the country? Our Founding Fathers did *not* write God or most importantly Christian into *the* USA Constitution.

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<sup>53</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 31, in Benjamin Rush, *Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical* (Philadelphia: Thomas & Samuel F. Bradford, 1798): 8, “Of the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic.”

<sup>54</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 33, with bold-italic emphasis his.

That statement by Barton is only true if you make dunces of our Founding Fathers, and then you also revise and edit out all of Freemasonry. Barton is wrong—dead wrong. There is no precedent for pure religious pluralism in history up to 1776, except in Freemasonry, and the Thirteen Colonies were not. The USA is started pluralistic because of the First Amendment and the example in Freemasonry's principles that required pluralism—spelled it in English—where in Christianity *tolerance* is not clear and pluralism is wrong.

A Christian is not to be yoked in marriage with a non-Christian (unless they were married prior to believing). *Tolerance* is only implied in Christian love, and *pluralism* is just a little recognized in the New Testament from the charge to be *in the world but not of the world*. There is no pluralism in Christianity, and that was understood and enforced all over the pre-revolutionary colonies; a Christian is supposed to witness and win lost souls, but to be without Christ is to be hell-bound. In Freemasonry and only there, pluralism was constituted, practiced, and theological debate prohibited, and then as today Freemasons do no solicit members—sheese, how many ways can we explain that Freemasonry *practiced* pluralism even before the term pluralism was being used.

Barton totally ignores or occults that many of the Christians in the colonies were not tolerant at all, did not even know how to play with tolerance, and were opposed to *Christian* variants. Oh, be mindful that no one confuses what pluralism means today; we live with it being legal for those of a different religion down the street from us—because the Constitution says “no law” shall be made to prohibit. But that is not the pluralism that Barton is fluffing into 1776, and he should know better. It was enough in colonial America to tolerate other Christians, but there was no pluralism in even the *tolerance* of non-Christian variants.

Non-Christian religions in colonial America—well, the American Indian, and we took all their land. Prior to 1776, many fundamentalists did not countenance other religions (as today), and like Afghanistan today in their Taliban fervor, many colonies persecuted and banned *Christian* variants, jailed Baptists, and would kill some. Christianity in itself is not tolerant of other faiths, for

tolerance is not biblical by any clear *biblical* reference; those not in Christ are going to hell by most Christian standards. The only biblical tolerance is in biblical love for the lost and special love for the lost sheep, but the sheep are still lost. In the Founding Era, Freemasonry was truly the first pluralistic religious society in the colony: *religious* but not a religion, mostly Christian without the sectarianism.

I find myself here, hearing the words of another famous American, Earl Pitts—“Wake up America!” Slap stick and true, even if out of context for Pitts’ vision of the USA. Freemasonry is more pluralistic and supports liberty and equality *more* than even Earl Pitts, American. Pluralism is not agreement in all absolute differences and is far above the superiority of attitude behind the word *tolerant*; *pluralism* recognizes the legal right of a person to be in a completely different religion, but *tolerance* may recognize the legal “right” while harboring the notion that such legal “rights” are wrong in themselves; pluralism allows an equal standing under the law, but the tolerated are on borrowed time. Only the USA made it legal to be either a Christian, Buddhist, or atheist—as congress shall make no law—but in Christianity, it is wrong to be a Buddhist or atheist. The USA was founded upon freedom of religion and freedom of conscience.

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### **3. Barton’s Revisionism Not so Subtle**

As David Barton points out, one signer of the Constitution, Richard Dobbs Spaight, said,

As to the subject of religion.... no power is given to the general [federal] government to interfere with it.... No sect is preferred to another. Every man has a right to worship the Supreme Being in the manner he thinks proper. No test is required. All men of equal capacity and integrity are equally eligible to offices.... I do not suppose an infidel, or any such person, will ever be chosen to



any office unless the ***people*** themselves be of the same opinion.<sup>55</sup>

[Bold italic his]

If Barton had read anything at all about Freemasonry, he would have seen that the quote above by Spaight is Freemasonry through and through. Did David Barton know that Richard Dobbs Spaight, Jr., was also a Freemason?<sup>56</sup> Spaight's words have rhetorical flavor, and the very words originate in so many variants from Founding Era Freemasonry publications as well as from Benjamin Franklin's publication of Anderson's *Freemasonry Constitutions* and the European Freemasonry interchange of influence with the Enlightenment. Also, notice Barton's bold italics that actually distracts from the meat of Spaight's words; the italics reflect an assurance Spaight is giving to his audience, and Barton is lifting them higher to try and showcase "the ***people*** themselves." Regardless of Barton's distraction, Spaight is clear on the issue of original intent issues, "no power," "no sect," "every man," "all men," and "equally eligible"; and Barton should build on that instead of distract from that.

But here is also another point where Barton is clearly revising, poorly, but still trying to squeeze every droplet of juice of Christian establishment, even from such a small things as "people ... be of the same opinion" in Spaight. Our point is made, yet again—not only is Barton occulting, but his poor attempts at revising history are to serve his construction of something that never existed, so that he can *rebuild* the walls of a Christian republic, or more properly and simple-mindedly just move the Wall of Separation of Church and State out to include Christians and exclude all others. This is a serious affair, and Barton needs to be checked, before he takes very many more checks from Christians in his wall building business.

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<sup>55</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 35, with bold-italic emphasis his.

<sup>56</sup> William R. Denslow's *10,000 Famous Freemasons* (1957, 4v.): 171, notes that Richard D. Spaight, Jr., (1796-1850) was a Freemason, but that his father of the same name was not; they were both Governors of NC, and Spaight, Jr., became a master of the Grand Lodge of NC in 1822.

#### 4. Barton on Oath Taking ... SBC Move Over Please!

Furthermore, based upon article VI of the Constitution that no religious test be required, in 1961 the Supreme court struck down Maryland's 200-year-old state requirement that a candidate must declare a belief in God to hold an office. I wonder if the belief-in-God requirement was Freemasonry inspired, as all Freemasons must believe in order to join a lodge? Barton of course did not dig that deep and avoided Freemasonry altogether, but it is a most worthy construct. Barton notes the same in the Tennessee constitution. Barton comments, "the Founders believed that *any* oath or affirmation—including that of elected officials to uphold the Constitution—*presupposed* a belief in God"<sup>57</sup> That means to Barton that the Founding Fathers believed that confessing a belief in God and requiring the same was not considered a religious test or in conflict with article VI. That is Freemasonry through and through, and at the same time at odds with some of the religious sectarianism afloat in the colonies in 1776 and today. Barton repeats,

The evidence is clear: the Founders, and even legal authorities for generations afterwards, viewed a belief in God as an inherent part of taking an oath.

The Constitution required an oath of office, but prohibited a religious test; an oath, however, presupposed a belief in God; therefore, only under the most extreme and absurd application of Article VI could a belief in God have been considered a religious test.<sup>58</sup>

*Hello* Freemasonry, and *thank you* David Barton. Since 1717, Freemasonry has required a belief in God side-by-side with that requirement *not* being a religion. Did Barton just miss that or in a way plagiarize that? Or did Barton just occult that from its Freemasonry origins? We'll never know the whole truth to that secret. Yet, in spite of whatever Barton did, how gloriously that

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<sup>57</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 36, with bold italic reference his.

<sup>58</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 39.

supports Freemasonry *in* Barton and sadly moves *against* Barton's own Christian establishment agenda.

We wish that the anti-Masons would listen to that. Barton's statement was inspired from Freemasonry constitutions, and Freemason Washington *was* the superintendent of the Constitutional Convention. The "oath of office" *under* God is not from the Bible or against the Bible, and SBC expert Bill Gordon and the SBC 1993 *Original* report on Freemasonry both condemn oaths categorically, but the oath is Freemasonry to the bone. Where does Barton think the taking of oaths came from? Did he do any research on the origins of oaths in 1776?

Forcing an oath of office is a natural occurrence and outgrowth of Freemasonry leadership. Finding from the original source material all of the precedents that pressured the minds and hearts of our Founding Fathers, and Barton occults Freemasonry influence at this most critical point. This is a breach of trust, and we call him to task upon it. Take a closer look. Ask why Barton forces so much juice from oath taking and fusses over the lack of religious requirement, and then avoids the profusion of Freemasonry all over the pre-revolutionary colonies.<sup>59</sup>

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## **5. Wall of Separation the Original Intent, and Danbury Baptists**

Though less ably than Leonard W. Levy and Thomas J. Curry, and not directly, David Barton has proven that all of the signers of both the Declaration and the Constitution knew the difference between *religion* in general and the establishment of *Christianity*. What Barton does not do—even occults—is reveal that the Freemasons had been using those very words for fifty years in their lodges prior to 1789. There is a huge difference between an ascent

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<sup>59</sup> See Steven C. Bullock's masterly *Revolutionary Brotherhood: Freemasonry and the Transformation of the American Social Order, 1730-1840* (1996; 421p.), Allen E. Roberts' *Freemasonry in American History* (1985; 462p.), Frank Lambert's *The Founding Fathers and the Place of Religion in America* (2003; 328p.), and Margaret C. Jacob's *Living the Enlightenment—Freemasonry and Politics in Eighteenth-Century Europe* (1991; 304p.) for starters.

to the reality of a Supreme Being and the establishment of Christianity. It only takes one person to make that clarification, and there were several very articulate Freemasons helping with the Constitution, especially the very formidable and articulate father figures of Washington and Franklin.

Our Founding Fathers had a strong moral fiber that was forged and tempered by the white-hot fires of oppressive and bloody injustices from an intolerant Christian monarch. Our Founding Fathers were sure and steady characters—stalwart and steady of hand—and most of them were well educated. There is and should be no doubt whatsoever that if our beloved Founding Fathers had intended to *constitute* Christianity, or any religion, that is what they would have done. They had battled and struggled for what to write, and they wrote what they *intended* to write. They did not constitute God or Christianity by *intention*. Moreover they *wrote in* that God and any religion could not be established, and they also *intended* and wrote that the free exercise of religion should not be prohibited—that “Congress shall make no law.”

The First Amendment is hard only for those—like David Barton and many of the Religious Right—who are just obsessed with trying to make it favor Christianity. I agree; it is sad that some people use the First Amendment to crush Christianity, and that is wrong. But the First Amendment should not be used to favor Christianity, and that plays out in Barton’s chapter 3, “The Misleading Metaphor,” referring to Thomas Jefferson’s letter to the Baptist Association of Danbury, Connecticut, where that association wrote to Jefferson on October 7, 1801. Barton even notes that Jefferson was an anti-federalist like most Baptists who championed limits on governmental powers. The Baptists expressed concern that the government one day might intrude upon religious liberty and free expression. Barton quotes how Jefferson had the same concern and had expressed that several times. Jefferson wanted to assure the Baptists, said Barton, that “free exercise of religion would *never* be interfered with by the government.”<sup>60</sup> President Thomas Jefferson answered the Danbury Baptists on January 1, 1802:

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<sup>60</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 45, bold italic emphasis his.

Gentlemen,—... Believing with you that religion is a matter which lies solely between man and his God; that he owes account to none other for his faith or his worship; that the legislative powers of government reach actions only and not opinions, I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should “make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,,” thus building a wall of separation between Church and State. Adhering to this expression of the supreme will of the nation in behalf of the rights of conscience, I shall see with sincere satisfaction the progress of those sentiments which tend to restore to man all his natural rights, convinced he has no natural right to opposition to his social duties. I reciprocate your kind prayers for the protection and blessing of the common Father and Creator of man, and tender you for yourselves and your religious association assurances of my high respect and esteem.<sup>61</sup>

Barton construes natural rights to be those that “God Himself had guaranteed to man in the Scriptures.”<sup>62</sup> Jefferson understood that God, not the government, was the Author and Source of our rights. Barton minimizes the metaphor of *wall* of separation, while trying to build another wall—confusing. Or is Barton in secret just trying to move Jefferson’s Wall of Separation out to include himself and his business supporters and exclude all others?

Barton needs to define in clear terms the *wall* he is building.

Yet we must give the title of “Founding Father” to Thomas Jefferson, no matter how Barton or others may downplay the “wall of separation.” The *wall* is just as much a matter of *original* intent as any. It is a powerfully clear metaphor and the most popular metaphor from all of the original source material. The *wall* metaphor is a part of our history that needs clarification, not denial or minimizing, and few have clarified like Leonard W. Levy and Thomas J. Curry.

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<sup>61</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 45-46, from Thomas Jefferson, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (The Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association, 1904; Vol. XVI, pp. 281-282).

<sup>62</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 46.

What is clear is that both the 1776 Declaration of Independence and 1789 Constitution of the United States are *the* foundation of the United States. Samuel Adams said,

Before the formation of this Constitution.... this Declaration of Independence was received and ratified by all the States in the Union and has never been disannulled.<sup>63</sup>

David Barton continues,

For generations after the ratification of the Constitution, the Declaration was considered a primary guiding document in American constitutional government. In fact, well into the twentieth century, the Declaration and the Constitution were viewed as inseparable and *inter*dependent—not independent—documents....

[Barton compares corporation articles and bylaws] the Declaration is America’s articles of incorporation and the Constitution is its bylaws....<sup>64</sup>

As proof that our Founding Fathers believed that the Declaration was the foundational document, Barton notes how the Constitution’s salutation ended with a notation in reference to the twelfth year of independence and how several Founders dated their government actions by years of independence.<sup>65</sup>

Instead of harping on the original intent of our U.S. Constitution, the Religious Right would be far more honest and true to history if they would just say what they mean. The Religious Right do *not* like what the Founding Fathers did. And today, the Religious Right wants to change what our Founding Fathers did. They truly want to establish Christianity as the national religion with all of the tyranny that that involves—religious liberty for them only, with all of the trappings of power that favoritism brings. They want favoritism

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<sup>63</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 247, quoted from, Samuel Adams, *The Writings of Samuel Adams*, (1909; vol. IV, p. 357, to the Legislature of Massachusetts on January 17, 1794).

<sup>64</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 247-248.

<sup>65</sup> David Barton, *Original Intent* (2004, 1st 2000; 534p.): 248, for instance, George Washington signed one document, “in the fifteenth year of the Sovereignty and Independence of the United States”; Barton lists others.

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legalized, and some of them want money too. Only they want to accomplish that on the sly with some kind of magical revising of history and fancy marketing and shovel loads of occulting.

David Barton and Paige Patterson dislike Freemasonry history, and they do not believe that character counts for much—at least not where it counts most of all, as the hammer that drives the wedge of credibility for all.

Our Founding Fathers wrote what they *intended* to write and were far more intelligent and honest about what they wrote than the characters Barton makes them out to be. Next, we shall show you how David Barton revised history in occulting Freemasonry's principles prior to the USA's founding.



**A Critique of David Barton's  
*Original Intent— The Courts, the  
Constitution, and Religion***

Aledo, TX: [www.WallBuilders.com](http://www.WallBuilders.com), 2005, 132p., loads of pictures

By [Dr. Michael G. Maness](#) - [www.PreciousHeart.net/fm](http://www.PreciousHeart.net/fm)

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This following is the full version of the critique,  
that was originally intended for chapter 12.D of the first edition  
and 4.A of the Revised Second Edition

[Character Counts](#)  
[Freemasonry USA's National Treasure](#)  
[and Source of Our Founding Fathers' Original Intent](#)

