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November 17, 2008: The Mormon church and Proposition 8

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Title: The Mormon church and Proposition 8

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11/17/2008--According to the Associated Press, on Friday, November 7, protestors in Salt Lake City "marched around headquarters of the Mormon Church" chanting "Separate church and state... ." The protest was held to criticize the Church for its enthusiastic support of Proposition 8. There has been more criticism of the Church since then. Today, a story appeared in the LA Times in which Jim Key, a spokesman for the L.A. Gay & Lesbian Center, was quoted as follows: "We're making a statement that no one's religious beliefs should be used to deny fundamental rights to others... ." The story mentioned estimates, which could not be confirmed, that Mormons gave more than \$20 to support Proposition 8. Now, I was an opponent of Proposition 8 and I support gay marriage (I now wish I had sent some money to the effort to defeat Proposition, but I was guilty of thinking that such a thing could never pass in California). Nevertheless, I have to say that these quasi-constitutional criticisms make no sense. Obviously no one's religious beliefs should be used to deny fundamental rights, but no one's political beliefs should either. The question is whether gay marriage is a fundamental right. A majority of Californians does not think it is. Do these critics really mean that our religious beliefs should not inform our voting? And that it is violation of the separation of church and state when they do? This will come as a shock to the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. Imagine now the opposite scenario. I go to the polls to vote against Proposition 8. Someone claims that I only support gay marriage because I learned in Hebrew School that all human beings are made in the image of God. This person then says by voting against Proposition 8 on this religious ground, I am violating neutrality toward religion. This is silly. Voters don't need anybody's permission to vote. And they come to their conclusion about how to vote through all kinds of considerations. Next time, say that the Mormon leadership are bigots. Not that they mixed church and state.