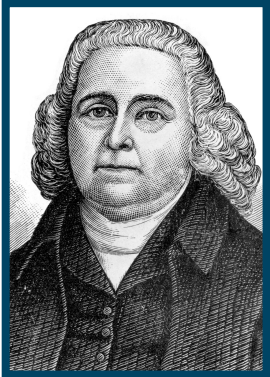


## About Isaac Backus



Isaac Backus (1724-1806) was a Baptist pastor, historian, and theologian who was instrumental in securing the separation of church and state in America. He was born in Norwich, Connecticut, to Puritan parents and at age 17 was

converted to faith in Christ during the Great Awakening. Sensing a call to ministry, he served as the pastor of First Baptist Church of Middleboro, Massachusetts, from 1756 until his death. During that time, the Congregationalist church was the official state church in Massachusetts, and Baptists, among others, were forced to pay taxes to support the Congregationalist clergy, taxes which Backus vehemently opposed.

Backus supported the American War for Independence, which he saw as a battle for religious freedom. He voted to ratify the United States Constitution at the Massachusetts Ratifying Convention in 1788.

Although best known for his battle for religious liberty and his writings on American church history, Backus was first and foremost a pastor and evangelist who loved to teach others about the Word of God.

## The Isaac Backus American Freedoms Lecture

# Silenced Masses: Catholicism Canceled in 17th-Century England

A lecture by  
Dr. Lisa Clark Diller  
Zapara School of Business, Room 244  
March 10, 2025  
5:30 p.m. Light refreshments  
6:00 p.m. Lecture

The Isaac Backus American  
Freedoms Lecture is proudly sponsored by



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# Silenced Masses: Catholicism Canceled in 17th-Century England



Dr. Lisa Clark Diller is a historian (University of Chicago, PhD) who teaches about the early modern world at Southern Adventist University. She researches and writes on religious minorities and the development of modern liberal democracy. In addition to seventeenth-century religion and politics, she enjoys service and activism in her urban neighborhood, running a ministry in the local church community that she and her husband helped start in 2008. Her academic credentials enable her to talk about history and politics, but her passion is learning how to be part of the kingdom of God, and she loves the friendships and adventures that come with discipleship.

In the seventeenth century, English Catholics were not allowed to practice their faith openly. Catholic priests could be executed for saying mass, children were not allowed to attend Catholic schools, and Catholic heirs could lose their land or inheritance. The English state patrolled its borders to try to prevent Catholic families from sending their children to be educated on the Continent. In this scary time, parents could lose custody of their children to be raised by Protestants, and sending their children abroad was both an act of faith and a risky endeavor. This was also a time when English men and women were learning to articulate their rights and were demanding a state that practiced representative government and liberty of conscience. Catholic families joined this discussion and were among the first to argue that parents had the right to raise their children in their own faith, demonstrating that calls to protect individual conscience came not just from Protestants, but from Catholics as well.

March 10, 2025, 6:00 p.m.  
Zapara School of Business, Room 244

## Silenced Masses: Catholicism Canceled in 17th-Century England

**Dr. Lisa Clark Diller**

*Professor of History at Southern Adventist University*

### To find La Sierra University

**Campus Map & Directions:** [lasierra.edu/campus-map](https://lasierra.edu/campus-map)

La Sierra University is located just north of the 91 freeway in western Riverside. From the 91 freeway, exit Pierce Street (eastbound) or Magnolia Avenue (westbound). Head north on Pierce Street, which turns into Riverwalk Parkway. Continue on Riverwalk Parkway, and turn left onto Yaeger Way at the signal. Turn left at the first yield sign into the Zapara School of Business parking lot. Refreshments will be served in the atrium, and the lecture will be presented upstairs in Room 244.

