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### June 16, 2009: More on the Church and State Panel at the Netroots Convention in Pittsburgh in August

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Title: More on the Church and State Panel at the Netroots Convention in Pittsburgh in August

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6/16/2009--The moderator for the panel will be Chuck Freeman of Soul Talk Radio. The panelists are: Frederick Clarkson, well-known journalist, left wing religious thinker and author of *Dispatches from the Religious Left: The Future of Faith and Politics in America*, Ig Publishing, October 2008, Kyoki Roberts of the Zen Center of Pittsburgh and Vic Walczak, Legal Director of the Pennsylvania ACLU. It is pretty much a certainty that none of them will agree with the proposal for the future of church and state that I am making. But, everyone must answer the following question: are the words "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance constitutional? The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals said "no" in 2003. The Supreme Court reversed without reaching the merits of the issue. What is the progressive vision here? Thom Hartmann once said to me on his radio show, well the Pledge is just symbolic. That suggests that we progressives think the Pledge is unconstitutional but it's not important enough to take the political heat of doing anything about it. That is what progressives said about gun control and look where we are now. At some point we have to come clean and fight for our vision of the future. My future vision of church and state sees a secularism comfortable with religious imagery. So, to me, the Pledge is ok.