



Americans United for Separation of Church and State

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

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

Conscientious Objectors and the Separation of Church and State

With Dr. Sam Coleman

Saturday, September 15th at 2:00 pm

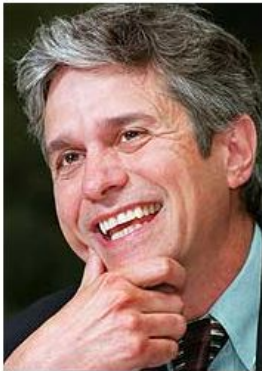
Irvine Ranch Water District

15600 Sand Canyon Avenue, Irvine

Fall 2007

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Yoshinori Matsuda Mainichi Newspapers 2002

Just because there is no draft today, it does not mean that conscientious objection does not exist.

We invite you to join us in a presentation by Dr. Sam Coleman on this subject.

Dr. Coleman is a social worker and academic anthropologist. As an associate member of the Orange County Chapter of Veterans for Peace, he assists the chapter's counter-recruitment projects. In 1968, during the Vietnam War, he responded to the draft by filing for conscientious objector status without claiming an affiliation with an organized religion. After receiving recognition as a conscientious objector, he interrupted his graduate education at Columbia University in early 1969 to complete two years and six months of alternate service at the Palo Alto, California, Veterans Hospital, where he served as a nursing assistant and surgical assistant.

Today, to be classified as a Conscientious Objector, an individual must show that his or her beliefs about war have changed since enlistment.

During the Viet Nam War, individuals who could show that they objected to participating in all wars "by reason of religious training and belief"--conscientious objectors--were entitled to exemption from the military service. Does this mean that only people who oppose war on religious grounds should qualify as conscientious objectors? What about those who oppose it on moral or humanitarian grounds? This is part of the dilemma of conscientious objectors and the separation of church and state.

Dr. Coleman will also talk about the U.S. vs. Seeger Supreme Court decision which was a key church/state separation case regarding conscientious objectors brought about because of claims that the law unfairly did not exempt non-religious conscientious objectors and that it discriminated between different forms of religious beliefs.. As Dr. Coleman states "The church/state dimension of conscientious objection is a linchpin issue and a natural first concern for Americans United."

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Dr. Coleman has devoted much time to the issue of conscientious objection and will be discussing these and other related topics which should make for a compelling discussion.

We hope you will join us for this event on September 15th and we encourage you to bring others who might be considering military service. ❀❀❀

Chapter Activists Using The Power of the Pen

One way our members are activists is by writing to different media outlets about issues relating to the separation of church and state. The 3 letters below, cover 3 different church/state separation issues. If you have submitted a letter—whether or not it has been printed, please copy us so we can share your views with the rest of the membership.

As printed in the Long Beach Press-Telegram, on the Supreme Court case *Hein v. Freedom From Religion Foundation*. The letter appeared on 7/26/07.

Dear Editor,

If our world ever comes to an end it will be as a result of religious terrorism. Not just the obvious Islamic extremists, but here in America it will be caused by Christians determined to force their "truth" on the rest of us. - Christians in public office who ban together and ignore our constitution.

The Freedom From Religion Foundation on June 25, 2007 lost its suit before the U. S. Supreme Court to stop President George W. Bush from giving taxpayer money to religious organizations through the "Faith Based" office he set up in the White House.

Our founders said "No taxpayer money to support religion."

To date he has given Christians more than one billion dollars.

Which constitution did he pledge to uphold? Where is the outrage?

It's bad enough that Catholic priests have raped so many of our children, now the five Catholics on the U. S. Supreme Court have in essence "raped" our constitution so that no taxpaying citizen can file suit to stop this unconstitutional use of our money. Where is the outrage?

M. Thomas Long

As printed in the Los Angeles Times on the coverage of Buena Park Pastor Drake who has asked his followers to pray for his critics to die. His critics are key staffers of Americans United's National Office. The letter appeared on 8/20/07

It would be easy to write off Wiley Drake as a religious looney for calling on his followers to pray for

the deaths of two leaders of Americans United for Separation of Church and State, but this is how hate crimes are spawned. If one of his followers decides that he must take God's work into his own hands, I think the pastor is as guilty of the crime as the perpetrator.

Bert Bigelow

As printed in the Los Angeles Times applauding the opinion piece written by Michael Weinstein of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation. The letter appeared on 8/27/07.

Editor:

Thanks to the LA Times for the wisdom of your editorial, "Not so fast, Christian soldiers" (8/22/07.)

As if it's not offensive enough that we're asking our soldiers to fight a senseless, no-win war, the LAST thing they need is to be inculcated with Christian rhetoric. Aside from the blatant illegality of the Pen-

tagon looking the other way-- thus allowing the propaganda to be disseminated-- their lack of judiciousness is appalling.

As history shows, there is absolutely nothing to gain from the immature playground mentality of charging into battle because 'my god's better than your god.' We owe our soldiers better than that!

Ellen Brown, President

Americans United for Separation of Church and State
San Diego Chapter

October and November Meetings Planned



On **October 20th** we will be showing the film "Deliver Us From Evil." One review calls it "a devastating investigation into the pedophilia scandals tearing apart the Catholic Church" This is no exaggeration. The film is about Father Oliver O'Grady, a priest outside of Sacramento, who openly describes his assaults on

children. Just as frightening is how his superiors, including Cardinal Roger Mahoney, cover up the crimes and keep moving O'Grady from diocese to diocese throughout Northern California. But what makes this film spellbinding are the interviews with the victims, now adults, and their parents. The stories are sad and compelling.

But the film is not without hope. There is one priest who looks to reform the church and provide help and goes with two of the victims to Rome to meet with the Pope.

This is an important film and I hope you will join us at 2:00 pm on October 20th at the Irvine Ranch Water District, 15600 Sand Canyon Avenue. ☘☘☘

November 17th will be the last meeting of the year. This will be our annual meeting and will include a pot luck of hors d'ouvres and desserts.

In November we will have our biennial chapter elections. If you have any nominations for officers, please contact Shirley Lorenz who is coordinating our election. Please see Shirley at the September or October meetings, send email to orange-countyau@yahoo.com or drop a note to our mailing address.

We will also have a review of 2007 and will report on the activities at this year's National Advisory Council.

Most importantly we will be discussing plans for 2008. We are considering moving to a quarterly theme with speakers, films and activism surrounding the theme. The newsletter will also follow the theme. We are looking for members' ideas for themes, speakers and events for 2008. Currently under consideration is covering the activities of the religious right in the military and having Mikey Weinstein of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation as a speaker. We will also be deciding whether or not we should be monitoring churches for political activity in 2008 and reviewing ballot initiatives for any that we may wish to support or oppose. We hope you'll join us for this event. ☘☘☘

Message from the President—Steph Campbell

Shortly after our last newsletter was sent out, Hindu Chaplain Rajan Zed opened the Senate prayer. A fine example of religious equality. But for Congressman Sali of Idaho it resulted in complaints. He said "We have not only a Hindu prayer being offered in the Senate, we have a Muslim member of the House of Representatives now, Keith Ellison from Minnesota. Those are changes — and they are not what was envisioned by the Founding Fathers." Sali says that America was built on Christian principles that were derived from scripture. He also says the only way the United States has been allowed to exist in a world that is so hostile to Christian principles is through "the protective hand of God."

The Senate prayer raises an interesting separation of church and state issue. Actually two issues. First of all, what is the Senate doing having an opening prayer in a nation where separation of church and

state is clearly protected? And beyond that, how can we, as a nation, tolerate the complaints of Congressman Sali and The American Family Association who, with their religious right friends, immediately condemned the invitation, and went on to demand that only Christian prayers be allowed.

If their "only Christian prayers" approach works, this is one more step to their goal of a Christian nation and turning those of different faiths into second class citizens. It sends the message that we are a nation of religious intolerance. What does that say to our citizens and what message does that send to the world?. We talk to the world about democracy and our Constitution; we need to follow those high ideals here at home.

Steph Campbell

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



Americans United-OC Chapter
3337 S. Bristol, #251
Santa Ana, CA 92704



In September the Steering Committee meets at 12:30 on September 15th—before the regular meeting.

Every Month

AU-OC Steering Committee

Usually meets following the monthly meetings. All members are encouraged to participate. Call 714-299-4551 for details.

September

15—Dr. Sam Coleman on conscientious objection and the separation of church and state (Irvine Ranch Water District, Multi-Purpose Room, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine at 2:00 pm).

October

20—Film: "Deliver Us From Evil" covering issues in the Catholic church (Irvine Ranch Water District, Multi-Purpose Room, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine at 2:00 pm).

November

17—Our annual meeting which will include biennial elections, the year in review, the National Advisory Council and 2008 planning (Irvine Ranch Water District, Multi-Purpose Room, 15600 Sand Canyon Ave., Irvine at 2:00 pm).

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 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.

Join or Renew Today! If you renew through national, please put Chapter #87 on your renewal.

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; to join or renew, complete this form and mail to the chapter at: 3337 S. Bristol, #251, Santa Ana, California 92704

New Membership Renewal Membership Special Donation

\$25 \$50 \$75 \$100 Other _____

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ Zip _____ Home Phone _____

Email: _____