

## Notes from May 14, 2024

### The Political Campaign Against the Separation of Church and State

#### Some key points from Dr. Balmer:

- Called the first Amendment "America's best idea".

### First Amendment


“Congress shall make no law respecting the establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof . . .”



- Provided a timeline of historical figures who believed America was founded as a Christian nation vs those who recognized the religious tyranny they had fled and saw the essential need to separate church from state
- The Founding Fathers deliberately kept religion out of the Constitution.
- We are a nation of religious diversity because of separation of church and state.
- Spoke of a free market of religion that thrives in the U.S. today because government does not interfere.

### Separation of Church & State

- Ensured political stability
- Engendered a lively, salubrious religious culture



- Highlighted the Treaty of Tripoli (submitted to Congress by John Adams and ratified unanimously by the U.S. Senate in 1797) as evidence we are not a Christian nation.

## Treaty of Tripoli

- Negotiated during *George Washington's* administration
- Sent to Congress by John Adams with his endorsement
- June 7, 1797: Ratified unanimously by U.S. Senate



"As the government of the United States of America is not in any sense founded on the Christian Religion,-as it has in itself no character of enmity against the laws, religion or tranquility of Musselmen,-and as the said States never have entered into any war or act of hostility against any Mehomitan nation, it is declared by the parties that no pretext arising from religious opinions shall ever produce an interruption of the harmony existing between the two countries."


- Article 11, Treaty of Tripoli



- The Founders would not be accepted into today's Christian Nationalist churches.
- Attacks on church/state separation, such as those widely promoted by David Barton, are often based on lies and misrepresentations of the historical basis of this foundational tenet of our form of government.

## David Barton

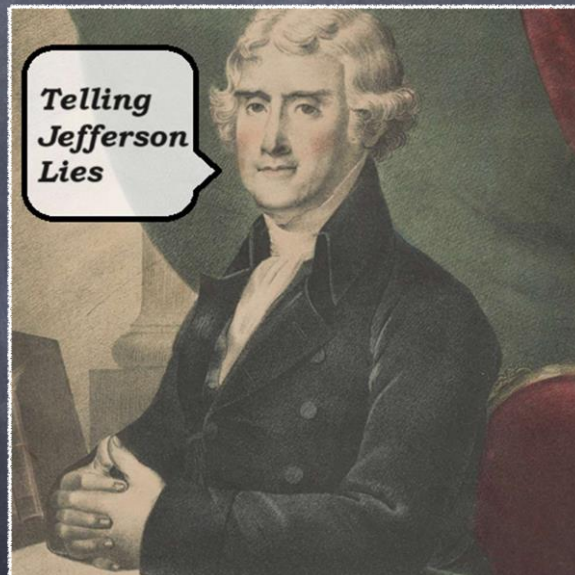
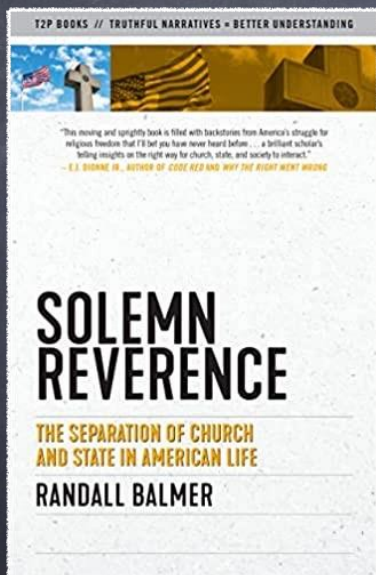
- 1976: B.A. (religious education), Oral Roberts University
- Youth pastor in Texas
- Founder of WallBuilders (Aledo, Texas)
- 1997-2006: Vice chair of the Texas Republican Party



(1954-)

- Emphasized his support of public education where there is exchange of diverse ideas; public education is vital for a healthy democracy
- Vouchers are “evil” in their intent to drain support from public schools.

## Additional Resources



## Some key points from Sarah Robinson:

- NH Education Commissioner Frank Edelblut and extremist NH Republican legislators play a central role in diminishing support for public schools by stirring up parents with culture issues/divisive concepts
- Edelblut and the State Board of Education have been main players in the creation of Education Freedom Accounts, aka vouchers.
- Vouchers: funded by taxpayers for tuition subsidies to parents of kids who already had been attending private school.
- Taxpayer funded vouchers go to tuition for religious schools and provide significant financial support for those schools.
- The Republican NH legislators are passing bills that significantly expand the criteria for voucher eligibility, draining 10s of millions of dollars from the Education Trust Fund which was established to send grants for adequate education to public schools.
- The intent of extreme Republicans who support vouchers is universal access to vouchers.
- Religious schools are starting to advertise vouchers on their marketing sites.
- Vouchers are granted for attendance at private schools that can, unlike public schools, discriminate based on narrow religious beliefs and are not accountable for state minimum standards of education.
- Arizona is going bankrupt from the cost of the voucher system.
- The intent of extreme Republicans is to undermine public education and steer students to taxpayer funded private schools where there is control over what and how kids learn, using curriculum based on religious ideology. But without the oversight required for public schools.
- The voucher takeover is a national movement

## Resources

<https://www.au.org>

<https://granitestateprogress.org/>

<https://www.randallbalmer.com/>

[article](#) that sparked the idea for our program.