



**Orange County Chapter
Americans United for Separation of Church and State**

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On the web at www.au-oc.org Email us at orangecountyau@yahoo.com

**Separation of Church & State:
A Mormon Perspective**

**Saturday, January 16th at 2:00 pm
Irvine Ranch Water District
15600 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine**

Jan-Mar 2010

Volume 6

Issue 1

Inside this issue:

We are pleased to present a panel discussion on the separation of church and state by two members of the Mormon Church. We will hear the progressive and conservative perspectives from panelists Steve Young and Bill Bollard. The panel will be moderated by AU Board Member, Karla Westphal.

The protections of the First Amendment to the Constitution provided a framework that has allowed the Mormon Church to survive and thrive in America. And today Mormons are a political force most recently felt during the battle of Proposition 8 in 2008.



Our progressive panelist Steve Young graduated from the University of Utah and Pepperdine University School of Law. He has four children and six grandchildren. He has spent twenty-nine years as a Civil Justice attorney in Orange County.

Our conservative panelist Bill Bollard is an experienced trial lawyer, arbitrator and mediator. Mr. Bollard has tried numerous complex business litigation matters and specializes in all aspects of business litigation including writs and appeals before the California Court of Appeal, Federal Circuit Court of Appeals and the World Court. Mr. Bollard has also handled complex commercial and criminal matters in Latin America including NAFTA claims.



The debate will focus on the current positions held by Mormons on the separation of church and state and their role in politics today. Bring your questions to participate in the discussion and come and hear the viewpoints of two great intellects as they reconcile the law, the Constitution, and their vision for America and their religion.

Bill Lobdell and Hugh Hewitt debate the intersection of religion, politics and the media	2
Dr. Phil Zuckerman on what we can learn from the least religious countries	2
California school conference drops religious right speaker	3
AU files suit against O.C. Community College District	3
Saddleback College Debate: Is God the best explanation for moral values?	3
Membership Form	4
Calendar	4

Celebrating Martin Luther King, Jr. at Saddleback College

On the morning of January 16th AU will be participating in the Saddleback College event "**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration: Exploring Social Action Through Religious Diversity.**" We will have a panelist in the break out session "What Separation of Church and State" Means to Me" and will also

be tabling at this event. The panel discussion explores different interpretations of the words "Separation of Church and State" from a variety of religious/nonreligious traditions.

Please join us!

Bill Lobdell & Hugh Hewitt Debate The Intersection of Religion, Politics and the Media: Does It Harm or Benefit Society?

**Saturday, March 20th at 2:00 pm
Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine**

For our March meeting we will have a debate between two major Southern California personalities. With opposing positions on religion, both have been heavily involved in the media for many years and both have written books on this subject.

William Lobdell, is an award-winning journalist, author, blogger, speaker, college lecturer and media consultant.



He worked for 18 years with the Los Angeles Times and its sister newspapers. Lobdell covered the religion beat for The Times for eight years, first as a columnist and then as a beat reporter.

He earned several national awards for his work before becoming a metro editor for the paper in 2006. He left the paper in 2008.

His memoir about finding then losing his faith is chronicled in the book: "Losing My Religion: How I Lost My Faith Reporting on Religion in America — and Found Unexpected Peace." He is also a faculty member at the University of California, Irvine, where he

teaches "Religion and the Media" and "The Internet, Blogs and Politics."

Hugh Hewitt is a law professor and broadcast journalist with a nationally syndicated radio show. Professor Hewitt is a graduate of Harvard College and the University of Michigan Law School, and has been teaching Constitutional Law at Chapman University Law School since 1995.



He is a frequent guest on CNN, Fox News Network, and MSNBC, and has written for The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, and the Los Angeles Times.

He is the author of eight books, including two New York Times best-sellers. His most recent books are *Blog: Understanding the Information Reformation That is Changing Your World* and *A Mormon in the White House?*

This event should be of great interest to all who are concerned when religion and politics intersect. Plan to come early to get a good seat!

Dr. Phil Zuckerman Society Without God: What We Can Learn From the Least Religious Countries in the World

**Saturday, February 20th at 2:00 pm
Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave, Irvine**



Dr. Zuckerman received his Ph.D in sociology from the University of Oregon. He currently is a professor at Claremont where he teaches sociology and a graduate seminar on the sociology of religion. In 2005 he was a guest professor in Denmark where he did research on secularization and its impact on society.

He is a prolific author including the 2008 book "Society Without God" and "Strife in the Sanctuary: Religious Schism in a Jewish Community."

He has also been a contributor on "The Huffington Post" where he has written on "The Religious Support Behind Proposition 8." In this article he concludes that Prop. 8 passed because of religious people who think that God will punish us if we allow gay marriage. He shows the fallacy of that argument from a sociological perspective and concludes that while "religious supporters of Proposition 8 have a right to their opinion but that doesn't make their opinion right." ###

Calif. School Conference Drops Religious Right Speaker

Thanks to an Orange County chapter member the California School Boards Association rescinded Bob Tyler's invitation to speak at its annual event.

Tyler is general counsel at 'Advocates for Faith and Freedom' which has gone to court to promote religion in public schools and defended Proposition 8.

The School Board group had been unaware of the background of Tyler's organization.

This is a great example of what our activists can do and that one person can make a difference in the fight against the religious right! ###

Americans United Files Suit Against South O.C. Community College District by Karla Westphal

As many of you know, I teach at Saddleback College, which is part of the South Orange Community College District. I, together with colleagues, students, and community members, have been trying for years now to get them to stop including official prayers at school and district events.

We have written letters. We have spoken up at Board meetings. We have held up signs at graduation, and we have had face-to-face meetings with district officials.

It has been clear to me for some time now that the Board will not change its practice voluntarily. So I am thrilled to be working with Americans United and seven fellow plaintiffs to challenge the district in

court. The case is Westphal v. Wagner, and a copy of our complaint and the preliminary injunction motion can be found on our local AU website: www.au-oc.org.

It is a huge privilege to be working with the wonderful legal team AU has assembled for our case. While I am sorry we were not able to resolve this issue out of court, I have no doubts that we are doing the right thing in moving forward.

As we start a new year, I find myself feeling incredibly grateful to all who have supported me in this struggle. If you are a member of AU, know that this includes you, and please accept my heartfelt thanks for helping to make this possible. ###

AU-OC Sponsors Feb. 26th Debate at Saddleback College

The Orange County chapter of Americans United for Separation of Church and State has joined with the Saddleback Freethinkers Club and the Saddleback Campus Crusade for Christ to sponsor a debate asking the question: "**Is God the Best Explanation for Moral Values?**"

The debate will be moderated by Dr. Craig Hazen who is the Director of the M.A. Program in Christian Apologetics (a field of Christian theology that aims to present a rational basis for the Christian faith and expose the perceived flaws of other world views) at Biola University.

The debaters are Sean McDowell and Dr. James Corbett.

Sean McDowell is the head of the Bible Department at Capistrano Valley Christian Schools, where he

teaches courses on Philosophy, Theology, and Apologetics. He graduated from Talbot Theological Seminary with a double Master's degree in Theology and Philosophy.

James Corbett teaches Advance Placement European history at Capistrano Valley High School. He routinely brings up divisive topics in class and often makes inflammatory statements about religion to encourage students to think critically about changes in religious thought and institutions. Dr. Corbett received his Ph. D from Ohio State University in communication journalism.

The February 26th debate will start at 7:00 pm and there will be an entry fee of \$5 for those who are not affiliated with Saddleback.

Please check our web site for more details. ###



We're on the web
at www.au-oc.org

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Jan 16th—2:00 pm “**Separation of Church & Society: A Mormon Perspective**”

Feb 26— 7:00 pm Debate at Saddleback College
“**Is God the Best Explanation for Moral Values?**”

Feb 20— 2:00 pm “**Society Without God: What We Can Learn From the Least Religious Countries of the World**” with Phil Zuckerman

Mar 20— 2:00 pm **Hugh Hewitt & Bill Lobdell** debate “The Intersection of Religion, Politics and the Media: Does It Harm or Benefit Society?”

AU-OC general meetings are at The Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine.
There is no charge for our meetings

The Steering Committee meets after the general meeting. All are invited.

Keep Up To Date with Americans United-Orange County

Along with our newsletter, we keep people informed with what’s going on in the fight to preserve separation of church and state as well as our events through the web site at www.au-oc.org and also through our Yahoo! Group. If you’re not on the Yahoo! Group, send an email to us at: au-oc-subscribe@yahoogroups.com. We meet monthly at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine on the 3rd Saturday at 2:00 pm.

Irvine Ranch Water District neither supports nor endorses the cause nor activities of organizations which use the District’s meeting rooms that are made available as a public service.

Membership Form

Basic membership is \$25 and includes an annual subscription to Church & State magazine. We are a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, and donations beyond the \$18.00 value of the subscription to Church & State magazine are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. Email any questions to orangecountyau@yahoo.com.

3337 S. Bristol, #251, Santa Ana, California 92704

\$25 (new membership) **Donation \$ _____**

Name _____

Address _____

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Email: _____