

FAITH IN ACTION

RESOURCE GUIDEBOOK

2006



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL USA
PROGRAM TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY

WWW.AMNESTYUSA.ORG/FAITHINACTION/

Amnesty International

Founded in London in 1961, Amnesty International (AI) is a Nobel Prize-winning grassroots activist organization with over one million members worldwide. Amnesty International undertakes research and action focused on preventing and ending grave abuses of the rights to physical and mental integrity, freedom of conscience and expression, and freedom from discrimination, within the context of its work to promote all human rights.

AI is a worldwide campaigning movement that works to promote all the human rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other international standards.

With its International Secretariat headquartered in London, AI has members and supporters in 162 countries and territories. Activities range from public demonstrations to letter writing, from human rights education to fundraising concerts, from individual appeals on a particular case to global campaigns on a specific human rights issue.

AI is impartial and independent of any government, political persuasion or religious creed. It is financed primarily by subscriptions and donations from its worldwide membership.

Amnesty International USA (AIUSA) is the U.S. Section of Amnesty International.

Amnesty International USA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty

The Program to Abolish the Death Penalty (PADP) works toward the abolition of the death penalty worldwide. Collaborating with departments such as Communications, Government Relations, and others, the PADP supports the work of Amnesty International's Regional Offices, Regional/State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators (R/SDPACs), and grassroots activists throughout the country by serving as a facilitator and clearinghouse for information and resources on the death penalty. Additionally, the PADP works for clemency on individual death penalty cases, supports state and federal legislation that seeks to limit the application of the death penalty, and coordinates efforts to build coalitions with other abolitionist and social justice organizations.

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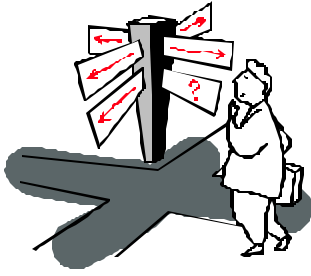
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Guide to the Guidebook



This **Guidebook** contains vital background information and resources to support your participation in the 2006 National Weekend of Faith in Action on the Death Penalty (NWFA) and other faith-based work on the death penalty. It is accompanied by two resources: "Organizing for the National Weekend of Faith in Action and Beyond: A Guide for Participants", which contains specific ideas for NWFA activities and events, and a Faith in Action Resource CD. All of these materials are part of the NWFA Organizing Packet.

While this Guidebook might seem a bit overwhelming at first blush, it is quite easy to navigate through the information once you've gotten the hang of it. This "**Guide to the Guidebook**" will help direct you to the most relevant resources for your participation in the NWFA. You'll find some specific suggestions below, but first, here are a couple of **general tips** for using the Guidebook:

- Familiarize yourself with the **Table of Contents**. (pp. i-ii)
- Keep in mind that **you do not need to read the Guidebook cover to cover**. Rather, you can "**pick and choose**" among the ideas, examples, and resources to find the best fit with your needs and capacity to work on the death penalty.

For those of you who are new to the death penalty issue or to the NWFA, here are some specific suggestions for how to get started:

- Read through "Organizing for the National Weekend of Faith in Action and Beyond... A Guide for Participants."
- Review the background information on the death penalty and the abolition movement. (Part One, beginning on p. 1)
- Learn what religious groups and people of faith have said about the death penalty. (pp. 20-28)
- Check out the section on "How to Address the Tough Points" for examples of responses to some of the most difficult questions about the death penalty. (pp. 31-33)
- Utilize the film discussion guides. (pp. 34-39)

For you "veterans" of the NWFA, here are some of the new resources you will find in the 2006 Guidebook:

- A Declaration of Life (p. 18)
- A discussion guide for the film "The Exonerated" (p. 37)
- Information on "No Silence, No Shame": Organizing Families of the Executed - a project of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (p. 46)
- A sample press release (p. 52)
- A sample letter to legislators (p. 56)
- An example of a sign-on letter from faith leaders (p. 57)

The Faith in Action Resource CD includes these items:

- Sample sermons on the death penalty
- Essays on the death penalty from various faith perspectives
- A PowerPoint presentation from California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty - "What People of Faith Should Know About the Death Penalty" - that you can adapt for your own state
- More facts on the death penalty, more quotes, and more prayers

Need more information or assistance? Contact any of these sources:

- Amnesty International USA's Regional and State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators** (R/SDPACs) (pp. 71-73)
- Amnesty International USA's Regional Offices (p. 76)
- Amnesty International USA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty (p. 77)
- Your local/state anti-death penalty coalition (pp. 79-85)
- Other national organizations that work on the death penalty (pp. 77-79)

**Throughout this Guidebook, we refer to Amnesty International USA's (AIUSA) Regional and State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators (R/SDPACs). AIUSA has at least one R/SDPAC in nearly every state and region. These volunteer leaders help to coordinate AIUSA's work on the death penalty in their respective states. For the NWFA, your R/SDPAC can help you organize or publicize your event. She/he can also provide you with contact information for local speakers and other materials specific to the death penalty in your state.

Please contact your R/SDPAC if you have any questions about death penalty-related issues in your state, or if you would like more information about how to become involved in local efforts. If no one is listed for your state or region, please contact the appropriate AIUSA Regional Office (see p. 76) or the Program to Abolish the Death Penalty.



While this Resource Guidebook has been developed specifically for use during the National Weekend of Faith in Action, it will also support your work on the death penalty throughout the year. Please feel free to use or reprint any of the information or tools presented here, provided you credit Amnesty International USA as the source.

www.amnestyusa.org/faithinaction/

Part One: Background Information on the Death Penalty

Amnesty International's Position on the Death Penalty

Amnesty International (AI) considers the death penalty to be a violation of the most fundamental of human rights - the right to life. It calls for the immediate and unconditional abolition of the death penalty worldwide.

AI opposes the death penalty because:

It is the ultimate denial of human rights. The death penalty is the premeditated and cold-blooded killing of a human being by the state in the name of justice. It violates the right to life as proclaimed in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and is the ultimate cruel, inhuman, and degrading punishment.

It does not stop violence. The death penalty is often promoted in the United States as a way to deter violence and make society safer. Yet in its four decades of documenting human rights abuses, AI has found that the death penalty does nothing to make society safer. In fact, many states without the death penalty actually have lower homicide rates than those with the death penalty.

It is irreversible. Since 1973, more than 120 people in the United States have been released from death row due to evidence of their wrongful conviction. An executed person can never be brought back to life, and the probability of error increases with each person killed. The use of the death penalty remains a gross miscarriage of justice and is too flawed to be fixed.

It is arbitrary and unfair. The death penalty is employed disproportionately against the poor, people of color, and members of certain racial, ethnic, and religious communities. The risk of fatal error is much greater for poor and minority defendants, the majority of whom lack adequate legal representation.

It is not a solution. AI has the deepest sympathy for the victims of violent crimes and their families. Yet the death penalty only serves to create more victims and perpetuate a cycle of violence. There are no "right" circumstances for violence, especially government-sanctioned execution.

“The movement to abolish the death penalty needs the religious community because the heart of religion is about compassion, human rights, and the indivisible dignity of each human person made in the image of God.”

~Sister Helen Prejean



The Abolition Movement: A Brief History

The Abolition Movement in the United States

Early American Experience with the Death Penalty

When the first European settlers arrived in America, the death penalty was accepted as just punishment for a variety of offenses. Although the English Penal Code, which applied to the British colonies, listed 14 capital offenses, actual practice varied from colony to colony. In concordance with the English tradition, the Founding Fathers commonly accepted the death penalty. There has never been universal support for capital punishment in the United States, however. Even in times when the abolitionist movement has lost prominence, individual states have refused to implement the death penalty.

“The abolition of the death penalty is making us a civilized society. It shows we actually do mean business when we say we have reverence for life.”

-Archbishop Desmond

Tutu



The movement for abolition gained momentum in the second quarter of the 19th century. In 1845, The American Society for the Abolition of Capital Punishment was founded. Shortly thereafter, in 1847, the Territory of Michigan abolished the death penalty and replaced it with life imprisonment. By doing so, Michigan became the first English-speaking jurisdiction in the world to abolish the death penalty for common crimes. In states outside the South, murder and treason became the only acts warranting capital punishment. The federal government also reduced the number of federal crimes punishable by death to three - treason, murder, and rape. In no instance was the death penalty mandatory.

This early success in the movement proved short-lived, however, and in many states, abolition of the death penalty was only temporary. Of the 16 states and jurisdictions (including Puerto Rico) that outlawed capital punishment after 1845, only 7 - Michigan, Rhode Island, Wisconsin, Maine, North Dakota, Minnesota, and Puerto Rico - had no major death penalty statute at the beginning of the 1950s.

The 1950s to 1970s

Between 1917 and 1957, no state abolished the death penalty. There was more progress during the late 1950s and 1960s, when Alaska and Hawaii abolished the death penalty in 1957. Delaware (1958), Michigan (1963, for treason), Oregon (1964), Iowa (1965), and West Virginia (1965) also abolished capital punishment, while many other states sharply reduced the number of crimes punishable by death (Delaware and Oregon have since reinstated capital punishment).

Until the 1960s there was little concern as to the constitutionality of the death penalty. Then, in 1963, Supreme Court Justice Goldberg, joined by Justices Douglas and Brennan, raised the question of the legality of the death penalty in his dissent from a rape case in which the defendant had been sentenced to death.

The Abolition Movement: A Brief History

A large number of legal filings in the late 1960s led to a *de facto* moratorium on executions, as states waited for the Supreme Court to decide several issues related to the death penalty.

In 1972, in *Furman v. Georgia*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that all death penalty statutes then in existence were unconstitutional. The justices found that the prevailing pattern of arbitrary imposition of the death penalty could no longer be tolerated. In the words of Justice Potter Stewart, "These death sentences are cruel and unusual in the same way that being struck by lightning is cruel and unusual" - they are capriciously, freakishly, and wantonly imposed. The Court commuted the sentences of all 629 people on death row at the time and sent states scrambling to revise their capital punishment statutes.

The Furman decision led to another moratorium on executions, which lasted until 1976 when the court heard the case of *Gregg v. Georgia*. With that case, the court recognized new death penalty statutes in Georgia, Florida, and Texas, which allowed the death penalty to be imposed when certain aggravating circumstances were established. In effect, the Court declared that all the problems it had recognized four years earlier would now be resolved through implementation of the new procedures contained in the statutes of these three states, statutes that established "guided discretion" for imposing a death sentence. This decision effectively permitted the resumption of executions and in 1977, Gary Gilmore of Utah "volunteered" for execution by firing squad, marking the beginning of the modern death penalty era.

The Modern Death Penalty Era

Since the 1970s, the majority of justices generally have interpreted the death penalty as worthy of extra attention because of the seriousness of the consequences, but not unconstitutional as a means of punishment (with the exception of certain groups within the population, such as persons with mental retardation). The Court has also limited the death penalty to crimes involving murder (in 1977, it held in *Coker v. Georgia* that the death penalty is an unconstitutional punishment for the rape of an adult woman when the victim is not killed).

The federal government no longer lists rape as one of the crimes punishable by death, but it continues to impose the death penalty for murder, treason, and espionage. Over the years, the federal government has significantly expanded the number of crimes punishable by death.

There has been a perceptible shift in the death penalty debate over the last six years, however, accompanied by a period of serious examination of the flaws in the system, both of which appear to stem from the large number of people who have been released from death row due to evidence of wrongful conviction.

"From this day forward, I no longer shall tinker with the machinery of death. ... I feel morally and intellectually obligated simply to concede that the death penalty experiment has failed."

~U.S. Supreme Court
Justice Harry A. Blackmun



Part One: Background Information on the Death Penalty

“Unless we live with nonviolence and reverence for all living beings in our hearts, all our humanness and acts of goodness, all our vows, virtues, and knowledge, all our practices to give up greed and acquisitiveness are meaningless. ...Indeed, the pain of others is our own, for the consequences of neglect and apathy cannot be long in coming our way.”

-Mahavira, founder of Jainism



In 2000, then-Governor George Ryan of Illinois declared a moratorium on executions and established a blue-ribbon commission to study the state's death penalty system. Ryan established the moratorium because more innocent men had been released from death row in Illinois than had been executed, with 13 exonerations and 12 executions.

The Commission released an exhaustive report in April 2002, which recommended 85 reforms to the death penalty system. The Commission recognized that even with these reforms, the risk of executing an innocent person could never be completely eliminated.

In January 2003, before leaving office, Governor Ryan - faced with the Illinois legislature's failure to implement the commission's recommended reforms - decided to pardon four death row inmates and commute all 167 other death sentences in Illinois to life imprisonment. This culminated a three-year process of examining the fatal flaws in the death penalty system; the moratorium in Illinois remains in effect.

Since 2000, thousands of community groups, city councils, faith communities, businesses, and others have passed resolutions in favor of a moratorium on executions or in support of abolition. Numerous states have also made significant headway in passing moratorium or abolition legislation.

In the last six years, several landmark U.S. Supreme Court decisions have narrowed the scope and application of the death penalty. In 2002, the Court's decision in *Atkins v. Virginia* found that executing those with mental retardation is cruel and unusual punishment, prohibited by the Eighth Amendment of the Constitution. This ruling, which applies retroactively to those with mental retardation already on death row, compelled 20 states to change their statutes. Several years later, however, several states are still struggling to comply with the Court's decision.

Also in 2002, in its *Ring v. Arizona* decision, the Supreme Court ruled that a jury, rather than a judge, must make a finding of the "aggravating factors" that are prerequisites under state law for consideration of the death penalty. The Court found that a sentence imposed solely by a judge violates a defendant's constitutional right to a trial by jury. Unlike the *Atkins* decision, however, this ruling has not applied retroactively.

On March 1, 2005, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in *Roper v. Simmons* that the death penalty for juvenile offenders - those under the age of 18 at the time of the crime - constitutes cruel and unusual punishment and is therefore prohibited under the Constitution. This decision spared the lives of 72 juvenile offenders on death rows throughout the United States. Until this time, the United States had led the world in executing juvenile offenders.

The Abolition Movement: A Brief History

Recent Developments Regarding the Death Penalty in the United

States:

- Reports from the U.S. Bureau of Statistics illustrate that the number of new death penalty sentences being imposed each year has dropped by nearly half. From 1994 to 2000, an average of 296 people received death sentences each year. From 2000 to 2001, the number of new death sentences dropped significantly, from 231 to 163. **In 2005**, new death sentences reached their lowest point since the reinstatement of capital punishment in 1976, with 106 people sentenced to death. This downward trend likely can be attributed to the financial burden of death penalty trials and new sentencing options, such as life in prison without parole.
- On **December 2, 2005** the 1,000th execution since 1977 took place with the execution of Kenneth Boyd in North Carolina. The coalition of activists and organizations that worked to prepare for this occasion successfully engaged activists in vigils and other actions in at least 28 states, secured more than 1,000 signatures on an open letter from faith leaders and 300 signatures on an open letter from academics, created a photo petition with over 900 pictures, developed a website dedicated to this issue, and generated letters to the editor, op-eds, and articles in hundreds of media outlets, which focused on the growing debate over the death penalty. Work around this milestone also helped to bring attention to the case of Robin Lovitt, a potentially innocent man whose execution in Virginia was originally slated to be the 1,000th. As a result, Virginia Governor Mark Warner commuted Mr. Lovitt's sentence the day before his scheduled execution.
- On **January 9, 2006**, the New Jersey Assembly passed S-709, a bill that establishes a moratorium on executions while a legislative commission conducts an in-depth study of the death penalty. The bill was signed into law by Governor Codey. New Jersey is the first state to legislatively mandate a moratorium on executions, which will remain in effect until the conclusion of the study.
- On **January 25, 2006**, the U.S. Supreme Court agreed to hear the case of *Hill v. Crosby* (later renamed *Hill v. McDonough*), to decide whether death row inmate Clarence Hill was entitled to file a challenge to the constitutionality of lethal injection and whether his challenge may be pursued under federal civil rights law (1983). Mr. Hill was strapped to the gurney at the time the Court accepted his appeal. He had argued that his civil rights would be violated because the chemicals used to execute him would cause excessive pain.

“In all religions, we make a choice about what we emphasize, and I choose to come down on the side of a loving God.”

~Reverend Bernice King



By agreeing to hear the case, the Court set off a flurry of legal activity in more than a dozen states regarding the

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constitutionality of lethal injection as it is currently administered. At issue in some states is whether medical professionals can or should play a role in the execution process, in order to mitigate any pain or suffering an inmate might experience (physician participation is prohibited by the American Medical Association [AMA] and numerous other professional associations).

On June 22, 2006, the Court ruled unanimously in favor of Mr. Hill, therefore allowing death row inmates to challenge their state's lethal injection process as a civil rights claim, even after they have exhausted all of their habeas petitions. The Court did not consider whether lethal injection itself constitutes cruel and unusual punishment; in fact, the Court has never found a particular method of execution to be cruel and unusual. Lethal injection is available in 37 out of 38 death penalty states (the only exception is Nebraska, which has the electric chair).

- On four occasions since **December 2004**, major U.S. newspapers have raised questions about whether an innocent person was executed. Missouri is currently investigating the possibility that it executed an innocent man, Larry Griffin, in 1995, while in Texas, newspaper investigations have raised significant doubts about the executions of Ruben Cantu (1993), Cameron Todd Willingham (2004), and, most recently, Carlos De Luna (1989). A district attorney is currently looking into the case of Ruben Cantu.

“No man has the right to take God’s place and say another man should die. It destroyed my life.”

~Perry Cobb, who spent eight years on death row in Illinois for a crime he did not commit. He was exonerated in 1987.



Currently, **38 states, the federal government, and the U.S. military** allow the death penalty in law or practice. In Kansas and New York, the death penalty has been declared unconstitutional by state courts and is in a state of legal limbo (the U.S. Supreme Court recently upheld the constitutionality of Kansas' death penalty statute, however). Since the *Gregg v. Georgia* decision in 1976, more than 1,025 executions have occurred; more than 80 percent have taken place since 1990.

The Abolition Movement Worldwide

The *de facto* moratorium that existed in the United States between 1967 and 1977 paralleled general worldwide movement toward the abolition of capital punishment, especially among Western nations. By the time the United States resumed executions in 1977, most of the Western world had abolished the death penalty either in law or practice. One decade later, one of the first acts of the parliaments of many Eastern European countries after the fall of Communism was to abolish capital punishment. This general attitude was reflected in the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), adopted by the United Nations (U.N.) General Assembly in 1989, which provides for the total abolition of the death penalty but

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allows states to retain the death penalty in wartime as an exception. It has been ratified by 57 states and signed by 7 others.

Protocol No. 13 to the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights abolishes the death penalty in *all* circumstances; it has been ratified by 36 European states and signed by 8 others.

Nearly **two thirds** of the countries in the world have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice. Amnesty International's latest information shows that:

- **87** countries and territories have abolished the death penalty for all crimes;
- **11** countries have abolished the death penalty for all but exceptional crimes such as wartime crimes;
- **27** countries can be considered abolitionist in practice: they retain the death penalty in law but have not carried out any executions for the past 10 years or more and are believed to have a policy or established practice of not carrying out executions.
- A total of **125** countries (out of 196) have abolished the death penalty in law or practice.
- **71** other countries and territories retain and use the death penalty, but the number of countries which actually execute prisoners in any one year is much smaller.

Over **40 countries** have abolished the death penalty for **all crimes** since 1990. They include countries in Africa (recent examples include Cote d'Ivoire, Liberia, Senegal), the Americas (Canada, Paraguay), Asia and the Pacific (Bhutan, Samoa, Turkmenistan) and Europe and the South Caucasus (Armenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Cyprus, Greece, Serbia and Montenegro, Turkey).

Once abolished, the death penalty is seldom reintroduced. Of the countries that have abolished the death penalty since 1990, only four have since reintroduced it. Two of them - Nepal and the Philippines - later abolished the death penalty again. There have been no executions in the other two (Gambia, Papua New Guinea).

Increasingly, the death penalty has become a crucial political issue worldwide as more international pressure has been placed on retentionist countries. In the last five years, there have been several notable attempts to enhance international collaboration aimed at abolishing the death penalty. The first **World Day Against the Death Penalty** was commemorated on October 10, 2003 with local events in over 60 countries and an internet appeal calling on the highest authorities of all countries that retain the death penalty "to ensure that executions cease immediately, and to abolish the death penalty for all crimes."

The World Day was organized by the **World Coalition Against the Death Penalty** (WCADP), a coalition established in 2002 that unites

"Standing alone among great democratic nations in imposing the death penalty is another moral decision that Americans are being forced to confront."

-President Jimmy Carter



Part One: Background Information on the Death Penalty

“The calculated killing of a human being by the state involves, by its very nature, an absolute denial of the executed person’s humanity. The most vile murder does not, in my view, release the state from constitutional restraint on the destruction of human dignity.”

~U.S. Supreme Court
Justice William Brennan



national and international human rights organizations (including Amnesty International), Bar associations, trade unions and local and regional governments. Official statements welcoming the initiative were made by the European Union, the Council of Europe, the Belgian government and the foreign ministries of Canada, France and Mexico.

The **Council of Europe** has also sought to influence other nations to abolish the death penalty. In a resolution and a recommendation adopted in October 2003, the Parliamentary Assembly warned Japan and the United States that they were violating their obligations as observer states by continuing to use the death penalty. The Parliamentary Assembly comprises members of parliament from the 45 countries that make up the Council of Europe. Japan and the United States were granted observer status in 1996. In June 2001, the Parliamentary Assembly had called for an immediate moratorium on executions in both countries and resolved to establish a dialogue on the issue with officials in Japan and the United States.

Recent Developments Worldwide:

- During 2005, at least **2,148** people were executed in **22** countries and at least **5,186** people were sentenced to death in **53** countries. These are only minimum figures; the true numbers are certainly higher.
- **In 2005, 94 percent** of all known executions took place in **China, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the USA**. Saudi Arabia accounted for at least 86 executions; there were 60 executions in the USA.
- Based on available public reports, Amnesty International estimated that at least **1,770** people were executed in China last year, although the true figures are believed to be much higher. A Chinese legal expert was recently quoted as stating the figure for executions is approximately 8,000 based on information from local officials and judges, but official national statistics on the application of the death penalty remain classified as a state secret.
- Iran executed at least **94** people, including **8 child offenders**, in 2005. A 17-year-old boy was executed in May 2006. International human rights treaties prohibit anyone under 18 years old at the time of the crime being sentenced to death or executed. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child and the American Convention on Human Rights all have provisions to this effect. More than 110 countries whose laws still provide for the death penalty for at least some offenses have laws specifically excluding the execution of child offenders or may

The Abolition Movement: A Brief History

be presumed to exclude such executions by being parties to one or another of the above treaties. Iran is one of the only countries in the world that has continued to executed child offenders, in spite of these conventions.

- Two countries abolished the death penalty for all crimes in 2005: **Liberia and Mexico**.
- On **June 7, 2006**, the Philippine Congress passed legislation abolishing the death penalty. The Philippines is the 25th country in the Asia-Pacific region to end capital punishment in law or practice and is the 125th nation to become abolitionist in law or practice. Earlier in the year, President Arroyo commuted all death sentences (over 1,200) to life imprisonment in what is believed to be the largest ever commutation in modern times.

Today, among Western democratic nations, only the United States imposes the death penalty. The rest of the world continues to move toward abolition, with more than three countries a year abolishing the death penalty for all crimes during the past decade. **125 nations have now abolished the death penalty in law or practice.**

Updated July 1, 2006. Up-to-date statistics for the United States can be found at www.amnestyusa.org/abolish. Information on death penalty developments worldwide can be found at <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/deathpenalty-developments-eng>.



Abolition march during the Second World Congress Against the Death Penalty, Montreal, Canada, 2004. © Martina Correia

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection on the Death Penalty

Sample Prayers

You'll find additional prayers on the CD that accompanies this Guidebook, including one in Spanish.

A Prayer for Murder Victims' Families

By Maria Hines

God of merciful love,
Help these families who are victims of murder
To accept the reality of such senseless acts of violence
Without, at the same time,
Succumbing to the despair of so great a loss.
May this violence become for them, instead,
A steppingstone toward greater union with you.

Teach them the forgiveness that was exemplified
By Jesus as he said,
"Father, forgive them for they know not what they do."
And through his redemptive love,
Show your mercy to the perpetrators of these crimes.

Fill the emptiness of their victim hearts
With the fire of your divine love
So as to transform their losses
Into a healing power
For themselves and for our world.

Amen.

[Maria Hines, of Louisville, Kentucky, is a former board member of Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, as well as the founder and director of its Kentucky affiliate. In 1989 her brother, a Virginia State trooper, was killed in the line of duty. The man who killed Jerry Hines received a death sentence. Before his execution, Maria forgave Dennis Eaton and, unsuccessfully, sought clemency for him. She continues her work as a staunch opponent of the death penalty through her own organization and through membership in the Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty.]

United Methodist Sample Litany

Service of Advocacy and Witness Against the Death Penalty

Leader: For our social order, that it may show love and mercy, justice and peace,

People: We pray to the Lord.

Leader: For all elected officials, that they may govern with compassion,

People: We pray to the Lord.

Leader: For all prisons, that they may be places of restoration and healing,

People: We pray to the Lord.

Leader: For all prison employees, that they may respect prisoners as fellow human beings,

People: We pray to the Lord.

Leader: For all prisoners, that they may have the courage not to become embittered or hopeless,

People: We pray to the Lord.

Leader: For all on death row, that their lives may be spared and that they may walk in newness of life,

People: We pray to the Lord.

Leader: That all may be saved from cruel and unusual punishment,

People: We pray to the Lord.

Leader: That the death penalty may be seen as incompatible with the dignity and self-respect of persons and be finally abolished,

People: We pray to the Lord. God of Life, hear our prayer. Amen.

[Source: *United Methodist General Board of Church and Society*]

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection

Sample Bulletin Insert

You can use a bulletin insert to let your congregation or community know about the NWFA and to promote your activity or event.

2006 National Weekend of Faith in Action on the Death Penalty: October 20-22, 2006

This weekend, October 20-22, 2006 marks the Ninth Annual **National Weekend of Faith in Action on the Death Penalty (NWFA)**, coordinated by Amnesty International USA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty. Each year AIUSA invites individuals of all faiths, local congregations and interfaith groups, and human rights activists to devote some time this weekend to the death penalty issue, using our own faith traditions and values as a starting point. In the words of Sister Helen Prejean, author of *Dead Man Walking*: "*The movement to abolish the death penalty needs the religious community because the heart of religion is about compassion, human rights, and the indivisible dignity of each human person made in the image of God.*" During this weekend, our community will stand in solidarity with people of faith throughout the United States in proclaiming our belief in the value and dignity of each and every human life.

Throughout the weekend, please consider ways that you can affirm the dignity of all human life by expressing opposition to the death penalty. Please take a few minutes to pray for the people on all sides of this issue - crime victims and their families, those on death row and their families, lawyers, judges, juries, prison workers, chaplains, and all those who work on behalf of death row inmates. You do not need to "choose a side" to participate. Here at First Presbyterian Church, we will be observing the NWFA by hosting Keisha Sanders, who will speak to us about how she came to oppose the death penalty for her grandfather's killer. The event will take place in the church library immediately after the service on October 22. For more information about local activities, please contact Kim Brown at 202-575-5647. To learn more about the NWFA or about Amnesty International, please visit www.amnestyusa.org/faithinaction.

Sample Services

National Weekend of Faith in Action Interfaith Service

First Iconium Baptist Church, Atlanta, Georgia

October 10, 1999, 3:00 p.m.

Call to Action

Rev. Fred D. Taylor (SCLC) & Laura Moye (Amnesty International)

Prelude

Jimmy Compton, saxophonist

Call to the Gathered Community

Rev. Brian McAdams, Minister of Outreach, Christ Covenant MCC

Song

Interfaith Prayers

Hindu- Balabhadra Dasa

Ba'hai- Steve Zalodek

Jewish- Holli Levenson

Buddhist- Matthew Laney

Welcome

Rev. Tim McDonald, President, Concerned Black Clergy & Pastor, First Iconium Baptist Church

Occasion

Martin Luther King III, President, Southern Christian Leadership Conference

Speakers

Steve Bright, Southern Center for Human Rights

Tyrone Brooks, Georgia State Legislature

Litany

Leader: We affirm as found in the Mosaic writing, "So God created humankind in God's own image, in the image of God was the human being created; male and female God created them." Therefore the state does not have the theological authority to take life.

People: Oh God, we work for alternatives to state sanctioned killings.

Leader: It is cost effective to abolish the death penalty. The statistics indicate, in states where capital punishment continues, the actual cost of an execution is substantially greater than the cost of imprisoning a person for life.

People: Oh God, we pursue alternatives to state sanctioned killings.

Leader: Michigan Congressman John Conyers reminds us: "The continuing lottery-like nature of the death penalty in America escapes proper scrutiny. Only a tiny proportion of capital offenders ever reach death row, and of these a still smaller fraction are executed... It is a macabre game, this death penalty lottery."

People: Oh God, we seek alternatives to state-sanctioned killings.

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection

Leader: What are we teaching our children when we teach them that vengeance and violence are our only solutions to the social ills of our communities? We have seen a rash of schoolyard shootings, drive-by killings, and other heinous acts of violence. With the death penalty, perhaps we are inadvertently teaching our children that killing is a way to right a wrong and that violence is an appropriate way to mend brokenness. The death penalty may very well be a contributing factor to our present culture of violence.

People: Oh God, we pray for alternatives to state sanctioned killings.

Leader: In 1994, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice Harry A. Blackmun asserted, "Twenty years have passed since this court declared that the death penalty must be imposed fairly, and with reasonable consistency, or not at all, and despite the efforts of some states and courts to devise legal formulas and procedural rules to meet this daunting challenge, the death penalty remains fraught with arbitrariness, discrimination, caprice, and mistake."

People: Oh God, we advocate alternatives to state sanctioned killings.

Leader: May we remember the names of all who die at the hands of our government. Moreover, may we remember all those who died brutally, painfully, and with societal sanction.

People: Oh God, we agonize for alternatives to state sanctioned killings.

Leader: Our task is urgent, our mission is honorable and just, our duty is ongoing, our vision is attainable... and God's world will be better without the death penalty.

All: May the God of mercy, forgiveness, compassion, justice, completeness, love, and companionship bless us all on our journey to abolish the death penalty and find a better way for eliminating our culture of violence.

Speakers

Betty Myers, Sister of Warren McCleskey (executed by the state of Georgia)
Dale Williams, Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation

Solo

Jackie Ward, Southern Organizing Committee

Speakers

Imam Plemon El'Amin, Atlanta Masjid of Al-Islam
Rabbi Debra Landsberg, Atlanta Rabbinical Association

Lest We Forget

Beda Warrick & Mary Ann Gardner will read the names of the people on death row in Georgia as well as the names of people across our country who are facing an execution date. Please join with us in remembering these people that our government is trying to kill. After every five names, the leaders will say, "For these..." Please respond with, "We Pray."

Blessing

Rev. Fred D. Taylor, SCLC & Chair of the Weekend of Faith in Action
Laura Moye, Amnesty International

[Source: Laura Moye]

“Restorative Justice” Service

Oakhurst Baptist Church, Decatur, Georgia

October 10, 1999

Greetings and Announcements

A Word About Prison Focus Month

Concerns and Celebrations

Receiving of Gifts

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise God all creatures here below,
Praise God above ye, heavenly host,
Creator, Christ and Holy Ghost. Amen

Prayer of Dedication

Prayer for Victims of Crime

Leader: God of Love and Healing. God of Love and Forgiveness. We pray for those who suffer because of the violence inflicted upon them by our criminal brothers and sisters. We ask that you be active in their grief. Bring to them your healing love. We pray that they be freed from their pain, their anger, and their desire for retribution. We pray that you will lead them to the path of forgiveness.

People: We pray in the name of Jesus whom you sent to be with us as an expression of your forgiveness. Amen.

Hymn: “Called as Partners in Christ’s Service”

Reading: Genesis 4:1-16

Prayer for Prisoners and Jailers

Leader: God of Love and Judgment. God of Love and Redemption. We pray for those who live and work behind concrete walls, chain link fences and concertino wire. Keep them in good health and spirit. Help both the prisoner and the jailer to do the tasks before them with grace and compassion. Help both the prisoner and the jailer to see one another as human beings created in your own image. And protect both the prisoner and the jailer from those who would do them harm.

People: We pray in the name of Jesus who showed us how to love those who have done wrong against us. Amen.

Leader: God of Love and Crucifixion. God of Love and Resurrection. We join with other congregations across the nation today asking for a special blessing for the people who live and work on death row. May they find your grace and your peace. We pray for those who make decisions about the life and death of prisoners. We pray that you help them find ways to choose life and not death.

People: We pray in the name of Jesus who showed us the way to true life. Amen.

Reading: Psalm 133

Anthem: “Lily of the Valley” (Spiritual, arr. Wendell Whalum)

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection

Prayer for Families

Leader: God of Love and Faithfulness. God of Love and Friendship. We pray for the other victims of crime - the families and friends of the offender. We can only imagine the grief and pain, the shame and ridicule, the emotional and physical hardships that mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers, sons and daughters, extended family, and friends of prisoners experience during the incarceration of a loved one. We celebrate and learn from their steadfast faithfulness to their loved one who has done wrong. We ask that you be with them and sustain them through this time of separation and judgment. Give them the strength and the way to keep the family together. Provide for them the strength and the knowledge to help their loved one prepare for homecoming and to help ensure that this ordeal will not be repeated.

People: We pray in the name of Jesus who called us friend and taught us to be faithful. Amen.

Reading: Matthew 18:1-22

Sermon: "If You Do Well: The Vanity of Vengeance and the Restoration of Righteousness"

Prayer for the Church

Leader: God of Love and Discipleship. God of Love and Sacrifice. We pray that you provide within us the determination to follow your son Jesus who ate with sinners and comforted the outcast. Help us to focus our discipleship on those incarcerated in prison and jails. But do not let us lose our outrage over the terrible acts of the offender. Help us to understand how we as a church might proclaim your redemptive love to a government and community that confuses vengeance with rehabilitation. But keep us from seeking simple solutions to complex issues. Help us to practice and proclaim restorative justice, that the broken offender and the broken victim might be restored to wholeness.

People: We pray in the name of Jesus who was able to forgive those who crucified him. Amen.

Invitation to Discipleship

Hymn No. 434: "Today We All Are Called to Be Disciples"

Benediction

Notes: Welcome to the worship service of Oakhurst Baptist Church. Today we begin Prison Focus Month. We also observe the National Weekend of Faith in Action on the Death Penalty, along with 50 other congregations in Atlanta and numerous faith communities across the country this weekend. Today's service was planned by the Prison & Jail Mission Group. You are invited to sign the Moratorium 2000 petition.

[Source: *Laura Moye*]

Sample Sermons

Two sample sermons are available on the CD that accompanies this Guidebook - one from the Jewish tradition and one from the Unitarian Universalist tradition. We encourage you to incorporate the personal stories of those who have been impacted by the death penalty into your sermons, for example, murder victims' family members, the families of those on death row, and the families of those who have been executed. Profiles of family members are available on the website of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights: www.murdervictimsfamilies.org.

For additional sermons, check out *Sermons, Homilies, & Reflections on the Death Penalty*, available from the Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project. This powerful booklet contains 17 moving sermons that confront the death penalty from a wide variety of religious traditions. Underscoring the need for the religious community to make the abolition of state-sanctioned killing a moral imperative, this resource will inspire religious leaders to use the pulpit to elevate the issue. Contact the Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project at 215-241-7130 or www.deathpenaltyreligious.org to order.

Sermons are also available online from Unitarian Universalists for Alternatives to the Death Penalty at www.uuadp.org/library.htm.

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection

A Declaration of Life

Ask members of your faith community to sign the following "Declaration of Life," which states that should they become the victim of a homicide, they do not want their murderer to be executed. The Buddhist Peace Fellowship Prison Project also has a version of this document, available at http://www.bpf.org/html/current_projects/prison_project/pdfs/declaration.pdf.

I, the undersigned, being of sound and disposing mind and memory, do hereby in the presence of witnesses make this Declaration of Life,

I believe that the killing of one human being by another is morally wrong.

I believe it is morally wrong for any state or other governmental entity to take the life of a human being for any reason

I believe that capital punishment is not a deterrent to crime and serves only the purpose of revenge.

THEREFORE, I hereby declare that should I die as a result of a violent crime, I request that the person or persons found guilty of homicide for my killing not be subject to or put in jeopardy of the death penalty under any circumstances, no matter how heinous their crime or how much I may have suffered. The death penalty would only increase my suffering.

I request that the Prosecutor or District Attorney having the jurisdiction of the person or persons alleged to have committed my homicide not file or prosecute an action for capital punishment as a result of my homicide.

I request that this Declaration be made admissible in any trial of any person charged with my homicide, and read and delivered to the jury. I also request the Court to allow this Declaration to be admissible as a statement of the victim at the sentencing of the person or persons charged and convicted of my homicide; and, to pass sentence in accordance with my wishes.

I request that the Governor or other executive officer(s) grant pardon, clemency or take whatever action is necessary to stay and prohibit the carrying out of the execution of any person or persons found guilty of my homicide.

This Declaration is not meant to be, and should not be taken as, a statement that the person or persons who have committed my homicide should go unpunished.

I request that my family and friends take whatever actions are necessary to carry out the intent and purpose of this Declaration; and, I further request them to take no action contrary to this Declaration.

I request that, should I die under the circumstances as set forth in the Declaration and the death penalty is requested, my family, friends and personal representative deliver copies of this Declaration as follows: to the Prosecutor or District Attorney having jurisdiction over the person or persons charged with my homicide; to the Attorney representing the person or persons charged with my homicide; to the judge presiding over the case involving my homicide; for recording, to the Recorder of the County in which my homicide took place and to the recorder of the County in which the person or persons charged with my homicide are to be tried; to all newspapers,

A Declaration of Life

radio and television stations of general circulation in the County in which my homicide took place and the County in which the person or persons charged with my homicide are to be tried; and, to any other person, persons or entities my family, friends or personal representative deem appropriate in order to carry out my wishes as set forth herein.

I affirm under the pains and penalties for perjury that the above Declaration of Life is true.

WITNESS

_____ printed name

DECLARANT

Printed name

Social Security Number

STATE OF _____)

COUNTY OF _____)

Before me, a Notary Public in and for said county and state, personally appeared the Declarant and acknowledged the execution of the foregoing instrument this _____ day of _____ 20__.

WITNESS my hand and notarial seal.

NOTARY PUBLIC

Printed Name

My commission expires: _____ County of Residence: _____

[Please send a copy of this notarized form to: Cherish Life Circle, Convent of Mercy, 273 Willoughby Ave., Brooklyn, NY 11205. If you need additional information, please call 718-622-5750, or email damillersm@aol.com.]

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection

What Religious Groups and People of Faith Have Said About the Death Penalty

These statements, resolutions, and positions have been compiled from a variety of sources and reflect a range of perspectives on the death penalty. The majority are from U.S.-based sources. Numerous state groups have adopted positions on the death penalty, as well. While we have made every attempt to be as inclusive as possible, we recognize that this list may be incomplete. Please email any perspectives that should be added to this list to khoule@aiusa.org.

Links to the full text of many of these statements can be found on the AIUSA website, at www.amnestyusa.org/interfaith/faith_perspectives.html, or on the website provided beneath each statement. The Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project (coordinated by the American Friends Service Committee) has also produced a booklet of statements: "The Death Penalty: The Religious Community Calls for Abolition." This is available online at www.deathpenaltyreligious.org/education.html#section1.

Religious Groups/People of Faith That Have Expressed Opposition to the Death Penalty

Buddhist

Buddhist Peace Fellowship

"Society is like a dense fabric, made of many intertwined threads. Murder is like a violent tear in the fabric. The death penalty is like trying to repair the tear by cutting away at the fabric when we should take care to weave the many split threads back into the fabric. ...We oppose all executions, in keeping with the First Precept of Buddhism, which says not to harm any living thing."

www.bpf.org

Engaged Zen Foundation (2004)

"The First Precept of Buddhism goes something like this: 'I am reverential and mindful of all life, I am not violent and I do not kill.'"

www.engaged-zen.org

Christian

Alliance of Baptists (2000)

"Even if the problems with the application of the death penalty could be corrected, as members of a forgiven people we now speak out to oppose the use of the death penalty in our country and around the world. ...we call upon churches actively to pursue ministries that promote healing and justice for victims of crime, while opposing pseudo-solutions, such as the death penalty, which perpetuate violence, hatred and revenge.

http://www.allianceofbaptists.org/Death_penalty.htm

American Baptist Church, USA (1982)

"Therefore, the General Board of the American Baptist Churches recommends the abolition of capital punishment in those states which still practice it and urges churches and members of our American Baptist constituency to support groups and agencies working for the abolition of capital punishment in those governmental jurisdictions of the U.S. where it is still authorized by law."

www.abc-usa.org

What Religious Groups/People of Faith Have Said About the Death Penalty

Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America (2000)

"We, therefore, urge our members to seek God's justice and denounce the use of the death penalty. We encourage them to remember all those harmed by the violence of crime. ...Jesus Christ calls the church to a ministry of reconciliation and justice. As part of the community of faith, the Baptist Peace Fellowship of North America joins with many other voices in following that call. To this end, we denounce the use of the death penalty and urge our members to seek justice for all those who suffer because of violent crimes."

www.bpfna.org

The Bruderhof Communities

"We oppose the death penalty in all cases, out of reverence for human life and for God, the creator of Life."

www.bruderhof.com

Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) (1991)

"We believe there is a Christian mandate against capital punishment. We know God's justice and mercy through the teachings of His son, Jesus Christ, who both taught and practiced the forgiveness of injustice. ...

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the General Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)...support a permanent moratorium on capital punishment whether undertaken for deterrence or redress; and BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that congregations, regions and general units of this church be encouraged to pursue ways to support and implement the intent of this resolution at the national, provincial, state and local levels."

www.disciples.org

Church of the Brethren (1987)

"The Church of the Brethren has consistently opposed the death penalty in its Annual Conference statements of 1957, 1959, and 1975. In July 1979, a General Board resolution reaffirmed those Annual Conference statements. These actions have delineated an understanding of God's will for us which upholds the sanctity of human life and personality, opposes the use of capital punishment and encourages Brethren to work for the abolition of the death penalty."

www.brethren.org

Community of Christ (from *Roper v. Simmons* amicus brief, 2004)

"Based on the action of its highest legislative body, the Community of Christ opposes the death penalty and prefers to seek ways to achieve healing and restorative justice."

www.cofchrist.org

The Episcopal Church, USA (1979)

"RESOLVED, that this 70th General Convention of the Episcopal Church urge the provinces, dioceses, parishes, missions, and individual members of this Church to engage in serious study on the subject of capital punishment and work actively to abolish the death penalty in their states."

www.episcopalchurch.org

Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (1991)

"It is because of this church's commitment to justice that we oppose the death penalty. Lutheran Christians have called for an assault on the root causes of violent crime, an assault for which executions are no substitute. The ongoing controversy surrounding the death penalty shows the weaknesses of its justifications. We would be a better society by joining the many nations that have already abolished capital punishment."

www.elca.org

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Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America (from *Roper v. Simmons* amicus brief, 2004)

"The protection of human rights and the inherent worth of every person and of all human life are of paramount importance and basic principles in the moral teaching of the Greek Orthodox Church. These principles require us to oppose the death penalty for juvenile offenders."

www.goarch.org

The Mennonite Central Committee (1982)

"We believe the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches must act to enhance respect for human life, and that this cannot be done through executions."

www.mcc.org

Mennonite Church USA (2001)

"Jesus' death on the cross was the final payment for sin—a final sacrifice that made unnecessary other forms of sacrifice, including the human sacrifice that we call capital punishment. Jesus showed us that salvation from sin lay in forgiving the enemy, not in getting even by imitating the enemy's wickedness."

www.mennoniteusa.org

The Moravian Church in America (1982)

"RESOLVED: that the Northern Province of the Moravian Church in North America put itself on record as being opposed to capital punishment and that the members of the Moravian church be urged to work for the abolition of the death penalty."

www.moravian.org

Mormons for Equality and Social Justice (2003)

1. Calls upon all states to abandon the practice of capital punishment.
2. Calls upon the U.S. Congress to declare capital punishment cruel and unusual punishment by federal statute, and therefore unconstitutional.
3. Urges that all statutes addressing law enforcement, due process, and incarceration be based on security for society and rehabilitation of offenders, not on retribution."

www.mesj.org

National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. (1988)

"In light of its long-standing opposition to capital punishment, and recognizing the necessity for making incremental efforts to eliminate the death penalty, the National Council of Churches in the U.S.A. reaffirms its opposition to the death penalty and supports legislation that seeks to eliminate racially-biased sentencing."

www.ncccusa.org

The Orthodox Church in America

"BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Ninth All-American Council of the Orthodox Church in America supports the abolition of the death penalty in this and all countries and does urge our elected and appointed officials in those states where prisoners are still executed to introduce and support appropriate legislation aimed at abolishing the death penalty."

www.oca.org

Pax Christi (2001)

"Pax Christi reaffirms its 1981 Seamless Garment position in support of all life. The consistent ethic of life opposes the death penalty...and anything that threatens life."

www.paxchristiusa.org

What Religious Groups/People of Faith Have Said About the Death Penalty

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) (1985)

"THEREFORE, the 197th General Assembly (1985): Reaffirms the position of the General Assemblies of the United Presbyterian Church of 1959, 1965, and 1977, and of the Presbyterian Church U.S. of 1966, and declares its continuing opposition to capital punishment."

www.pcusa.org

Reformed Church in America (1965)

"That in light of the following reason this General Synod go on record as opposing the retention of capital punishment as an instrument of justice within our several states, encouraging forward looking study in all areas related to criminology; supporting all efforts to improve our penal institutions, crime prevention agencies and policy procedures, and effort being made to secure provision of adequate staff and budget for prison, parole boards and similar institutions..."

www.rca.org

Southern Christian Leadership Conference (from *Roper v. Simmons* amicus brief, 2004)

"The SCLC's founding president, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., believed that the death penalty both violates human rights and is a symptom of violence in society which could never serve as a remedy to violence. Additionally, the SCLC has opposed the death penalty because of its discriminatory application to the poor and people of color."

www.sclcnational.org

United Church of Christ (1979)

"BE IT RESOLVED that the Twelfth General Synod of the United Church of Christ reaffirm opposition to the death penalty."

www.ucc.org

United Methodist Church (2004)

"We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore and transform all human beings. The United Methodist Church is deeply concerned about crime throughout the world and the value of any life taken by a murder or homicide. We believe all human life is sacred and created by God and therefore, we must see all human life as significant and valuable. When governments implement the death penalty (capital punishment), then the life of the convicted person is devalued and all possibility of change in that person's life ends."

www.umc.org

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops (2005)

"Since 1980, the USCCB has taken a strong and principled position against the use of the death penalty in the United States. We oppose the use of the death penalty not just for what it does to those guilty of horrible crimes, but for how it affects society; moreover, Pope John Paul II, in both *The Gospel of Life* and the revised Catechism of the Catholic Church, states that our society has adequate alternative means today to protect society from violent crime without resorting to capital punishment."

www.usccb.org

Humanist/Peace Churches

American Ethical Union (1976)

"The American Ethical Union is unalterably opposed to capital punishment. The willful taking of human life is cruel and inhuman punishment and violates our belief in the intrinsic worth of every human being. It is wholly unacceptable, whether imposed to prevent repetition of a crime by an individual, as a deterrent to others, or as social retribution."

www.aeu.org

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American Friends Service Committee (1976)

"The American Friends Service Committee reaffirms its opposition to the death penalty. We base our stand on the Quaker belief that every person has value in the eyes of God and on Quaker testimonies against the taking of human life."

www.afsc.org

Fellowship of Reconciliation

"As people of religious and ethical conscience, we seek the restoration and renewal of wrongdoers, not their deaths."

www.forusa.org

Friends Committee on National Legislation (1987)

"We seek abolition of capital punishment, because it violates the sacredness of human life and our belief in the human capacity for change. This irreversible penalty cannot be applied equitably and without error. Use of the death penalty by the state powerfully reinforces the idea that killing can be a proper way of responding to those who have wronged us. We do not believe that reinforcement of that idea can lead to healthier and safer communities."

www.fcnl.org

Friends United Meeting (1960)

"We look with favor upon the renewed efforts in our time to abolish capital punishment, [and] urge our members individually, and our Monthly and Yearly Meetings to unite with others in the task for removing the death penalty from the statute books of the various states, provinces and central or federal governments, and the United Nations."

www.fum.org

Unitarian Universalist Association (2005 Statement of Conscience)

"The first two Principles of Unitarian Universalism address the inherent worth and dignity of every person and justice, equity, and compassion in human relations. Consistent with these fundamental principles, a new corrections policy must place a primary emphasis on community alternatives. ...

Appalled by the gross injustices in our current criminal justice system, we the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association commit ourselves to working in our communities to reform the criminal justice and correctional systems and effect justice for both victims and violators."

www.uua.org

Jain

Statement by Manish Shah, Lifelong Jain, Board of Trustee, Parliament of the World Religions (2001)

"Jainism, which does not espouse belief in a creator god, has as its ethical core the doctrine of *ahimsa*, or no injury to all living creatures, and as its religious ideal the perfection of man's nature, to be achieved predominantly through the monastic and ascetic life. ...The death penalty is not consistent with the teachings of Lord Mahavira and the Jain faith. *Ahimsa* teaches reverence for all life. A respect for another's life is respect for one's own life. This is what it means to experience the dignity of our own life. When we as a society cannot bear to cause pain to anyone is when we stop violating the laws of life. On this basis, capital punishment must be abolished."

What Religious Groups/People of Faith Have Said About the Death Penalty

Jewish

The American Jewish Committee (1972)

"WHEREAS capital punishment degrades and brutalizes the society which practices it...NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the American Jewish Committee be recorded as favoring the abolition of the death penalty."

www.ajc.org

American Jewish Congress (from *Roper v. Simmons* amicus brief, 2004)

"The American Jewish Congress is an organization of American Jews founded in 1918 to protect the civil, political, religious, and economic rights of American Jews and all Americans. It has opposed the death penalty in the United States because it believes that, given the current state of the criminal justice system, it cannot be administered in ways that comply with elementary notions of justice and fairness."

www.ajcongress.org

Central Conference of American Rabbis (1979)

"Both in concept and in practice, Jewish tradition found capital punishment repugnant, despite Biblical sanctions for it. For the past 2,000 years, with the rarest of exceptions, Jewish courts have refused to punish criminals by depriving them of their lives... We oppose capital punishment under all circumstances."

www.ccarnet.org

National Council of Synagogues (from *Roper v. Simmons* amicus brief, 2004)

"Our contemporary Jewish religious and moral leaders have developed a consensus that the practice of capital punishment is unacceptable in our time. ...Our tradition teaches that vengeance and retribution neither heal pain nor comfort the bereaved. Responding to violence with violence only breeds more violence and suffering. Though we understand society's concerns with punishing the guilty by meting out death as a form of retributive justice, we as religious people are called to a higher moral ground, seeking punishments that allow for healing, reconciliation and penance. The death penalty annihilates the possibility of reaching this higher ground, all the more so in the case of juvenile executions."

The Rabbinical Assembly (1995)

"THEREFORE, be it resolved that The Rabbinical Assembly oppose the adoption of death penalty laws and urge their abolition in states that have already adopted them."

www.rabbinicalassembly.org

Union of American Hebrew Congregations (1959)

"We believe, further, that the practice of capital punishment serves no practical purpose. Experience in several states and nations has demonstrated that capital punishment is not effective as a deterrent to crime. Moreover, we believe that this practice debases our entire penal system and brutalizes the human spirit. ...

We appeal to our congregants and to our co-religionists, and to all who cherish God's mercy and love, to join in efforts to eliminate this practice which lies as a stain upon civilization and our religious conscience."

www.urj.org

Native American

Yvonne Swann, International Indian Treaty Council Information Office, San Francisco, CA

"I am a member of the Sinixt/Arrow Lakes Nation. ...The death penalty was imposed on my people from the day that the colonizers first set foot on this land. ...We don't believe in the

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection

death penalty. If we did, there wouldn't be any other people here but the indigenous peoples. We believe in sharing. We are a loving and peaceful people."

Sikh

Nemi Jain – Sikh Scholar (2003)

"Executing [an individual] is against Sikh values of love, compassion, mercy and forgiveness."

Religious Groups/People of Faith That Have Expressed Concerns about the Death Penalty and/or Support a Moratorium

Christian

National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc. (2004)

"NBCUSA, Inc. calls on President Bush and the governors of our nation that have not called a moratorium on the death penalty to do so."

www.nationalbaptist.com

Jewish

Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations (2000)

"While traditional Judaism clearly contemplates and condones the death penalty as the ultimate sanction within a legitimate legal system, Judaism simultaneously insists that capital punishment be administered by a process that ensures accuracy as well as justice; our valuing of human life as infinite demands no less. ...Thus, we support putting an execution moratorium in place and the creation of a commission to review America's death penalty procedures and any reforms needed to ensure that our justice system lives up to that name."

www.ou.org

Muslim

Muslim Public Affairs Council (from *Roper v. Simmons* amicus brief, 2004)

"The Quran does sanction the use of the death penalty in certain circumstances. However, this is circumscribed by a variety of factors. Two being, the injunction to be merciful is emphasized throughout the Quran, and even in capital cases of murder, the Quran clearly states that it is better to forgive, but most men are not capable of that. A democratic polity, however, can choose to enshrine this divine mandate to be merciful with the law itself by forgoing the death penalty in its entirety. Our reading of the Islamic texts supports such a conclusion."

www.mpac.org

Dr. Azizah Y. al-Hibri - Islamic Scholar (2001)

"In principle, capital punishment is not prohibited in Islam. Capital punishment in Islamic law, however, has its own *dhawabit* (checks and balances). For one, this punishment is not imposed unless due process has been observed in a fair trial, and extenuating circumstances were fully considered. ...it is an established fact that the burden of capital punishment in the United States falls disproportionately on minorities... This bias is not only racial, but economic as well."

www.karamah.org

Dr. Shaid Atha - Islamic Scholar (2004)

"We must consider capital punishment from the aspect of a giver of life and death. "He who created life and death, that He many test which of you is best in deed. Her is the mighty, the forgiving." (Qur'an 77:2) "No one can die except by God's permission, the terms being fixed as by writing." (Qur'an 3:145) Life is sacred. "Do not take the life which God had made sacred except in (the course of) justice." (Qur'an 6:151) ...Thus is it clear that the giver of life and death is God Himself alone, and anyone acting on His behalf must act according to His principles."

What Religious Groups/People of Faith Have Said About the Death Penalty

Religious Groups/People of Faith That Have Explicitly Not Taken a Position on the Death Penalty

Christian

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (1996)

"The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints regards the question of whether and in what circumstances the state should impose capital punishment as a matter to be decided solely by the prescribed processes of civil law. We neither promote nor oppose capital punishment."
www.lds.org

The General Association of General Baptists (1975)

"Views differ among us and laws differ among states concerning the death penalty. Christians must use prayer and the word of God to arrive at a decision on the rightness or wrongness of the death penalty."
www.generalbaptist.com

Religious Groups/People of Faith That Have Expressed Support for the Death Penalty

Christian

The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod (1980)

"Whereas, The Lutheran Confessions support capital punishment:

...God has delegated His authority of punishing evil-doers to civil magistrates in place of parents; in early times, as we read in Moses, parents had to bring their own children to judgment and sentence them to death. Therefore what is forbidden here applies to private individuals, not to governments. (*Large Catechism I*, 180 to 181 [Tappert, p. 389])

Therefore be it Resolved, That The Lutheran Church - Missouri Synod declare that capital punishment is in accord with the Holy Scriptures and the Lutheran Confessions. ...

Christians are to use their influence, to whatever degree it is possible, in urging governments either to retain, to reinstate, or to abolish the death penalty, on the insistence that any punishment be administered with utmost fairness."
<http://www.lcms.org/graphics/assets/media/CTCR/capitalpunishment.pdf>

National Association of Evangelicals (Resolutions in 1972 and 1973):

"The National Association of Evangelicals believes that the ultimate penalty of capital punishment should be retained for premeditated capital crimes. ...

We strongly affirm our resolution of 1972 concerning capital punishment, and we call upon congress and state legislatures to enact legislation that will direct the death penalty for such horrendous crimes as premeditated murder, the killing of a police officer or guard, murder in connection with any other crime, hijacking, skyjacking, or kidnapping where persons are physically harmed in the process. ...

We urge that legislation which re-establishes the death penalty also include safeguards to eliminate any inequities."

www.nae.net

Part Two: Resources for Promoting Reflection

Southern Baptist Convention (2000)

"Therefore, be it RESOLVED, That the messengers to the Southern Baptist Convention, meeting in Orlando, Florida, June 13-14, 2000, support the fair and equitable use of capital punishment by civil magistrates as a legitimate form of punishment for those guilty of murder or treasonous acts that result in death; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge that capital punishment be administered only when the pursuit of truth and justice result in clear and overwhelming evidence of guilt; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That because of our deep reverence for human life, our profound respect for the rights of individuals, and our respect for the law, we call for vigilance, justice, and equity in the criminal justice system; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we urge that capital punishment be applied as justly and as fairly as possible without undue delay, without reference to the race, class, or status of the guilty; and

Be it further RESOLVED, That we call on civil magistrates to use humane means in administering capital punishment; and

Be it finally RESOLVED, That we commit ourselves to love, to pray for, and to minister the gospel to victims and perpetrators of crimes, realizing that only in Christ is there forgiveness of sin, reconciliation, emotional and spiritual healing, and the gift of eternal life."

www.sbc.net

Part Three: Resources for Promoting Discussion on the Death Penalty

How to Create a Supportive Space for Discussion

Open discussion is one of the best ways to conduct public education on the death penalty. It allows people to express their viewpoints and hear what others have to say on the issue, leading to greater understanding. For this reason, any discussion on this emotional and volatile topic requires a supportive space in which all can feel at ease expressing their opinions.

Here are some suggestions that will aid in ensuring a comfortable and productive discussion about the death penalty:

- Prepare yourself as the discussion facilitator. This means planning an agenda, considering possible time limits, preparing provocative questions, etc.
- Begin the session by welcoming all participants and explaining the intention of the discussion. Review the agenda, agree on time limits, and explain the following ground rules for considerate interaction:
 - Speak from your own experience.
 - Actively listen to other participants and consider what they are communicating.
 - Do not interrupt anyone.
 - Do not attack personally those who offer differing opinions.
- Allow those participating in the discussion to introduce themselves. Use a creative icebreaker so that people can get to know each other before becoming involved in a heated discussion. This personal contact will help humanize the discourse.
- Employ techniques that will include as many of the participants as possible. Each participant must feel that s/he has been given an opportunity to present his or her views. Work toward balancing the various viewpoints, allowing as many perspectives as possible to be heard.
- Focus on facilitating the discussion, not offering your own viewpoint. There should be other people present who can raise concerns similar to yours.
- Be prepared to initiate the discussion and to keep it flowing. One tactic is to read from books, articles, letters to the editor, quotes from well-known people, or other statements that raise different points of view, in order to elicit responses from the group. Use the resources provided in this Guidebook, such as

“The death penalty doesn’t need your assent to continue... it needs your indifference.”

~Ray Krone, the 100th innocent person to be released from death row
(2002)



Part Three: Resources for Promoting Discussion

“Every chance we get, we need to challenge the mentality that compassion is a weakness. Compassion is the toughest thing of all, but it’s the only thing that works to restore peace in our lives.”

~Carol Byars, member of
Murder Victims’ Families
for Reconciliation,
Houston, Texas
✝ ☆ ☾ ☸ ☸

the discussion guides for the films “Dead Man Walking”, “The Exonerated”, and “The Empty Chair” (pp. 34-39), as well as “How to Address the Tough Points” (pp. 31-33). You can also distribute copies of AIUSA’s fact sheets.

Here are a few potential discussion-starters:

- What has been your personal experience with the criminal justice system? Have you ever served on a jury?
- If you had to summarize your general feelings on the death penalty, what would you say?
- How long have you held your current views on the death penalty? Have your views changed at all over time?
- To what extent have you followed executions that have taken place in your state?
- Do you have relatives or friends who have been the victims of violent crime? How do those experiences shape your views toward crime and, more specifically, the death penalty?
- Could you personally vote to sentence someone to death if you served on a jury? Why or why not?
- In what circumstances, if any, do you feel the death penalty is an appropriate sentence?
- What has shaped your opinions on the death penalty? Your religious background? Family and friends? The media? Other sources?
- What to you is the most important and persuasive argument to support your position on the death penalty?
- Have you ever wavered in your position on the death penalty? What prompted that?
- Are there alternatives to the death penalty that you believe would promote both public safety and respect for life?
- How can faith communities help victims of crime heal from the tragedy they have experienced?
- How can faith communities help break the cycle of violence in our society?

How to Address the Tough Points

Talking about the death penalty can often be divisive, frustrating, and even counter-productive. Yet constructive discussion can be achieved through a clear strategy that works to dispel common death penalty myths. The following pages offer suggestions for addressing pro-death penalty points of view.

How to Approach Death Penalty Supporters

When leading a discussion on this issue, try to encourage participation at every step and be sure to give voice to pro-death penalty arguments. As St. Francis suggests, “we seek first to understand, then to be understood.”

By reinforcing the values of death penalty supporters while at the same time dispelling the myths that might misinform their views, it is possible to give those who favor the death penalty a chance to change their minds without changing their value systems. For example, providing information about the arbitrariness and discriminatory nature of the capital sentencing process may allow death penalty supporters to change their views about the death penalty while still upholding their commitment to justice.

Pro-Death Penalty Assertions and Refutations

Assertion: *“The death penalty is necessary to ‘get tough on crime.’ It is an effective deterrent to violent crime such as rape and murder.”*

Refutation: The death penalty cannot be justified as a necessary public safety measure because it has not been proven to reduce crime. Reasonable people might be deterred from committing a crime by considering execution as a consequence, but people who commit murder are rarely thinking rationally at the time of the crime. Most research on the death penalty demonstrates that the possibility of being sentenced to death does not deter criminals from committing either calculated or spontaneous crimes. According to Professor Roger Hood, director of Oxford University’s Center for Criminological Research and author of a 1988 UN report on the death penalty (updated in 2002), there is no conclusive evidence that the death penalty reduces the murder rate. Furthermore, states that maintain the death penalty traditionally have higher murder rates than states that do not (according to FBI data). No connection has ever been made to link the rate of murders in a state to its use of the death penalty. Also, nations such as Canada that have abolished the death penalty have since experienced a decline in violent crime.

“Criminals, people who commit crimes, usually society rejects these people. They are also part of society. Give them some form of punishment to say they were wrong, but show them they are part of society and can change. Show them compassion.”

~Dalai Lama
✠ ✨ ☪ ☸

Part Three: Resources for Promoting Discussion

Use of the death penalty, therefore, is actually detrimental to the search for real solutions to violent crime because it offers a false sense of safety. It could also be argued that the death penalty increases the level of brutality in society, furthering the cycle of violence.

Assertion: *“The death penalty is demanded by and carried out in the name of the victims’ families.”*

“To me the death penalty is vengeance, and vengeance doesn’t really help anyone in the healing process.”

~Bud Welch, Board President, Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights.

His daughter Julie was killed in the Oklahoma

City bombing.



Refutation: Punishment for a crime cannot be decided on the basis of the wishes of the victim’s family. If this was the situation, all sentencing would be completely arbitrary, reflecting differing ideas about justice from case to case. A justice system, ideally, should mete out consistent penalties for criminal acts. It is only natural to feel angry and frustrated about the loss of innocent life through the violent act of murder. We fail as a society, however, if all we can offer to those hurt by violent acts is more violence and death, rather than mercy and healing.

It is also important to remember that not all victims speak with the same voice. Many victims’ families oppose the death penalty. Members of organizations such as Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation, the Journey of Hope...From Violence to Healing, and Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights argue that executions only perpetuate the violence that victimized their loved ones and draw attention and resources away from victims’ families. (See pp. 77-78 for contact information for these groups.)

In addition, the death penalty itself creates more victims - the family members of the person who has been executed - and can take a terrible toll on the the prison officials charged with carrying out executions. (See p. 46 for information on the “No Silence, No Shame” project that supports the families of the executed.)

Assertion: *“We need to execute people who commit the most heinous crimes, such as Jeffrey Dahmer and Timothy McVeigh.”*

Refutation: Death penalty supporters will often point to the most heinous case they can think of, in hopes of appealing to people’s sense of retribution for unthinkable crimes. Despite the claim that the death penalty is reserved for the “worst of the worst,” history clearly demonstrates that this is simply not true. In recent years, both the BTK serial killer in Kansas and Gary Ridgeway, the Washington state man who confessed to committing 48 murders over a 20-year period, received life sentences for their crimes. In this scenario, it is important to maintain that we must examine capital punishment on a systemic level, not simply according to the most gory and reprehensible cases.

When people claim that the death penalty is just, and that some people deserve punishment by death, they make assumptions about the fairness of the death penalty. Approximately two

How to Address the Tough Points

percent of those eligible for the death penalty actually receive death sentences in the United States, and far less than one percent are later executed.

See AIUSA's fact sheets on the death penalty for more details.

Although we might assume that gravity of the crime and culpability are the main factors that determine who is executed, the facts indicate otherwise. Local politics, the quality of legal counsel, the location of the crime, plea bargaining, and pure chance affect the process by which people are sentenced to death in this country. Offenders who commit similar crimes under similar circumstances often receive vastly different sentences. The race of both the offender and victim, as well as social and economic status, play a large part in deciding who lives and who dies.

Assertion: *"I don't want my tax dollars to go toward incarcerating convicted murderers."*

Refutation: The costs associated with the death penalty are substantially higher than those associated with life imprisonment. The greatest costs of the death penalty are incurred prior to and during trial, not in post-conviction proceedings (appeals). Even if all appeals were abolished, the death penalty system would still be more expensive than alternative sentences. In the United States, it costs two to six times as much to execute a person than to imprison someone for life. Many states could save millions of dollars per year if they abolished the death penalty. Some states expend so many resources promoting and using the death penalty that they must cut funding to law enforcement officers and for effective crime prevention programs.

Assertion: *"The American justice system is the best in the world and offers proper safeguards against mistakes."*

Refutation: Most Americans trust our country's justice system, but the fact that mistakes are made should lead many to question the "justice" involved in seeking the death penalty. No matter how good our justice system is, it is based on human reason and judgment and is subject to error. Therefore, the specter of mistake will always exist, as will the possibility of executing an innocent person. Jailhouse or "snitch" false testimony, mistaken eyewitness identification, misinterpretation of evidence, incompetent legal representation, unreliable expert testimony, and community prejudices and pressures all too often impact the verdict and sentencing.

More than 120 people have been released from death row since 1973, due to credible evidence of their wrongful conviction. Ten such exonerations occurred in 2003 alone. Many of these exonerations resulted from the tireless work of journalism students, lawyers, and activists - not the justice system. Investigations are currently underway in Missouri and Texas into four cases in which an innocent person might have been executed.

This section was adapted from "How to Address the Tough Points," CACP News Notes, vol.7. no.3, and "Death Penalty Workshop," developed by Angela Thieman, March 1997.

Film Discussion Guides

Discussion Guide for “Dead Man Walking”

The film “Dead Man Walking” is an excellent tool for initiating discussion about the death penalty. It is well known for its balanced portrayal of the issue and has been acclaimed by people with differing personal beliefs about the death penalty. “Dead Man Walking” can be found at most movie rental stores. Rent it a day in advance or reserve a copy to make sure that it is available for your discussion.

Introduction

“Dead Man Walking” is a highly acclaimed film that raises questions about capital punishment in a compelling way. It is based on the book *Dead Man Walking: An Eyewitness Account of the Death Penalty in the United States* by Helen Prejean, CSJ. In it, Sister Helen describes her insights and her experiences with ministering to men facing execution, and, later, to the families of murder victims. The film allows audiences to see the reality of murder and punishment from the viewpoints of death row inmates, their families, the families of the victims, and prison officials.

Guidelines for Discussion

A discussion of “Dead Man Walking” can be a rich - as well as intense - learning experience. The issues of violent crime and the death penalty often stir strong feelings and deeply held opinions. The film presents these issues in an emotionally powerful way through the personal stories of its characters. Consequently, it is important to consider the emotional dynamics of any discussion session.

- As you begin the session, make sure that the group has a clear understanding of the time frame and the purpose of the discussion. Be particularly clear about whether you will be discussing the film, the issues that it raises, or both. If this is not clear, and if participants come in with conflicting expectations, the resulting discussion may be frustrating for some members of the group, as well as for you as the facilitator.
- Establish some ground rules for the discussion, especially if you expect significant differences of opinion. Be aware that your tone and approach as a facilitator will go a long way toward setting the tone of the session. Invite participants to adopt the following guidelines:
 - Speak the truth and be as open as you can about your own thoughts and beliefs.
 - Be respectful toward others who may hold differing beliefs.
 - Listen actively and refrain from interrupting other participants.
 - Speak in terms of your own beliefs, experiences, or feelings, rather than blaming or criticizing others.
- If the discussion takes place directly after viewing the film, it will be especially important to begin the session with some time for the expression and release of emotional energy built up during the experience of watching “Dead Man Walking.”

- Consider ways to encourage participation by all and to avoid domination by a few vocal members. Here are some ways this can be done:
 - With a small group: For questions on which you would like to hear from everyone, go around the room to give each person an opportunity to speak.
 - With a large group: Break into pairs or small groups of three to five people. If it seems useful and time permits, you can ask each group to report briefly to the larger group on some insights or important points from their discussion.
 - The facilitator can simply say, "I would like to hear from some of you who have not said much so far."

Discussion Questions

Initial Reactions and Feelings

- "Dead Man Walking" is a very powerful film. What feelings and/or reactions did you have while viewing it?
- What scenes and images in the film stand out for you? What meanings do these have for you?
- How did the film affect you?

About the Film

- What do you think of Sister Helen's attempt to minister to both sides - to the murderer and to the families of the murder victims?
- What changes did you see taking place in Matthew Poncelot during the film? What brought about these changes?
- What new information about the death penalty did you learn from viewing this film?
- What new understandings about the experiences and needs of murder victims' families did you gain from viewing the film?
- What new understandings about the experiences and needs of the families of those on death row did you gain from viewing the film?
- Sister Helen's family presents the argument that her community of faith would benefit more if she were to help "honest" people. Do you agree? How can serving those on death row or their families benefit your community of faith?

About the Issues Raised

- How were your own beliefs regarding capital punishment affected by watching this film?
- Did you find yourself supporting Matthew Poncelot's execution, or hoping that his life would be spared?
- Early in Matthew's relationship with Sister Helen, he tells her that he didn't kill anybody, but ultimately he confesses his real involvement in the crime. If Matthew's original story to Helen had been true - that he had been present and had participated in the crime by threatening the two young

"I am pleased that I am able to stand here today and say with a pure heart and a meaningful heart that I am against the death penalty. There is no purpose that it serves except to further the damage that has already been done."

~Mamie Till-Mobley,
Mother of Emmitt Till,
addressing Illinois
Governor George Ryan in
her final public
appearance, December
2002



Part Three: Resources for Promoting Discussion

These questions were adapted from a discussion guide by Bob Gross, originally published by the Criminal Justice Program of the Presbyterian Church (USA). The original version is available for free from Presbyterian Distribution Service, (800) 524-2612, PDS #72-630-96-715.

people but had not killed anyone - how would that affect your view of whether he should live or die?

- We are not told of alternatives to the death penalty in Louisiana, but if you knew that the alternative punishment was life imprisonment with no possibility of parole, would you support the death penalty for Matthew Poncelet or the alternative? Why?
- Do you believe victims' families should have a role or a voice in determining the sentence in a capital case? Should they have a role in the clemency process? Why or why not?
- How does healing come to families grieving the loss of a murdered child? How can faith communities help promote healing?
- How does healing occur for the family members of someone convicted of a capital crime, or executed by the state? What is our role in assisting with their healing?
- Many death penalty abolitionists believe that capital punishment denies the humanity of the individual and the possibility of rehabilitation. How do you feel about a convicted murderer's capacity for rehabilitation?

Closing

In closing the session, help the group summarize or reflect upon the themes or important points that emerged during your discussion. It will also be helpful to ask whether any individuals, or the group as a whole, have been moved to take further steps in regard to the issues raised in the film. Some people might want to read the book, *Dead Man Walking*, by Sister Helen Prejean (see p. 66 for information).

Discussion Guide for “The Exonerated”

The film “The Exonerated” portrays six true-story accounts of individuals who have been released from death row due to evidence of their wrongful conviction. It explores the circumstances leading to their convictions, death sentences, and hardships on death row. These questions were developed by AIUSA’s Program to Abolish the Death Penalty.

1. This film tells the story of six individuals wrongly convicted and sentenced to death. Did you know that exonerations had occurred from death row in the U.S.? How does that affect your view of capital punishment or the criminal justice system?
2. Gary Gauger was interrogated for 21 hours by local authorities, which ultimately led to his false confession. In your opinion, what are acceptable parameters for methods of police questioning and gathering of evidence?
3. Confessions are often taken as definitive proof of guilt by jurors. How has this film affected your opinion of the validity of confessions?
4. What kinds of evidence were used against the six exonerated individuals but were eventually found to be unreliable or misleading? What important evidence was withheld that might have pointed to the suspects’ innocence?
5. Does the film bring to mind any social stereotypes that might be utilized or manipulated to increase the chance of arrest and/or conviction?
6. In the cases of David Keaton, Delbert Tibbs, and Robert Hayes, do you believe that race played a role in their arrests, convictions, and death sentences?
7. How did the film affect your beliefs about those sentenced to death in this country?
8. Sunny Jacobs’ partner, Jesse Tafero, experienced an excruciating execution due to a botched electrocution. Should the pain caused to a prisoner during execution be considered in the death penalty debate? Should the Eighth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, which prohibits cruel and unusual punishment, apply to the method of execution?
9. Much attention is given to the way the death penalty affects victims’ families. What do the stories of Sunny Jacobs and Kerry Max Cook tell us about the way the death penalty impacts the families of death row inmates?

Facts from the Death Penalty Information Center, as of July 2006:

1. Since 1973, 123 people have been released from death row in 25 states, due to evidence of their wrongful conviction.
2. 18 people, including Sunny Jacobs and Kerry Max Cook, have been released with substantial evidence of their innocence but not exonerated completely.
3. 8 people have been executed despite strong evidence of their innocence.
4. In total, exonerated death row prisoners have spent 1,042 years between their death sentences and their exonerations.
5. Currently only 15 states, the District of Columbia, and the federal government in the U.S. have laws for wrongful conviction compensation. Where these laws do exist, they are fairly meager, and compensation is usually not granted if the alleged criminal pled guilty in cases involving confessions.
6. Since 1973, the states with the highest number of exonerations are Florida with 22, Illinois with 18, and Louisiana, Texas, and Arizona, all with 8.

www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Part Three: Resources for Promoting Discussion

Witness to Innocence, a project of the Death Penalty Discourse Network and The Moratorium Campaign, maintains a speakers' bureau of exonerated death row prisoners. To arrange for a speaker, please visit www.witnesstoinnocence.org/ or contact Coordinator Kurt Rosenberg at 215-387-1831.

10. What kind of compensation, if any, are those who have been exonerated from death row entitled to receive from the state?
11. What role did pressure from the community play in the wrongful convictions explored in the film? Do you agree that there are situations in which police and/or prosecutors might feel pressured to arrest or charge the wrong person? Has this been true in your experience or in your community?
12. After viewing the movie, what do you think your faith community's response should be to the death penalty in general and to death row inmates in particular? How can your faith community support those who have been exonerated?

Discussion Guide for “The Empty Chair”

1. Stories of the victims' families as recounted in the documentary bring you into an emotional relationship with the issue of the death penalty that is different from an intellectual relationship. Does it shift the debate?
2. The family members in the documentary express the search for forgiveness and healing. Does this cause you to reflect on how you would respond to these difficult human journeys?
3. A viewer commented that the film reminded her of the doctor in Camus' *The Plague* who, without believing in God or some ultimate meaning, chose the course of sympathy, empathy, and love. Does the documentary point to the spiritual possibilities within people?
4. The documentary deals with human experiences regarding revenge and anger. Does this stimulate a conversation about how we can move past these emotions?
5. Renny Cushing, whose father was murdered, says that he prefers life in prison without parole over the death penalty because once the state takes the life of the murderer, it forever precludes the opportunity to forgive the killer. Do executions deprive the victims' families of the chance for forgiveness and reconciliation?
6. Forgiveness does not mean you condone the crime or criminal. Forgiveness, as expressed in the film, is often chosen to save oneself. Do you view forgiveness as a choice?
7. Does the death penalty give comfort to the victims' families?
8. Are the voices of the victims' families “unheard” in the machinery of the criminal justice system today? Should they have a more prominent role during the trial stage?
9. Many interviewees expressed distrust that “life in prison without the possibility of parole” is an absolute sentence. If it were, do you believe more people would favor it over the death penalty?
10. Has viewing this documentary affected your personal view of the death penalty?

“The Empty Chair” presents the stories of four families that have been victimized by murder and must confront their notions of forgiveness and punishment.

These questions have been adapted from the discussion guide developed by Justice Productions, www.justiceproductions.org.

Part Four: Resources for Promoting Action on the Death Penalty

This step-by-step guide was developed by:

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How to Pass a Resolution on the Death Penalty

Getting started: Bringing a resolution before your group/congregation

1. **Find out the procedures**, if any, by which your group/congregation considers a resolution.
2. **Draft your resolution.** Use the sample resolutions on the following pages or contact Equal Justice USA for help on crafting a resolution that addresses how the death penalty is being applied in your state. Does your resolution give enough information to lead members of your community toward supporting abolition or a moratorium? [If your resolution is for abolition, include a clause about calling for a moratorium until such time as abolition is achieved. That way, your group can still be part of Equal Justice USA/Quixote Center's national listing of moratorium resolutions, now at over 4,300 groups!]
3. **Line up your support.** Share your plans to introduce the resolution with others in your group/congregation who you think will support it. Ask for their help in convincing your community to pass it.
4. **Introduce your resolution.** Be sure that everyone involved in the decision has a copy of your resolution. Make yourself available to answer questions or to provide background information.
5. **Urge an open discussion about your call for abolition or moratorium.** Encourage people to schedule time for internal education on the death penalty. Consider showing a film or inviting an outside speaker.
6. **If your resolution passes:** Be sure to alert the media and your national, state, and local elected officials. Send a copy to Amnesty International USA and Equal Justice USA/Quixote Center for inclusion in the *National Tally* of groups that have passed a resolution.

If your resolution does not pass: *Don't get discouraged!* Introducing it has surely educated some people in your congregation/group and you have probably made some new allies. Consult with them about your next steps.

What's next? Taking the campaign to the next level

After you have secured support from your group/congregation on board, set out to recruit others! Here's how:

- 1. Alert your entire membership** that the resolution has passed and ask members to introduce resolutions to other groups to which they belong.
- 2. Put a blank resolution in your next newsletter or email alert.** Equal Justice USA can supply you with an electronic version of a blank resolution or you can direct people to www.ejusa.org.
- 3. Give a talk at another group, faith community, or school in your area.** Include a pitch for the resolution campaign in your message. Or when people ask you what they can do, give them a blank resolution and ask them to recruit a group.
- 4. Take a resolution to your city council.** Contact Equal Justice USA for ideas or hints on how to go about gaining your town's endorsement. It's easier than you think!

Over 4,300 faith communities, civic groups, businesses, and government bodies have called for a moratorium on executions, including the following:

- Armenian Orthodox Church (CA)
- Baton Rouge Catholic Worker (Baton Rouge, LA)
- College Hill Zion AME Church (Selma, AL)
- Coral Gables Congregational Church, Peace and Justice Committee (FL)
- Detroit Friends Meeting (Quakers) (Detroit, MI)
- Ecumenical Christian Ministries (KS)
- Episcopal Diocese of Delaware
- Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Arkansas-Oklahoma Synod
- First Mennonite Church, Leadership Council (Lincoln, NE)
- Foundry United Methodist Church, Peace with Justice Mission (Washington, DC)
- Illinois Conference of Churches
- Interdenominational Ministerial Alliance of the Baltimore Area (Baltimore, MD)
- South Side Presbyterian Church USA (Tucson, AZ)
- Temple B'rith Kodesh, Social Action Committee (Rochester, NY)
- Washington Park United Church of Christ (Denver, CO)
- First Unitarian Universalist Church of San Antonio (TX)

Part Four: Resources for Promoting Action

Sample Resolutions on the Death Penalty

Statement by Mother of God Parish, Covington, Kentucky

Examples of faith-based resolutions calling for a moratorium on executions are available at www.quixote.org/ej/. Your local/state anti-death penalty coalition might also have sample resolutions; check pp. 79-85 for website addresses.

If your community or group passes an abolition or moratorium resolution, please let us know! You might also consider such next steps as including a copy of the resolution in your newsletter or posting it on your bulletin board; creating a framed poster of the resolution to hang in your building; sending a copy to your local newspaper; or posting it on your community website.

Mother of God Parish in Covington, Kentucky, affirming its belief in God as the author of life, in the dignity of human life, in reconciliation, and in restorative justice, now expresses its opposition to the death penalty and calls for the abolition of capital punishment. We take this stand for the following reasons:

1. Jesus calls us to love and forgive even our enemies, and to reform our hearts and lives, replacing anger and retaliation with reconciliation (Mt.:21-45). The Catholic Church, in recent statements, calls us explicitly and powerfully to oppose capital punishment.
2. "Capital Punishment does nothing for the families of victims of violent crime other than prolonging their suffering through many wasted years of criminal proceedings." (October 1997 Statement of the Catholic Bishops of Texas)
3. There is ample evidence that the death penalty is applied in a racist manner.
4. Death sentences are reserved for the poor.
5. Prisoner appeals have been severely curtailed, increasing the risk of imprisonment and execution of innocent people.
6. The 1998 Kentucky General Assembly passed legislation providing "life without possibility of parole" as a sentencing option to the death penalty.
7. The American Bar Association in February 1997 concluded that the administration of the death penalty is a "haphazard maze of unfair practices with no internal consistence" and has called for a moratorium on executions.
8. The United Nations Human Rights Commission in April 1998 called for a moratorium on executions, reporting that some states carry out executions in an arbitrary and discriminatory manner that does not spare juveniles, retarded, or mentally ill persons.

Therefore, we the Parish of Mother of God commit ourselves:

- To oppose the imposition of a death sentence by the Commonwealth of Kentucky, the United States, or any other entity.
- To encourage the membership of our parish to work toward the abolition of the death penalty by asking respective legislators to remove the laws allowing for a death sentence and to strengthen those parole regulations and practices which fail to protect society.
- To support each other to grow in non-violence as a way of life.
- To pray for the victims and their families, for offenders and their families, for the innocent and the guilty, for judges, jurors, attorneys, police officers, prison officials, and all affected by violent crime.

How to Pass a Resolution on the Death Penalty

We further direct that copies of this resolution shall be forwarded to Governor Paul Patton, our Kentucky representatives and senators, President William J. Clinton, and our Congressional delegation.

Signed by the Pastor of Mother of God Parish and Chairperson of Parish Pastoral Council, May 24, 1999.

[For information, contact Sr. Dorothy Schuette at (859) 291-2288; Fax (859) 291-2065; Mother of God Church, 119 West Sixth Street, Covington, Kentucky 41011.]

Statement on the Death Penalty: The Buddhist Peace Fellowship of Santa Fe

The Buddhist Peace Fellowship of Santa Fe seeks to abolish capital punishment in New Mexico and the United States because we believe that human life is sacred, and because we believe that human beings can change.

We base our position on the Buddha's trainings for non-harming, or precepts, which are guidelines for living our lives ethically. The first of these precepts states: "Aware of the suffering caused by violence, we undertake the training to refrain from killing or committing violence toward living beings. We will attempt to treat all beings with compassion and loving kindness."

++We believe that killing human beings for any reason is unethical, including killing by states and other governments.

++We believe that capital punishment degrades and brutalizes any society that practices it by teaching the use of violence in reaction to violence.

++We believe that capital punishment does not deter crime, but serves only to exact revenge.

++We believe that capital punishment disconnects us from one another and obstructs the practice of compassion, the basis of all Buddhist teachings.

We therefore urge all our representatives to work to end the death penalty in our state and across our country.

--Adopted February 22, 2003

"I am determined not to kill, not to let others kill, and not to condone any act of killing in the world, in my thinking, and in my way of life. We cannot support any act of killing; no killing can be justified. But not to kill is not enough ... If in your thinking you allow the killing to go on, you also break this precept. We must be determined not to condone killing, even in our minds."

-Venerable Thich Nhat Hanh, Zen Buddhist monk, peace activist, scholar, and poet



Part Four: Resources for Promoting Action

Ways to Provide Support to Families Impacted by the Death Penalty

For more information and resources on how your faith community can support the family members of those on death row or those facing a death sentence, please contact Martina Correia at aug1970@bellsouth.net or 912-484-0344.

Catholic communities might also read *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice*, published by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops. This document includes a section on the Church's mission in supporting all those touched by the criminal justice system. It is available on their website at www.usccb.org/sdwp/criminal.htm.

Faith communities can offer many different kinds of assistance to the families of those impacted directly by the death penalty.

Suggestions for assisting families of those currently on death row or facing a potential death sentence:

- Help family members understand the criminal justice system, including "dos and don'ts" when their loved one is charged with a capital offense; provide them with a copy of the "Capital Defense Handbook for Defendants and Their Families," available online at www.quixote.org/ej/grip/capitaldefensehandbook.pdf
- Help family members understand the legal representation assigned to their loved one
- Provide support at the trial and other court hearings by attending on behalf of the defendant
- Schedule conferences with the District Attorney's Office and both families - that of the victim and the defendant - to seek restorative justice and alternative sentencing instead of the death penalty
- Connect family members of death row inmates to each other
- Direct family members to organizations that advocate for alternatives to the death penalty
- Provide financial assistance for such things as counseling, transportation to and from the prison or courthouse, and phone cards
- Provide assistance with understanding the rules and regulations of the correctional center
- Serve as a source of compassion, strength, and kindness
- Provide support to groups/hospitality houses that assist family members during their visits to death row

Ways to Provide Support to Families Impacted by the Death Penalty

Ideas for providing support to the families of the executed:

- Hold a ceremony or memorial service or provide financial assistance for funeral and burial costs
- Be aware of anniversaries (of the arrest, of the execution) and of the extra difficulty that survivors may be experiencing at that time
- Be aware of the potentially re-traumatizing effect of hearing about other executions in the news
- Provide opportunities for the survivors to keep talking about their grief, anger, regret, worry
- Be sensitive to short- and long-term needs of any children who are affected by the execution, and be alert to the fact that even children whose relationship with the executed family member is relatively more distant may still be deeply affected
- Be aware that family members, and children in particular, may be hearing taunts and name-calling or may even be ostracized by others at school and in the community
- Help connect the family with the "No Silence, No Shame" project of Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (see next page for details)
- Help connect the family with local anti-death penalty groups
- Invite opportunities for the family member to speak publicly about the effects of the death penalty on survivors - perhaps to a church audience, perhaps elsewhere in the community
- Provide help/support for other projects the family member might choose to get involved in, such as developing a handbook for families of those still on death row or working with violence prevention or mental health organizations
- Help to reconcile family members who hold different opinions on the death penalty
- Provide counselling services to family members

"If people are genuinely concerned with the victim's family's plight, there should instead be a clamor for the legal and social measures which will provide the real support systems these families need in their time of anguish and irrevocable loss - financial assistance, therapeutic counsel, trial information, resolution, etc."

-Marietta Jaeger-Lane,
co-founder of the Journey
of Hope... From Violence
to Healing
✠ ☆ ☾ ☺ ☸

Part Four: Resources for Promoting Action

“No Silence, No Shame”: Organizing Families of the Executed – a Project of Murder Victims’ Families for Human Rights

“The ultimate measure of a person is not where one stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where one stands at times of challenge and controversy.”

~Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



As unrecognized victims who have been directly affected by executions, family members of the executed have the potential to be a powerful voice in the death penalty debate. Yet in order to achieve a public voice, these families have to overcome the shame and isolation that often makes it difficult to speak out. A project that focuses on outreach to and organizing of families of the executed can help to publicize the effects of the death penalty on the surviving family members by introducing a new voice into discussions of the societal costs of executions.

Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (MVFHR) officially launched the “No Silence, No Shame”: Organizing Families of the Executed project in Austin, Texas in October 2005. Eighteen relatives of people who were executed traveled from Illinois, Missouri, North Carolina, Georgia, Tennessee, Rhode Island, California, Massachusetts, Virginia, Alberta, Canada, and other parts of Texas for a private gathering and public ceremony. At the ceremony, speakers talked about society's failure to consider the effects of executions on surviving children, challenged society to offer treatment rather than death sentences to mentally ill offenders, and described the uniquely horrific experience of witnessing a loved one's execution. Participants then placed two roses in a vase: one in memory of their relative who was executed, and one in memory of the victim of the original murder.

With the support of the Unitarian Universalist Fund for a Just Society, the Maverick Lloyd Foundation, and the United Church of Christ Neighbors in Need Fund, MVFHR is now working on the next phase of the project. This involves conducting extensive interviews with family members of the executed around the United States with the goal of releasing a published report on International Human Rights Day: December 10, 2006. In the meantime, MVFHR is regularly adding photos and statements to its web gallery of victims' stories (which includes photos and statements from murder victims' family members and families of the executed). The organizations plans to work with state and local anti-death penalty groups to arrange public speaking opportunities for “No Silence, No Shame” participants.

To read more about the “No Silence, No Shame” project, visit www.murdervictimsfamilies.org. To support or become involved in the project, contact nosilence@murdervictimsfamilies.org or call 617-491-9600.

How to Find an Inmate Pen Pal

Below are some organizations that provide interested volunteers with information on prisoners looking for pen pals. You might also check with your local or state anti-death penalty coalition for information on how to become a pen pal to someone on death row in your state.

Please note that most of the information posted by these organizations for pen pals is provided by prisoners and has not been verified. Persons under the age of 18 should not seek correspondence with prisoners.

Brethren Witness Death Row Support Project

Website: <http://www.brethren.org/genbd/witness/drsp.htm>

Campaign to End the Death Penalty

A pen pal program for death row prisoners.

Website: www.nodeathpenalty.org

Canadian Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Death row inmates only. USA or International.

Website: <http://ccadp.org/AF.htm>

Email: ccadp@rogers.com

International Network of Prison Ministries

A list of hundreds of Christian pen pal programs.

Website: <http://prisonministry.net/directory/categories/penpal/index.htm>

Lamp of Hope Project

Founded by Texas Death Row prisoners.

Website: <http://www.lampofhope.org/>

Prison Pen Pals

Providing prisoners with correspondence opportunities.

Website: www.prisonpenpals.com

Email: info@prisonpenpals.com

Unitarian Universalist Prison Ministry

Faith-based pen pal program.

Website: www.uua.org/clf/penpals/html

“When I became the SDPAC for Connecticut, I knew that I had embarked upon a journey that would change my life in many ways. The more time that went by, the more I realized that I needed (and still need) to bring my work to a deeper level. That led me to correspond with people on death row, and eventually, I began visiting a man on death row. Besides learning more about the prison and judicial system, it put a human face on the part of the death penalty equation that I had not yet encountered. I had already met victims families and those directly touched by murder, I had talked with prosecutors, judges and defense attorneys, but until I met and developed a relationship with a death row inmate, my work was still abstract.”

-Robert Nave,
SDPAC-Connecticut



Part Four: Resources for Promoting Action

How to Move Your Messages in the Media

Please send us any press clips, photos, letters to the editor, etc., from your NWFA events!!

Start Thinking About Media Now

Why wait until the last minute to factor media into your plans for the National Weekend of Faith in Action (NWFA)? As soon as you decide that you are going to organize an event, make media coverage an integral part of your overall strategy. We encourage you to think of your work to abolish the death penalty as a campaign. Every time you talk about abolition, write a letter to the editor, submit an op-ed, or arrange a forum at your church or school, it's an opportunity to build support for your "candidate": abolition. In order to build that support, however, you must be prepared to deal strategically with the media and the public. As soon as you start planning your NWFA activities, start thinking of ways to use the media as a tool to generate support for your messages.

Media Is a Tool

When most people think of media, they think of television, radio, and newspapers; however, these outlets are simply vehicles. Real media is the content and the messages delivered to the general public through these vehicles. You, too, can use media as a tool to present your messages in compelling and persuasive ways. Television, radio and newspapers are all tools that activists can use to close the gap between public support for the death penalty and the harsh realities of this antiquated practice. Think about it this way - when was the last time you listened to a radio talk show, or read an opinion column, op-ed or letter to the editor that did not try to convey a specific point of view about a certain issue? The outlets are the vehicle, but it's the messages that provide the content and drive public opinion.

Agenda Moving Messages

Successful media is based on strong, dynamic messaging. One political insider refers to messaging as the "story by which we communicate." It conveys the key points you want the public to understand about your issue. As you develop your events or activities for the NWFA, think about what you want people to learn about the death penalty and abolition, or about the Weekend itself. Think about your audience. Will your messages resonate with this group? Think of interesting ways to make your core messages about the death penalty more compelling and appropriate for your community. For example, try statements like "an eye for an eye leaves the whole world blind," or "two wrongs don't make a right." You might also consider promoting your faith tradition's position on the death penalty. Just remember to ALWAYS stick to the core messages.

Keep in mind that one of the primary goals of your speech, letter, op-ed, or interview is to make others reflect on their own beliefs

How to Move Your Messages in the Media

about the death penalty. Sure, our friends and allies might agree with us, but preaching to the choir is no longer enough. If we are going to be successful in our efforts to abolish the death penalty, we must fill the pews with new faces. The NWFA itself is designed to create a safe space for those with deeply held religious convictions to come together and talk about the death penalty. Make sure you talk about abolition in ways that are true to your values, but don't be afraid to extend a friendly hand to a person or group to whom you otherwise would not reach out. You may be surprised at how many more people are willing to listen to what you have to say.

Putting It All Together

Ideally, you will start to think about ways to integrate media into whatever events you plan for NWFA. You might also make outreach to the media the cornerstone of your participation in the NWFA. As you plan your event, consider your target audience. Develop messages relevant to your event and audience, and then, if appropriate, take them to the public.

While speeches, meetings, and community discussions may not bring out newspapers or television cameras, they are great opportunities to interact with people who may not support abolishing the death penalty. The forethought you put into developing your messages will come in handy here. These key points, presented in a very compelling way, could persuade at least one person to see how fundamentally and morally wrong the death penalty is.

Newspapers

There are a number of ways to generate media coverage in newspapers. This includes alternative, African-American, and Latino weekly papers, or any other type of community bulletin.

1. **Earned media:** This includes stories, columns and other items written by reporters or columnists at the paper. Contact religion reporters or columnists who are supportive of abolishing the death penalty and talk to them about NWFA. You can also "pitch" or try to convince a reporter to cover your event or your participation in the NWFA. For example, in 2003, prominent religious leaders in Ohio signed a letter calling on Governor Bob Taft to declare a moratorium on executions in Ohio, in what they hope will be the first step toward ending the state's death penalty. Multiple news outlets picked up the story.
2. **Op-eds:** Write a column for your local newspaper discussing the NWFA and demonstrating that people of faith oppose capital punishment. Try to tie it to current events. Be direct and to the point. Use information that localizes the column. These pieces are usually 500-700 words, but check the submission guidelines for your paper to be sure. (Guidelines

“Humankind has to get out of violence only through non-violence. Hatred can be overcome only by love. Counter-hatred only increases the surface as well as the depth of hatred.”

-Mohandas Gandhi



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can usually be found on the paper's website.) You can also offer to write a piece for a member of the clergy at your church and submit it in that person's name (with their permission, of course!).

- 3. Letters to the Editor:** These are usually written in response to a story, editorial, or something else that was published recently in the newspaper. Letters to the editor tend to be about 250 words. Be sure to reference the story to which your letter relates. Again, check the newspaper's website for specific guidelines. Amnesty International USA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty can provide you with sample letters to the editor, talking points, etc.

Radio

Write a letter or make a call to the producers of a radio talk show in your community, suggesting that they focus a show or a segment of a show on the NWFA. Offer to appear on the show - perhaps with a prominent community faith leader - to discuss such topics as a death penalty case in your state, moratorium legislation, or recent U.S. Supreme Court decisions. The best shows to approach are religious programs on AM stations, gospel radio stations, college radio, or the local NPR or Pacifica affiliate. Again, consider radio stations or programs that are popular in African-American or Spanish-speaking communities. Just do a little research on the radio show beforehand, to make sure that you are not walking into a combative radio format or anything else with which you might be uncomfortable.

Television

When planning your event, ask yourself if you are doing anything that would make for "good television." "Good television" is a term that refers to active, lively, colorful events that will convince a news department to send a camera crew. Be sure to send the assignment desk editor at the television station a notice about your event. Then, a day or two before the event, call to follow up. (Usually, television stations don't commit to covering an event until the last minute, so don't feel slighted if it seems like they are dismissing you.)

You might also consider contacting the heads of your public access TV station, to suggest that they produce a show on the NWFA, featuring representatives of various religious perspectives on the death penalty.

Online

Opportunities to communicate your messages online have grown considerably over the last few years. Many local papers now have websites that provide a link at the bottom of stories, which allows readers to submit their opinions. Check out your local newspaper's website and look for opportunities to promote your NWFA activities or events.

How to Move Your Messages in the Media

Blogging

Visit one of the following death penalty blogs - or start your own! There are many personal, local group, and state coalition blogs run by activists throughout the United States. There are also several national blogs. Read and comment on these often to build involvement from the growing online community; you can also use these blogs to discuss your plans for the NWFA and why it's critical for faith communities to take action on the death penalty issue:

- Amnesty International USA's Death Penalty Blog: blogs.amnestyusa.org/death-penalty
- Abolish the Death Penalty, NCADP: www.deathpenaltyusa.blogspot.com/
- Against Death Rows: www.againstdeathrows.blogspot.com
- Capital Defense Weekly: <http://capitaldefenseweekly.com/>
- Journey of Hope: www.thejourneyofhope.blogspot.com/
- The Lonely Abolitionist: www.lonelyabolitionist.blogspot.com/
- TCASK :: On the Road (to Abolition): <http://tcask.blogspot.com/>

With your own death penalty blog, you can share your thoughts, personal experiences, interesting news stories, or favorite websites; you can also link to other blogs. There are several websites that offer free blogs, including:

- www.blogger.com
- www.typepad.com
- www.blogstream.com

Guidelines

The following guidelines have been adapted from the *AIUSA Activist Toolkit 2002-2003* and are helpful pointers in dealing with the media.

- Keep it simple. Whether it's a telephone call, a media advisory or an event, always try to focus on your basic messages on the death penalty. Repeat what you want to see in the paper rather than improvising under pressure.
- Localize. Local journalists look for a local angle - stress to them that you are part of a larger effort involving hundreds of faith communities throughout the country.
- React. If you read a story in your local paper that relates - or could relate - to the death penalty, call the reporter who wrote the story and talk to him or her about your work in this area. You may also want to write a letter to the editor.
- Contact. Keep a record of contacts you make at local newspapers and radio stations and note any journalists who seem particularly interested in this issue - you will want to contact them again when you hold other events.

“There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.”

-Elie Wiesel, 1986 Nobel Peace Laureate and Holocaust Survivor



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Sample Press Release

[Your Letterhead]

For Immediate Release:
[Date submitted to the media]

Contact: **[Your name]**
 [Your contact number]

Religious and Spiritual Groups in [Your Town] Participate in National Initiative to Focus Attention on the Death Penalty

Amnesty International USA's National Weekend of Faith in Action Draws Thousands of the Faithful

[Your town, state here] - [Church / Synagogue / mosque / faith group/ AI group (give name/s)] will participate in Amnesty International USA's Ninth Annual National Weekend of Faith in Action on the Death Penalty (NWFA). During the weekend of October 20-22, hundreds of faith communities, interfaith groups, and human rights activists throughout the nation will devote time to educating and mobilizing their members through activities that raise awareness about the death penalty.

During the NWFA, Amnesty International USA encourages people of all faiths to come together and reflect on the death penalty, engage in dialogue, and consider ways to take action to end this practice.

Major faith traditions around the world - including Catholicism, nearly all Protestant denominations, Reform and Conservative Judaism, and Buddhism - have taken explicit positions against the death penalty. Even faith traditions that do not specifically oppose the practice, such as Orthodox Judaism and Islam, have expressed concerns about the random and biased way in which the death penalty is applied and administered in this country.

"Religious leaders and people of faith have played an essential role in advancing pivotal social justice issues in the U.S.," said **[Name, event organizer]**. "The National Weekend of Faith in Action provides an opportunity for people of faith to continue that tradition and to raise issues about a system in which the government makes life and death decisions - decisions that have sent at least 123 innocent people to death row."

WHO: [City/town- Faith Community Name/AI Group]

WHAT: [Short description of your event]

WHEN: [Date and time]

WHERE: [Location]

All are welcome. This event is free and open to the public.

###

How to Lobby

Lobbying your elected officials is one of the most important actions you can take to bring about the end of the death penalty. This section contains tips for communicating effectively with government officials.

What is lobbying?

Lobbying is getting your government to work for you. It is not limited to the hallowed halls of Congress or restricted to professional lobbyists - it is a tool we can all use to communicate with our decision makers and shape the communities in which we live.

Lobbying takes many forms, such as writing a letter, showing up for a public event, making a phone call, sending a fax/email/form letter, handwriting a letter, or anything else you can do to provide your elected official with information about your issue and a request for him/her to act on it.

How do I lobby?

Do your homework

There are many organizations and activists who are already lobbying on the death penalty in your state. To find out how to get involved with your state's grassroots lobbying efforts, contact AIUSA's State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators (the SDPAC contact list begins on p. 71) or State Legislative Coordinators (email grassroots@aiusa.org for information). You can also look online at www.quixote.org/ej or visit the website of your local/state coalition for information about grassroots legislative campaigns.

Find out what positions your elected member has taken in the past, for example, bills that s/he may have sponsored, his or her voting record, or speeches s/he has given. Familiarize yourself with the specific issue/legislation you want to address, prepare talking points, and provide information to your legislator. Once you've done your homework, you are ready to make contact with your legislator!

Visit your elected officials (state senator, state representative/ delegate, Members of Congress, mayor, governor, attorney general, city council members)

Be ACCURATE: To build a working relationship and achieve results, you need to be viewed as a credible source of information. Never bluff! If you are unable to answer a question, use it as an

Consider using your participation in the NWFA as an opportunity to contact your elected officials about the death penalty. Here are some ideas:

- Visit the AIUSA Online Action Center for current state/federal actions you can take.
- Encourage your city council to pass a resolution calling for abolition, or a moratorium on executions. See www.quixote.org/ej/ for examples.
- Find out from your local/state coalition what death penalty-related bills might be introduced in the next legislative session.
- Develop a sign-on letter from faith leaders that expresses opposition to the death penalty or asks for clemency for a particular death row inmate.
- Organize a group of prominent community faith leaders to meet with your state legislators or governor to discuss the death penalty issue.
- Invite local legislators to attend your NWFA event.

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“Our campaign currently is focused on our upcoming legislation, and this event was extremely helpful in reaching a Republican legislator who we had previously thought unreachable. From the pew, he heard [from an exonerated death row inmate] and was very interested in learning more. We have now begun to initiate a dialogue with him.”

-2004 NWEA Participant,

New Mexico



opportunity to make contact with the office again when supplying the information.

Be BRIEF: The official and his/her staff are incredibly busy and so are you. They appreciate it when you get to the point and respect their time. Be ready with the bill number and the specific action you want your legislator to take (for example, cosponsor/support the legislation). Provide a copy of any relevant materials you will be talking about, such as a copy of the bill or list of current cosponsors.

Be COURTEOUS: Always, always be courteous! A thank you letter to the staff member for listening to your concerns, especially if they take action, is ALWAYS recommended. Commend your elected official publicly, including letters to the editor or items in a newsletter (and share copies with his/her staff).

Write a letter

Hand-write your letter if possible. Be sure to include your name and address on the letter and envelope so they know you are a constituent.

Be brief and personal. Share your knowledge and experiences with the death penalty and the criminal justice system. Feel free to mention any organizations you are working with on this issue.

Be specific. Cite a specific bill number or an individual case. Be sure to include the specific action you want your elected official to take (sponsor the bill, intervene on behalf of a prisoner, attend an event, etc.). Ask him or her to respond with information about the action taken.

Thank your official for any positive steps he or she has taken in the recent past.

Follow up. Continue to maintain contact with the office to ensure that your elected official fulfills his or her commitments. Continue to provide information, and thank him or her for any positive actions taken.

Make a phone call

Ask to speak with the legislative assistant dealing with the death penalty and/or criminal justice issues.

Identify yourself as a constituent. You might also mention the name of your faith community or group.

Be specific: Identify the bill you are concerned with and the action you would like your legislator to take. Ask if your legislator has

taken a position on the legislation. Volunteer to provide further information about the bill or about the death penalty in general. Ask for the name of the person you spoke to and let him or her know you will be calling back to follow up.

Follow up with a thank you note and a small packet of information if necessary.

If you receive only a voice mail, identify yourself as a constituent and note the bill you are interested in and the action you want your legislator to take. For example, "Hello, my name is Jane Doe and I live in Anytown in your district. I am calling to ask you to co-sponsor HB 213, a bill to halt executions for two years. Please feel free to call me if you have any questions, at 123-456-7890. Thank you for your time."

What are the next steps?

Concentrate on building a relationship. Lobbying can take a while, and the more focused you are, the better the results. Remember that the bill you are working on may not pass during this session or that you may undertake another legislative initiative next year. Establishing this relationship is key to your work in future sessions.

Be sure to provide any information you learned with your Legislative Coordinator and your SDPAC or the state organization you are working with - you are gathering important information.

Thank your legislator publicly. Write a letter to the editor or a short article for your group's newsletter or a weekly paper. Be sure to share the information with your legislator.

Continue to track the bill and provide periodic updates to your legislator as necessary.

"A GOP legislator in that district appeared two days after our event at a Catholic legislative forum and was asked his opinion on the death penalty in front of hundreds of people. He said he used to be in favor of the death penalty but has been rethinking his position as he has been 'educated' about the issue."

~2004 NWFA Participant,

New Jersey



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Sample Letter to Legislators

“...we as the Church need to express wherever appropriate and wherever possible our stance against the death penalty. We need to talk about it. A lot of people don't feel comfortable in doing this but I think we need to, as the Pope says, preach the whole gospel of life.”

—Bishop Gabino Zavala,
San Gabriel Region of the
Archdiocese of Los Angeles



Dear Representative,

I strongly urge you to support HB 576, a bill to repeal New Mexico's death penalty statute. This legislation, introduced on January 31 by Representative Gail C. Beam, recently passed the House Judiciary Committee with a vote of 6 to 3.

I am deeply concerned by the terrible crimes of violence that plague our communities. I want our neighborhoods to be safe places to raise our children and I want those who commit violent acts to be held accountable and brought to justice. I believe, however, that the death penalty does not resolve any of the real problems associated with crime and the criminal justice system but instead serves to brutalize society. I would prefer that my tax dollars be applied towards constructive strategies to combat violent crime and to offer assistance to victims and their families.

According to a poll conducted in September 2004 by Greenberg, Quinlan & Rosner Research Inc., nearly two-thirds (65%) of voters in New Mexico and in the nation favor replacing the death penalty with life without parole and some form of restitution for the families of murder victims. House Bill 576 would redirect tax dollars previously used for death penalty litigation to fund an innovative package of victims' services programs.

This year, New Mexico has an opportunity to lead the nation by creating a new approach that returns the focus to where it belongs - to the family of the murder victim. Representative Crouch, I urge you to demonstrate leadership on this critical human rights issue. Let's make sure our state resources go toward meaningful victims' services, not to the death penalty!

Sincerely,

[Your Name and Address]

Interfaith Statement of Opposition to the Death Penalty

This sign-on letter was developed by the New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty during its 2005 legislative campaign. You can also find a sign-on letter from faith leaders at www.1000executions.org.

The Religious Community Calls for Passage of HB 576 - Abolish the Death Penalty

Dear Governor Richardson,

As faith leaders throughout New Mexico, we stand united against the continued use of capital punishment in our state. And we do not stand alone. The majority of religious communities nationwide oppose the death penalty as a violation of human rights and a perpetuation of violence in our society. The following national religious groups have made statements in opposition to the death penalty:

American Baptist Church in the U.S.A.	The Moravian Church in America
The American Jewish Committee	National Council of Churches of Christ
The Bruderhoff Communities	Orthodox Church in America
Central Conference of American Rabbis	Presbyterian Church U.S.A
Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)	The Rabbinical Assembly
Church of the Brethren	Reformed Church in America
Church Women United	Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ
The Episcopal Church	of Latter Day Saints
Evangelical Lutheran Church of America	Union for Reform Judaism
Fellowship of Reconciliation	Unitarian Universalist Association
Friends United Meeting	United Church of Christ
The General Association of American Baptists	The United Methodist Church
General Conference Mennonite Church	U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

As people of faith, we support a justice system that is both humane and restorative. We uphold the victims of violent crime and their family members in their grief and suffering and promote measures that will facilitate their healing.

Therefore, we ask you to support efforts to replace New Mexico's death penalty with life without the possibility of parole by signing HB 576 Abolish the Death Penalty. We also ask that you redirect state resources to more adequately fund programs for murder victims' families as dictated in HB 577 and enact employment protections for victims of crime to participate in court proceedings as provided in HB 356.

We are greatly disturbed by the presence of violence in our communities. As ministers to many of our greatest societal problems, we ask you to consider solutions to violent crime that address our communities need for healing not vengeance. Please respond to the will of the majority of New Mexicans and the nation in providing non-violent and restorative alternatives to the death penalty.

In the name of justice, mercy, and peace, **repeal the death penalty.**

Sincerely,
Rev. Barbara Dua
Executive Director, New Mexico Conference of Churches
(Signed by 66 faith leaders statewide, representing 15 different faith traditions.)

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Reports, Books, Films, Audio Recordings, and Theatrical Productions

Reports on the Death Penalty

Here are examples of reports available from AIUSA's Online Library at www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/reports.do. For a hard copy of these and other reports, please contact the Program to Abolish the Death Penalty at 202-544-0200 x244.

USA: *The Death Penalty Worldwide: Developments in 2005*. April 2006, AI Index: ACT 50/005/2006. This report chronicles significant worldwide developments concerning the death penalty for the year 2005, including the abolition of the death penalty in specific countries during the last year; moratoria and suspensions of executions; reductions in the scope of the death penalty; failed reintroductions of the death penalty; commutations and pardons; death sentences and executions; the use of the death penalty against child offenders and the mentally ill; innocence and the death penalty; judicial decisions made regarding the death penalty; and the role of intergovernmental organizations.

USA: *The Execution of Mentally Ill Offenders*. January 2005, AI Index: ACT 51/003/2006. This report addresses the fact that people with serious mental illness continue to be sentenced to death and executed in the United States of America, that existing safeguards are clearly inadequate to prevent this from happening, and that there is a profound inconsistency in exempting people with mental retardation from the death penalty while those with serious mental illness remain exposed to it. It includes case studies of 100 people who have been executed despite evidence of their severe mental illness. A summary version is also available.

USA: *Oswaldo Torres, Mexican National Denied Consular Rights, Scheduled to Die*. April 2004, AI Index: AMR 51/057/2004. This paper examines the case of Oswaldo Torres, whose execution date was set despite an International Court of Justice (ICJ) order that the execution not be carried out pending the ICJ's judgment on a lawsuit brought by Mexico on behalf of its nationals arrested, denied their consular rights, and sentenced to death in the USA. The Governor of Oklahoma commuted Mr. Torres' death sentence to life in prison on May 14, 2004.

USA: *Another Texas Injustice - The Case of Kelsey Patterson, Mentally Ill Man Facing Imminent Execution*. March 2004, AI Index: AMR 51/051/2004. This report examines the case of Kelsey Patterson, a 49-year-old African-American man suffering from paranoid schizophrenia, who was executed by the State of Texas on May 18, 2004.

People's Republic of China: *Executed "According to Law". The Death Penalty in China*. March 2004, AI Index: ASA 17/003/2004. This document describes the process that someone suspected of committing a capital crime goes through under the Chinese criminal justice system, from detention through execution. This process is described using examples of cases researched by Amnesty International or monitored in the official press in China.

Additional reports are available from the Death Penalty Information Center:
www.deathpenaltyinfo.org.

Reports, Books, Films, Audio Recordings, and Theatrical Productions

Books on the Death Penalty

Legal Perspectives

- Bedau, Hugo and Paul Cassell. **Debating the Death Penalty: Should America Have Capital Punishment?** Oxford University Press, 2004. This debate includes judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and philosophers on subjects ranging from deterrence to innocence, and life in prison without parole to racial discrimination.
- Bedau, Hugo, et al. **The Death Penalty in America: Current Controversies.** Oxford University Press, 1998. This book serves as a useful summary of the abolitionist viewpoint, and its extensive bibliography provides an excellent starting point for research on the subject. It also contains excerpts from important Supreme Court opinions and laws on the subject.
- Burnett, Cathleen. **Justice Denied: Clemency Appeals in Death Penalty Cases.** Northeastern University Press, 2002. This book faces the difficult questions surrounding the heated public and legal debate about a criminal justice system that risks the state-sanctioned killing of an innocent person. Focusing on executive clemency petitions, which are the final hope for death row inmates, Burnett exposes troubling flaws in the legal process of administering the death penalty.
- Carter, Linda and Ellen Kreitzburg. **Understanding Capital Punishment Law.** Matthew Bender and Company, Inc., 2004. Professors Linda Carter and Ellen Kreitzburg offer an overview of death penalty law, including constitutional law and current legal issues.
- Christianson, Scott. **Innocent: Inside Wrongful Conviction Cases.** New York University Press, 2004. Reviews mistakes in New York's justice system, focusing on mistaken identities, perjury, inadequate counsel, false confessions, and police and prosecutorial misconduct.
- Cole, David. **No Equal Justice: Race and Class in the American Criminal Justice System.** The New Press, 1999. Cole, a law professor at Georgetown University and an attorney with the Center for Constitutional Rights, demonstrates that the justice system not only has a harsher impact on minorities, but also systematically affords greater constitutional protections to certain groups at the expense of others.
- Dow, David R. and Mark Dow. **Machinery of Death: The Reality of America's Death Penalty Regime.** Taylor and Francis, Inc., 2002. Death penalty lawyer David R. Dow and writer Mark Dow bring together diverse views from lawyers, wardens, victims' families, executioners, and inmates to show how America's death penalty system actually works, and what it does to those who come in contact with it.
- Eisenburg, James R. **Law, Psychology, and Death Litigation.** Professional Resource Press, 2004. This resource explains the role of forensic psychology in capital trials (competency to be executed, mental retardation, risk assessment, etc.). It takes a step-by-step approach to the legal context of the death penalty.
- Foley, Michael. **Arbitrary and Capricious: The Supreme Court, the Constitution and the Death Penalty.** Praeger Publishers, 2003. Through examining the history of Supreme Court decisions, this book illustrates the fundamental flaws that exist with the implementation of the death penalty.
- Gottfried, Ted. **The Death Penalty: Justice or Legalized Murder?** Twenty-First Century Books, Inc., 2002. With fairness to all sides, Gottfried draws on landmark court cases to throw open the

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issue of capital punishment. He uses particular cases and trial proceedings to raise the big questions about guilt, innocence, and the effectiveness of the justice system.

Gray, Mike. **The Death Game: Capital Punishment and the Luck of the Draw**. Common Courage Press, 2003. Written with the power of a gritty novel, this book illustrates why justice and capital punishment don't mix. Mike Gray zeros in on issues of police brutality, pressures on prosecutors and judges seeking career advancement, and the frailty of eyewitness accounts.

Haney, Craig. **Death by Design: Capital Punishment as a Social Psychological System**. Oxford University Press, 2005. After identifying three factors that skew the application and imposition of death sentences, the author, a professor of psychology, suggests specific reforms and changes including alternative sentences and a more comprehensive investigatory process.

Junkin, Tim. **Bloodsworth: The True Story of the First Death Row Inmate Exonerated by DNA**. Algonquin Books, 2004. This biography details the events that led to the conviction, death sentence, and exoneration of Kirk Bloodsworth, who spent eight years in prison (two on death row) for a crime he did not commit.

Lezin, Katya and Stephen B. Bright. **Finding Life on Death Row: Profiles of Six Inmates**. Northeastern University Press, 2000. This study takes the form of six dramatic narratives of condemned prisoners whose cases have been addressed by attorney Stephen Bright in his capacity as director of the Southern Center for Human Rights.

Linderoff, David. **Killing Time: An Investigation into the Death Row Case of Mumia Abu-Jamal**. Common Courage Press, 2003. This publication examines the specifics of Abu-Jamal's capital conviction.

Mellow, Michael, et al. **Deathwork: Defending the Condemned**. University of Minnesota Press, 2002. As part memoir and part legal casebook, this book offers a picture of what some in the legal system refer to as the "machinery of death." The book closely examines issues of prosecutorial misconduct, racial inequities in sentencing, rules of evidence, and the rights of the mentally ill. It also shows what it is like to live and work under an impending death sentence.

Nelson, Lane and Burk Foster. **Death Watch: A Death Penalty Anthology**. Prentice Hall, 2000. This topical anthology features a collection of short articles, written in an accessible journalistic style, that focus on various aspects of the legal process of the death penalty and on executions past and present.

Radelet, Michael L., Hugo Adam Bedau, and Constance E. Putnam. **In Spite of Innocence: Erroneous Convictions in Capital Cases**. Northeastern University Press, 1994. This book presents the stories of some 400 innocent Americans who were falsely convicted of capital crimes and it examines the weaknesses in the criminal justice system that led to these wrongful convictions.

Sarat, Austin. **Mercy on Trial: What It Means to Stop an Execution**. Cloth, 2005. In this compelling and timely work, Austin Sarat provides the first book-length work on executive clemency. He turns our focus from questions of guilt and innocence to the very meaning of mercy. Mercy on Trial uses the lens of executive clemency in capital cases to discuss the condition of mercy in American political life.

Reports, Books, Films, Audio Recordings, and Theatrical Productions

Streib, Victor. **A Capital Punishment Anthology**. Anderson Publishing, 1997. These law review articles focus on both substantive and procedural laws for imposing capital punishment.

Streissguth, Thomas. **The Death Penalty: Debating Capital Punishment**. Enslow Publishers, 2002. This book illustrates the present death penalty debate by using seven experts, including judges, lawyers, prosecutors, and philosophers, whose discussion reveals the multiple facets of the issue.

Taub, Maura. **Juries: Conscience of the Community**. Chardon Press, 1998. A collection of readings on the realities of the justice and penal systems.

Trombley, Stephen. **The Execution Protocol: Inside America's Capital Punishment Industry**. Crown Publishers, Inc., 1992. This is a story of men and machines: how a team of men, sanctioned by the highest courts, sets out, deliberately and according to a well-defined plan, to take a life. It is based on unprecedented access to the execution team and condemned inmates at Missouri's Potosi Correctional Center.

Turow, Scott. **Ultimate Punishment: A Lawyer's Reflections on Dealing with the Death Penalty**. Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2003. For years, attorney and novelist Scott Turow was ambivalent towards the death penalty. His position changed, however, after he served on the blue-ribbon commission assembled by the former Governor of Illinois, George Ryan, which examined the flaws in the capital punishment system. In this book, Turow presents the arguments that swayed him in favor of abolition.

Historical Perspectives on the Death Penalty

Amsterdam, Tony. **America's Death Penalty: Beyond Repair?** Duke University Press, 2003. An examination of capital punishment in the United States since 1976 through a range of scholarly essays that review subjects such as innocence, arbitrariness, race and international laws on human rights.

Banner, Stuart. **The Death Penalty: An American History**. Harvard University Press, 2002. This book is a richly detailed overview of American attitudes towards capital punishment and its implementation throughout the history of the United States.

Boehm, Robert. **Death Quest II: An Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Capital Punishment in the United States**. Anderson Publishing, 2003. This book provides a historical overview of capital punishment. It also examines both arguments and counterarguments employed by proponents and opponents of the death penalty, specifically analyzing subjects such as deterrence, cost, and wrongful convictions.

Galliher, John, Larry Koch, David Patrick Keys, and Teresa J. Guess. **America Without the Death Penalty: States Leading the Way**. Northeastern University Press, 2002. Employing the case study method, this work focuses on the 13 U.S. states and jurisdictions that have abolished the death penalty. It provides invaluable historical and practical information to advocates striving to abolish capital punishment in other states.

Jackson, Rev. Jesse. **Legal Lynching: Racism, Injustice, and the Death Penalty**. Marlow & Co., 1996. Jackson recites the specifics of cases in which innocent men were sentenced to death - and even executed. The racial injustice of sentencing and the application of capital punishment come in for particular attention, as Jackson sketches the moral case for reforming the American criminal justice system to conform with what he sees as morally sound notions of justice and human rights.

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Lynd, Staughton. **Lucasville: The Untold Story of a Prison Uprising**. Temple University, Press, 2004. Examines the events during the 1993 Lucasville, Ohio, prison uprising and the trials and death sentences of the participants.

Steelwater, Eliza. **The Hangman's Knot: Lynching, Legal Execution and America's Struggle with the Death Penalty**. Westview Press, 2003. This book uses narrative, personal stories, and rare archival photographs to powerfully portray capital punishment in a historical context.

General Death Penalty Analysis/Casework

Costanzo, Mark. **Just Revenge: Costs and Consequences of the Death Penalty**. St. Martin's Press, 1997. Costanzo deftly presents and evaluates competing perspectives in the debate, ranging from deterrence to the cost of an execution. This work will inform readers about how and why America punishes capital felons, and what - if anything - this lethal policy accomplishes.

Dow, David. **Executed on a Technicality: Lethal Injustice on America's Death Row**. Beacon Press, 2005. Attorney David Dow's eye-opening book allows the men, and their cases, to speak for themselves. Through these accounts, he chronicles how his own position on the death penalty changed in favor of abolition.

Dwyer, Jim, Peter Neufeld, and Barry Scheck. **Actual Innocence: Five Days to Execution and Other Dispatches from the Wrongly Convicted**. Doubleday, 2000. Scheck, Neufeld, and Dwyer tell the stories of 10 of the men they have helped through the Innocence Project. They describe how these men wound up in prison - some on death row - for crimes they didn't commit.

Edds, Margaret. **An Expendable Man**. New York University Press, 2003. This book uses the case of death row exonerate Earl Washington, Jr. to demonstrate how easy it is for those marginalized in society to be wrongfully convicted.

Jackson, Rev. Jesse, Jesse L. Jackson, Jr., Bruce Shapiro. **Legal Lynching: The Death Penalty and America's Future**. New Press, 2001. In this collaborative work, father and son pursue a nationwide conversation on the issues surrounding the death penalty, one that begins with the proposal of a moratorium and could lead to the eventual cessation of capital punishment.

Lifton, Robert Jay and Greg Mitchell. **Who Owns Death? Capital Punishment, the American Conscience, and the End of Executions**. William Morrow, 2000. The authors provide a powerful analysis of the current status of the death penalty in the USA, including psychological insights and pieces of history not found in most other sources. They contend that, despite cases like Timothy McVeigh's, the death penalty is slowly losing support in America and will be abolished.

McAllister, Pam. **Death Defying: Dismantling the Execution Machinery in 21st Century USA**. Continuum Publishing Company. 2003. Death Defying is a life-embracing, uplifting, and thoughtful argument against the death penalty and a handbook for all who oppose it. McAllister draws on a variety of sources and addresses complex issues of violence, racism, revenge, and forgiveness - particularly in the age of terrorism in which we live. With over 100 examples of nonviolent action used in the fight against capital punishment, this book is sure to galvanize readers with its myriad inspiring ideas on how to break the cycle of violence.

Reports, Books, Films, Audio Recordings, and Theatrical Productions

Nathanson, Stephen. **An Eye for an Eye? The Immorality of Punishing by Death**. Roman & Littlefield, 2001. In this second edition, author Stephen Nathanson evaluates the arguments for and against capital punishment. He argues that the death penalty is inconsistent with the principles of justice and respect for life.

Ogletree, Charles and Austin Sarat. **From Lynch Mobs to the Killing State: Race and the Death Penalty in America**. Through the use of several approaches to the issue, this book draws a clear and comprehensive link between the death penalty and race. Readers will understand how the two help to propagate one another and how the death penalty system uniquely structures and frames race in our country.

Sarat, Austin. **When the State Kills: Capital Punishment and the American Condition**. Princeton University Press, 2001. This book considers what the death penalty does *to* us as a society, rather than what it does *for* us.

Solar, Susan Lee Campbell. **No Justice: No Victory - The Death Penalty in Texas**. Plain View Press, 2004. Examination of capital punishment in Texas through a political lens, with a focus on cases and anecdotes that illustrate the flaws in the system.

Understanding Capital Punishment: A Guide Through the Death Penalty Debate. Death Penalty Information Center, 2003. This guide is an excellent tool for those who speak, write, teach, organize, or want to learn more about the death penalty. To order copies of this 150-page, user-friendly and comprehensive resource, please contact DPIC at www.deathpenaltyinfo.org.

Zimring, Franklin. **The Contradictions of American Capital Punishment**. Oxford University Press, 2003. This book examines the way that American values have influenced the nationwide death penalty debate. Zimring examines the connections between lynching and the death penalty. He also seeks to understand why the United States and its international allies have taken different paths regarding this issue.

International Perspectives on the Death Penalty

Council of Europe (COE). **Death Penalty: Beyond Abolition**. Council of Europe Publishing, 2004. As a pioneer in the movement to abolish the death penalty, the Council of Europe details the path to abolition in Europe, the only region in the world where capital punishment has been almost completely eradicated. The book features the contributions of experts Robert Badinter, Hugo Bedau, Peter Hodgkinson, Roger Hood, Anne Ferrazzini, Michel Forst, Eric Prokosch, H.C. Kruger, Anatoli Pristavkine, C. Ravaud, Sir Nigel Rodley, Renate Wohlwend, and Yoshihiro Yasuda.

Hood, Roger. **The Death Penalty: A Worldwide Perspective**. Oxford University Press, 2002. The third edition of this work illustrates how the move to abolish the death penalty worldwide has continued to gather pace. It also captures the ways in which international organizations and human right treaties have increased the pressure on retentionist countries. Author Roger Hood has updated his review of studies that shed light on the realities of capital punishment, especially with regard to its arbitrariness and discrimination.

Schabas, William A. **The Abolition of the Death Penalty in International Law**. Cambridge University Press, 2002. This book describes the international community's progress away from the use of capital punishment, providing an in-depth discussion of the death penalty in terms of international law.

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Religious/Faith Perspectives on the Death Penalty

“The Death Penalty, Religion and the Law: Is Our Legal System’s Implementation of Capital Punishment Consistent with Judaism or Christianity?” *Rutgers University Journal of Law and Religion*: Volume 4, Number 1: 2003. This journal is a compilation of writings by religious leaders from both the Jewish and Christian communities regarding the morality and legality of capital punishment. The authors address such issues as innocence, whether capital punishment meets God's requirements, and the religious community's ambivalence toward capital punishment.

Hanks, Gardner C. **Against the Death Penalty: Christian and Secular Arguments Against Capital Punishment**. Herald Press, 1997. Drawing on Old and New Testament resources as well as secular arguments, Gardner C. Hanks shows that the death penalty harms rather than helps any quest for a just, humane society.

Hanks, Gardner C. **Capital Punishment and the Bible**. Herald Press, February 2002. This new book explores the death penalty by reviewing biblical references to capital punishment and by examining the USA's current application of the death penalty in light of these scriptures. This book is a follow up to an earlier work by Hanks (see above).

Marshall, Christopher D. **Beyond Retribution: A New Testament Vision for Justice, Crime, and Punishment**. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2001. Among other topics, Marshall reviews the debate in social thinking over the ethics and purpose of punishment - including capital punishment - and he advocates a new concept of “restorative punishment.” The result of this engaging work is a biblically-based challenge to imitate the way of Christ in dealing with both victims and offenders.

Megivern, James. **The Death Penalty: A Historical and Theological Survey**. Paulist, 1997. This theological and historical discussion of the death penalty documents the sweeping changes that many churches have made on this issue.

Prejean, Helen. **Death of Innocents**. Random House, 2004. Sister Helen Prejean takes the reader on a spiritual journey as she accompanies two potentially innocent people to their executions. Prejean also shows how race, prosecutorial ambition, poverty, election cycles, and publicity play far too great a role in determining who lives and who dies.

Recinella, Dale S. **The Biblical Truth About America’s Death Penalty**. Northeastern University Press, 2004. As a death row chaplain in Florida, Dale Recinella was struck by the number of Christians who quoted Bible passages, particularly from the Hebrew Torah/Pentateuch, that they thought mandated the death penalty. He argues that people of Biblical faith should be advocates of abolishing the death penalty, rather than supporters of this practice. This book is recommended for anyone who wants to explore the American death penalty in the light of the Bible.

Snyder, T. Richard. **The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Punishment**. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 2000. This work confronts the spirit of punishment that permeates our culture and its degrading effects on today's penal system and society at large. Snyder shows that our notions of punishment are often rooted in and reinforced by popular misunderstandings of human nature and God's grace.

Steffen, Lloyd. **Executing Justice: The Moral Meaning of the Death Penalty**. The Pilgrim Press, 1998. This book explores the moral justification for the death penalty as it analyzes the philosophical and humanitarian arguments for and against it. It debunks the legal and

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ethical arguments for the death penalty and uses the case of executed inmate Willie Darden to illustrate its moral deficiencies.

Personal Memoirs

Abu-Jamal, Mumia. **Live from Death Row**. Avon Books, 1996. Mumia Abu-Jamal was convicted in 1982 and sentenced to death for the murder of Philadelphia police officer Daniel Faulkner after a trial that many have criticized as profoundly biased. This book is a collection of Mumia Abu-Jamal's prison writings, an impassioned yet unflinching account of the brutalities and humiliations of prison life.

Arriens, Jan and Helen Prejean (Editor). **Welcome to Hell: Letters & Writings From Death Row**. Northeastern Univ. Press, 1997. This deeply moving book unmask the human face in the hidden world of death row by giving condemned men and women in the United States the rare opportunity to speak for themselves.

Cabana, Donald A. **Death at Midnight: The Confessions of an Executioner**. Northeastern University Press, 1996. In this narrative, Cabana, a prison official for 25 years, recounts his experiences as a warden and his change of heart about the death penalty. The book is a plea to ordinary citizens to reject messages from political and media sources that paint capital punishment as "the quick fix to a very complex problem."

Dicks, Shirley. **Congregation of the Condemned: Voices Against the Death Penalty**. Cambridge, 1995. This compilation of over forty essays calling for an end to the death penalty was gathered by Shirley Dicks, whose son is on death row for his role in a robbery that resulted in a storekeeper's death.

Fleury-Steiner, Benjamin. **Jurors' Stories of Death: How America's Death Penalty Invests in Inequality**. University of Michigan Press, 2004. Real-life accounts of white and black jurors in capital trials who discuss the unjust role that race can play in the sentencing process.

Masters, Jay Jarvis. **Finding Freedom: Writings from Death Row**. Padma, 1997. This collection of prison stories, told against a background of extreme violence and aggression at San Quentin Prison, comes from a death row inmate who has become a practitioner of Tibetan Buddhism. Jarvis' story is a testament to the power of faith.

Moore, Billy Neal. **I Shall Not Die: 72 Hours on Death Watch**. AuthorHouse, 2005. For more than 16 years on death row, Billy Neal Moore taught and preached to fellow inmates and the American public about Christ's love. Miraculously, his life was spared just 7 hours prior to his execution time. He describes his experiences in his new autobiography.

Murray, Robert. W. **Life on Death Row**. Albert Publishing Company, 2003. This is an in-depth examination of life on death row, drawn from the personal experience of an inmate in Arizona. It is available through www.1stbooks.com or from Albert Publishing Company, P.O.Box 30280, PMB 111, Phoenix, AZ 85046-0280.

O'Shea, Kathleen. **Women on the Row: Revelations from Both Sides of the Bars**. Ithaca Firebrand Books, 2000. A result of the author's correspondence with women on death row, some but not all of whom claim to be innocent, describing their lives before and since being placed on death row.

Pickett, Carrol and Carlton Stowers. **Within These Walls: Memoirs of a Death House Chaplain**. St. Martin's Press, 2002. This is the powerful memoir of Rev. Carroll Pickett, who spent fifteen

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years as the death house chaplain at "The Walls," the Huntsville unit of the Texas prison system.

Prejean, Helen. **Dead Man Walking**. Random House, New York, 1993. A Catholic nun's impassioned memoir of her friendship with two death-row inmates, coupled with a plea for the abolition of capital punishment.

Rossi, Richard M. **Waiting to Die: Life of Death Row**. Vision Paperbacks, 2004. Rossi offers a first-person account of daily life on death row in Arizona, where he served for 20 years. He describes the conditions on death row and their psychological effects.

Vadas, Agnes and Richard Nields. **Truth Be Told: Life Lessons From Death Row**. AuthorHouse, 2005. Correspondence between a Washington State human rights activist and a death row inmate can be found in this book. Many topics are discussed throughout the letters, including life's challenges and the lessons learned from them.

Williams, Nanon. **Still Surviving**. Breakout Publishing Co., 2003. First-person account of life on death row from Nanon Williams, a juvenile offender who spent 10 years on death row in Texas before his sentence was commuted in the wake of the U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Roper v. Simmons*, which banned the juvenile death penalty. Williams gives readers the chance to confront the death penalty - not as an abstract term - but as a reality for over 3,000 people in this country. Order from www.breakoutpublishing.com.

Fiction, Poetry, and Photography

Black, Jacquelyn. **Last Meal**. Common Courage Press, 2003. A book of more than 60 photographs, this work focuses on death row inmates in Texas and what they chose as their last meal before being executed. Combined with last words of the condemned, each set of pages features a photo of the person and what they ate.

Gaines, Ernest. **A Lesson Before Dying**. Vintage Books, 1997. In this powerful fictional narrative, an innocent young black man is about to go to the electric chair for murder in 1940s Louisiana. This story is about the relationship that develops between Jefferson, the convicted, and Grant Wiggins, a high school teacher trapped within social convention.

Johnson, Robert. **Poetic Justice: Reflections on the Big House, the Death House, and the American Way of Justice**. Conservatory of American Letters, 2003. This collection of poetry deals with the American system of justice and subjects such as crime and punishment, prison, prejudice, privilege, execution, and terror.

Jones, Lou. **Final Exposure: Portraits from Death Row**. American Friends Service Committee, 2002. This powerful collection of photographs from Lou Jones, with interviews by Jones and Lorie Savel Borges, presents moving profiles of individuals on death row throughout the United States.

Families of Victims & Families of Death Row Inmates

Ackler, James R. and David Reed Karp. **Wounds That Do Not Bind: Victim-Based Perspectives on the Death Penalty**. Carolina Academic Press, 2006. This book presents personal stories and legal issues to help the reader understand the emotional experiences that the criminal justice system requires victims' family members and victims' advocates to endure.

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Bosco, Antoinette. **Choosing Mercy: A Mother of Murder Victims Pleads to End the Death Penalty.** Orbis Books, 2001. Bosco's world was overturned in 1993 when her son and daughter-in-law were shot to death while they slept. In this spiritually-charged meditation on violence and punishment, Bosco addresses difficult issues ranging from a deeply flawed corrections system to whether the worst offenders possess the capacity to atone and be redeemed.

Cushing, Robert Renny and Susannah Sheffer. **Dignity Denied: The Experience of Murder Victims' Family Members Who Oppose the Death Penalty.** Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, 2002. This text reveals the discrimination that family members of victims who oppose the death penalty have endured from prosecutors, judges, and members of the victims' services community. The work seeks to challenge the assumption that family members of victims are always in favor of capital punishment. Available at www.mvfr.org.

King, Rachel. **Capital Consequences: Families of the Condemned Tell Their Stories.** Rutger's University Press, 2004. In *Capital Consequences*, King reminds us of other families and other victims who must be considered in the debate over the death penalty: the families of those on death row.

King, Rachel. **Don't Kill in Our Names: Families of Murder Victims Speak Out Against the Death Penalty.** Rutgers University Press, 2003. King's book is a collection of the wrenching accounts of individuals who have had loved ones murdered but oppose the death penalty, often working to save the life of the killer. These narratives intend to promote restorative justice, despite grief and the temptation for revenge. The book addresses the question of how one can move past the unforgettable and seemingly unforgivable.

Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation. **"I Don't Want Another Kid to Die": Families of Victims Murdered by Juveniles Oppose Juvenile Executions.** Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation, 2003. This report details the experiences of families of victims murdered by juveniles who oppose the death penalty. The report includes the story of Ireland and Rena Beazley, whose son Napoleon was a juvenile offender executed by the state of Texas in 2002. It is a statement against state killing of juveniles, made by those who know violent loss most intimately and have been most directly affected by juvenile crime. This report is available at www.mvfr.org.

Norgard, Katherine. **Hard to Place: A Crime of Alcohol.** Recover Resources Press, 2006. This non-fiction book chronicles a mother's first-hand experience with the death penalty system when her son is sentenced to die. Only after he has been on death row is it discovered that he is mentally ill and suffers from fetal alcohol syndrome.

Pelke, Bill. **Journey of Hope... From Violence to Healing.** 2003. The brutal murder of 78-year-old Bible teacher Ruth Pelke by four teenage girls was the beginning of Bill Pelke's Journey of Hope...From Violence to Healing. Initially, Pelke did not raise any objections when 15-year old Paula Cooper was sentenced to death for the murder of his grandmother. However, through the power of prayer and transformation, he moved from supporting Cooper's death sentence, to working to have it overturned, to dedicating his life to the abolition of the death penalty. This is the story of Pelke's remarkable journey, the overwhelming obstacles he overcame, and the phenomenal, loving, forgiving, committed people he encountered and befriended along the way. To purchase this book, go to www.journeyofhope.org.

Sharp, Susan. **Hidden Victims.** Rutger's University Press. 2005. This book focuses on the effects the death penalty has on the families of the accused and condemned.

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Films on the Death Penalty

“After Innocence.” This documentary tells the true life, compelling stories of exonerated prisoners. It examines the trials and tribulations waiting for them upon their release from prison. It also examines the U.S. justice system and the flaws that led to the wrongful conviction of these men. 2005. Check www.afterinnocence.com for screenings in your area.

“Dead Man Walking.” This acclaimed film traces the relationship between a death row inmate and the nun to whom he turns for spiritual guidance in the days leading up to his scheduled execution. 1995. 122 min.

“Deadline.” This documentary explores two of the most significant, yet unexamined, events in the history of American capital punishment - the abolition of the death penalty in 1972 and the momentous debate in Illinois in 2002 over clemency for all of the state's death row inmates. The film reveals the inner workings of these events and leads to profound questions about America's approach to crime and punishment. To purchase the DVD or to set up a screening, log onto www.deadlinethemovie.com. You can also download a discussion guide from the website. 2004. 90 min.

“The Empty Chair.” Four stories of murder victim's families reliving the crimes and confronting the loss of loved ones. Reactions range from revenge and desire for punishment to searching for forgiveness and healing. With commentary by Sister Helen Prejean. 2003. 52 min. www.justiceproductions.org

“The Exonerated.” Susan Sarandon and Danny Glover star in this film based upon the stage play of the same name. Actual court depositions, transcripts, letters, and interviews comprise the chilling and moving script that chronicles the stories of six wrongly convicted death row inmates. 2005. 90 minutes. This film can be purchased directly from AIUSA at www.amnestyusa.org/abolish/index.do.

“The Green Mile.” Set on Death Row in a Southern prison in 1935, this is the story of the cellblock's head guard, who develops a poignant, unusual relationship with one inmate who possesses a magical gift that is both mysterious and miraculous. 1999. 188 min.

“Interview with an Executioner.” This documentary goes behind the scenes in a Mississippi Penitentiary during the 14 days leading up to the execution of Edward Earl Johnson. Don Cabana, the executioner, recounts the chilling experience of the execution of Johnson, who maintained his innocence until the end with his final words - “I want you to know exactly what you are doing when you execute me. I want you to remember every last detail, 'cause I am innocent.” Copies of the video or DVD may be obtained from Terry McCaffrey, 11154 La Paloma Dr., Cupertino, CA 95014. Cost is \$12 including postage. Also available in Spanish.

“The Life of David Gale.” David Gale, a respected death penalty opponent, finds himself on death row for the rape and murder of fellow activist Constance Hallaway. With only three days before his scheduled execution, Gale, in an effort to reveal the truth, agrees to give reporter Bitsey Bloom an exclusive interview that ends with a terrible discovery. 2003. 131 min.

“Monster.” Actress Charlize Theron stars as serial killer Aileen Wuornos, who was executed in Florida on October 9, 2002. Director Patty Jenkins chronicles the love story between Wuornos

Reports, Books, Films, Audio Recordings, and Theatrical Productions

and Selby Wall, played by Christina Ricci, and the transformation Wuornos undergoes from being a prostitute and victim of abuse, to contemplating suicide, to becoming a cold-blooded murderer. 2003. 109 min.

“Not In Our Name: Dead Man Walking – The Concert.” This special edition DVD/CD includes never-before-seen footage from the award-winning concert featuring artists such as Eddie Vedder and Steve Earle. Included is the soundtrack CD for the *Dead Man Walking* film (see above). 2006. Available from <http://activemusic.org/>.

“The Religious Community Speaks Against the Death Penalty.” Produced by the American Friends Service Committee’s Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project, this video includes Dennis Brutus, South African poet and activist; Rev. Bernice King, Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.’s daughter and author of *Hard Questions, Heart Answers*; Sister Helen Prejean, CSJ, author of *Dead Man Walking*; Millard Fuller, Founder and President, Habitat for Humanity International; Rev. Kobutsu Malone, Zen Buddhist Priest; Marshall Dayan, Jewish activist against the death penalty; and Marietta Jeagar-Lane, with Murder Victims’ Families for Reconciliation. 2002. 31 min.

“The Thin Blue Line.” Through the use of reenactments of the crime, photo montages, film clips, and interviews, this is a reconstruction and investigation of the 1976 murder of a Dallas policeman and the subsequent arrest and sentencing to death of a man who claims to be innocent. 1988. 101 min.

“Too Flawed to Fix.” A powerful documentary that explores and exposes the irreparable flaws in the criminal justice system by examining the 13 individuals who were wrongfully convicted and released from Illinois’ death row. 2002. 1 hour and 15 minute versions available. To order the video, email: tooflawedtofix@hotmail.com. A study guide is also available.

Audio Recordings on the Death Penalty

The Executioner’s Last Songs Volumes 2 & 3. Bloodshot Records, 2003. The two-disc collection of anti-death penalty songs features artists such as Tim Rutilli, Dave Alvin, Jon Langford, Kurt Wager, Otis Clay, Sally Timms and the Meat Purveyors. Available now in stores and at www.bloodshotrecords.com or by phone at 773-604-5300.

Witness to an Execution. A Sound Portraits Production, 2000. Bears witness to the impact that participation in the execution process has on those involved, particularly the prison personnel and witnesses. It takes the listener step by step through executions as they occur in the death chamber in Huntsville, Texas. The tape and CD are available at: www.soundportraits.org/onair/witness_to_an_execution.

Theatrical Productions

The Executioners: A Play in One Act. When people kill others in cruel, cold-blooded murder, should we allow them to live? Is death a punishment? What good does it do? What bad does it do? These and other questions are debated and dramatized in this play by Unitarian Universalists for Alternatives to the Death Penalty member Ellen H. Showell. It is especially suitable for death penalty focus groups as a means to get people to think more about what we are doing when we allow, or demand, executions in our name. The play is suitable for various kinds of presentation - including full theatrical production, dramatic presentation as part of a church service, or dramatic reading. About 35 minutes in length, it calls for a cast of 20 people, although it can be done with fewer. Scripts are \$5.00 each. To order, email Ellen Showell at eshowell@erols.com, or write to 1200 N. Cleveland St.; Arlington, VA 22201.

Part Five: Death Penalty Resources and Contacts

Dead Man Walking: The Play

This stage play is based on Sister Helen Prejean's book of the same title. You can stage a full production or read excerpts from various parts of the play. Visit www.dmwplay.org for more information and to request materials.

Last Words. The Healing Stage, a non-profit theater company that produces drama workshops and performances that facilitate individual and group reform, has performed its monodrama - LAST WORDS - in venues throughout the United States. Written, produced, and performed by Rhode Island theatre soloist Ken Carnes, LAST WORDS captures actual last word testimony from America's death chambers, creating a seamless story of one man revealing the hearts and minds of the many condemned. The 75-minute performance allows individuals the freedom to explore the numerous debated issues in a most unique, entertaining and thought-provoking manner, often revealing insights not ever realized. In certain venues, a post-performance discussion is a valuable experience and can be led by Carnes, organization leaders, or a combination of the two. To bring LAST WORDS to your community, please contact Christine Snyder at 401-789-5475 or csnyder@thehealingstage.org.

Not in My Name. For the past ten years, members of The Living Theatre, with activists and performers they have trained, have been protesting the death penalty by performing a 15-minute play called Not in My Name, outside in Times Square on days when there are executions in the United States. This play can be easily taught in a workshop to those with any level of performance experience and requires about ten people. The play is designed to be highly visible and recognizable as a protest against the death penalty. The Living Theatre is interested in teaching the play to groups around the country; the workshop requires two seven-hour days to complete. A short video containing scenes from the play can be viewed at www.thelivingtheatreworkshops.com. Contact: Jerry Goralnick, JGoralnick@Juno.com.

AIUSA's State and Regional Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators

AIUSA's State and Regional Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators

AIUSA has at least one State Death Penalty Abolition Coordinator (SDPAC) in nearly every state. These volunteer leaders help to coordinate AIUSA's work on the death penalty in their respective states. If your state has the death penalty, your SDPAC will have experience organizing vigils and clemency campaigns, lobbying, conducting workshops, and working with media. If your state does not have the death penalty, your SDPAC will be able to tell you about conferences and workshops and provide ideas for keeping your state death penalty-free. For the NFWA, your SDPAC can help you organize or publicize your event and can provide you with contact information for local speakers and materials on the death penalty in your state. Please contact your SDPAC if you have any questions about death penalty-related issues in your state. If no SDPAC is listed for your state, please contact the appropriate AIUSA Regional Office (see p. 76).

Regional Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators (RDPACs) often serve as SDPACs, as well, but are also responsible for an entire region. They are involved in developing the regional strategy and help to coordinate the work of SDPACs in the region. RDPACs can answer questions about regional anti-death penalty work and suggest ways of working across state lines.

SDPACs

Alabama

Rev. Jack Zylman (Birmingham)
(h) 205-933-7678
(c) 205-821-0650
jzylman@bellsouth.net

Alaska

Kathy Harris (Anchorage)
(h) 907-333-0431
(f) 907-333-0435
kathyh@gci.net

California (2)

Richard Carlburg (Fountain Valley)
(h) 714-964-0715
(c) 714-222-2164
proudpoppa@aol.com

Tim Spann (San Diego)
(w) 619-531-1790
spannmanmc@aol.com

Colorado

Riley Selleck (Lakewood)
(h) 303-238-4707
rars11@yahoo.com

Connecticut

Robert Nave (Waterbury)
(c) 203-206-9854
naverober@yahoo.com

Delaware

Daniel Lee (Camden)
(h) 302-698-5270
danielvlee@yahoo.com

Florida

Mark R. Elliott (Clearwater)
(h) 727-517-8065
(c) 727-215-9646
melliott3@aol.com

Georgia

Martina Correia (Savannah)
(h) 912-231-1612
(c) 912-484-0344
aug1970@bellsouth.net

Idaho

Greg Jahn (Boise)
(h) 208-345-8014
gregjahn@att.net

Part Five: Death Penalty Resources and Contacts

Indiana

Karen Burkhart (Plainfield)
(h) 317-839-1618
jkmburkhart@iquest.net

Iowa

Steve Pohlmeier (Urbandale)
(h/f) 515-270-1419
(w) 515-263-5680
spohlmeier@mchsi.com

Kansas

Donna Schneweis (Topeka)
(h) 785-271-1688
dms2@mindspring.com

Kentucky (2)

Bert Lyons (Eminence)
(h) 502-845-2785
bert@louisville.edu

Amanda Lee Osborne (Bowling Green)
(c) 270-535-4728
amanda.osborne@wku.edu

Louisiana

Rosanne Adderley (New Orleans)
(h) 504-891-6534
(w) 504-862-8631
rosannemarion@yahoo.com

Maine

Mary Ellen Crowley (Waldoboro)
(h) 207-832-6603
travelmaryellen@verizon.net

Maryland

Cathy Knepper (Kensington)
(h) 301-564-0922
dp@speakeasy.net

Missouri

Silas Allard (Columbia)
si.webster@gmail.com

Montana

Eve Malo (Dillon)
(h) 406-683-4913
e_malo@bmf.net

Nebraska

Evan Littrell (Lincoln)
402-770-0459
retawnaive@yahoo.com

Nevada

Nancy Hart (Reno)
(h) 775-825-5550
(f) 775-322-4099
nh@pinecrest.reno.nv.us

New Jersey (2)

Lorry Post (Mt. Laurel)
(h) 856-273-7749
njdpml@verizon.net

New Mexico (2)

Celeste Fitzgerald (Chatham)
(h) 973-635-6396
paxcf@aol.com

New Mexico (2)

Catherine Jabar (Rio Rancho)
(h) 505-892-4396
priyajabar@aol.com

New Mexico (2)

Joe Whiteman (Las Vegas)
(h) 505-454-8221
jwhiteman@desertgate.com

New York

Alyce Stark (New York City and Long Island)
(h) 917-514-5920
asce4@earthlink.net

North Carolina

Scott Langley (Raleigh)
(h/w) 919-231-9752
scott@langleycreations.com

Ohio

Michael Manley (Columbus)
(h) 614-263-5914
(f) 614-222-4040
mmanley@ccad.edu

Oregon

Terrie Rodello (Portland)
(h) 503-246-6836
tarodello@igc.org

AIUSA's State and Regional Death Penalty Abolition Coordinators

Pennsylvania

Maria Weick (Kintnersville)
(h) 610-346-8793
bomabesa@earthlink.net

South Carolina (2)

Efia Nwangaza (Greenville)
(h) 864-242-3039
wangaza@aol.com

Ron Kaz (Charleston)
(c) 843-367-7202

Texas

Rick Halperin (Dallas)
(w) 214-768-3284
(f) 214-768-3475
rhalperi@mail.smu.edu

Vermont

Rachel Lawler (Burlington)
(c) 203 228-2610
rachel.y.lawler@gmail.com

Virginia

Kate Ranganath (Charlottesville)
(c) 434-227-0965
(h) 434-296-8765
kate@ranganath.com

Washington

Amy Luftig (Seattle)
(h) 360-561-9144
sdpacwa@hotmail.com

Wyoming

Amber Holen (Laramie)
(h) 307-742-7592
amholen@bresnan.net

RDPACs

Midwest

Donna Schneweis (Kansas)
(h) 785-271-1688
dms2@mindspring.com

Mid-Atlantic

Phyllis Pautrat (Pennsylvania)
(h) 856-273-1978
(w) 215-427-5800, ext. 113
(f) 215-427-5767 (call first)
ppautrat@comcast.net

Northeast

Robert Nave (Connecticut)
(c) 203-206-9854
naverobert@yahoo.com

West

Terry McCaffrey (California)
(h) 408-257-4611
terrymc@igc.org

Part Five: Resources and Contacts

AIUSA's Member Networks

There are many ways to become involved with Amnesty International USA (AIUSA), beyond the NWFA. Please consider joining one of the following Member Networks, or visit our website, www.amnestyusa.org, for more information on ways to continue taking action on the death penalty and other human rights issues.

Abolition Network

AIUSA's Abolition Network, coordinated by the Program to Abolish the Death Penalty, is a volunteer activist network that seeks total abolition of the death penalty worldwide. The strength of the Abolition Network is in its members - individuals, groups, organizations, students, faith communities - working together with coalition partners and AI's worldwide membership. Here's what you will receive as a member of the Abolition Network:

- The PADP Abolition Flashcard-Program Update (a monthly electronic newsletter)
- Promotional and educational materials on the death penalty
- Alerts on death penalty cases, legislative alerts, and other opportunities to take action in your state
- Connections with other abolitionists in your state and around the country

All NWFA participants will automatically become members of the Abolition Network. If for some reason you do not wish to join this Network, please contact us at padp@aiusa.org.

Urgent Action Network

The Urgent Action Network (UAN) is designed to provide a quick, effective response to situations of urgency involving prisoners, detainees, and other threatened individuals. 100,000 letter writers in 90 countries participate regularly in the UAN, including thousands of individual AI members, student groups, community chapters, and other organizations in the United States. The UAN consists of a streamlined procedure for finding and responding to urgent information about threatened individuals and quickly getting it to a pool of concerned people who agree to be "on call" to send immediate letters, faxes, telegrams, and emails to government authorities.

When signing up for the Urgent Action network, you can ask to receive death penalty letter-writing actions every month (generally those facing imminent execution or cases in which the prosecutor is seeking a death sentence). Members can sign up for the following kinds of actions:

- Members can receive all death penalty actions (domestic and international)
- Members can receive all domestic death penalty actions
- Members can receive 1 death penalty action/month
- Members can receive 2 death penalty actions/month
- Members can receive specific actions on juveniles or women and the death penalty
- Members can participate in the First Appeal Pledge Program (FAPP), in which letters are sent in your name via fax or telegram

You may also join the Interfaith Urgent Action Project, where you receive an action on a general human rights concern in time for letter writing with your faith community on a particular weekend each month. For more information, please contact the UAN Office by email at uan@aiusa.org or by mail at Urgent Action Network, Amnesty International, 600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, Washington, DC 20003. Please indicate what type of actions you would like to receive.

Online Action Center

You can take action on human rights issues throughout the world by visiting AIUSA's Online Action Center. The Action Center contains alerts on urgent human rights cases and pending legislation where your action can make a difference. You'll find the tools and information you need to protect human rights in the USA and around the world. Visit www.amnestyusa.org, and click on Act!

Part Five: Death Penalty Resources and Contacts

AIUSA's Regional Offices

Amnesty International USA's five regional offices serve as another important resource for all groups and individuals working to abolish the death penalty. Regional office staff members work closely with the volunteer leaders and AIUSA groups in their designated states. They will be able to provide you with information about AIUSA groups in your area, as well as upcoming events, conferences, and meetings.

Mid Atlantic Regional Office

Amnesty International
600 Pennsylvania Ave. SE, 5th Floor
Washington DC 20003
202-544-0200

Contact: Abbie Turiansky for Maryland, West Virginia, Virginia (ext. 269)

Contact: Lia Lindsey for Delaware, District of Columbia, Pennsylvania (ext. 344)

States: Delaware, District of Columbia,
Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia

Mid-West Regional Office

Amnesty International
53 W. Jackson Blvd. Room 731
Chicago, IL 60604
312-435-6396

Contact: Robert Schultz for Illinois, Kansas, Missouri, South Dakota, North Dakota

Contact: The office for Indiana, Kentucky, Nebraska, Ohio, Wisconsin

Contact: Michaela Purdue for Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota

States: Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky,
Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska,
North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin

Northeast Regional Office

Amnesty International
58 Day St.
Somerville, MA 02144
617-623-0202

Contact: Josh Rubenstein for all states

States: Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New
Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Rhode
Island, Vermont

Southern Regional Office

Amnesty International
730 Peachtree St. Suite 1060
Atlanta, GA 30308
404-876-5661

Contact: Laura Moye for Georgia (ext. 12)

Contact: Suha Dabbouseh for Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas (ext. 23)

Contact: Joshua Frazier for Alabama, Florida, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina (ext. 15)

States: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia,
Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma,
South Carolina, Tennessee, Texas

Western Regional Office

Amnesty International
350 Sansome St. Suite 630
San Francisco, CA 94104
415-291-9233

Contact: Erin Callahan for Montana, Hawaii, Nevada, and Wyoming

Contact: Mona Cadena for Alaska, Colorado, Idaho, Oregon, Washington (ext. 207)

Contact: Sandra Perez for Arizona, Northern California, New Mexico, Utah (ext. 206)

States: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado,
Hawaii, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico,
Oregon, Utah, Washington, Wyoming

International, National, State, and Local Organizations

International Organizations

Amnesty International (based in London, England)
http://web.amnesty.org/pages/deathpenalty_index_eng

Amnesty International USA's Program to Abolish the Death Penalty (based in Washington DC)
www.amnestyusa.org/abolish

EPCM (Together Against the Death Penalty) (based in Paris, France)
www.abolition-ecpm.org

Murder Victims' Families for Human Rights (based in the United States)
www.murdervictimsfamilies.org

Penal Reform International (based in London, England)
www.penalreform.org

Sant'Egidio International Campaign Against the Death Penalty (based in Italy)
www.santegidio.org

World Coalition Against the Death Penalty (based in Paris, France)
www.worldcoalition.org

National Organizations

Visit the websites of these organizations for in-depth information about the death penalty and how to get involved. Many of these organizations are based in Washington, DC.

Abolitionist Action Committee
www.abolition.org

American Bar Association
www.abanet.org/moratorium

American Civil Liberties Union
www.aclu.org/capital/index.html

American Friends Service Committee - Criminal Justice/Anti-Death Penalty Program
www.afsc.org/community/criminal-justice.htm

Buddhist Peace Fellowship Prison Project
www.bpf.org

Campaign to End the Death Penalty
www.nodeathpenalty.org

Catholics Against Capital Punishment
www.cacp.org

Citizens United for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (CUADP)
www.cuadp.org

Part Five: Death Penalty Resources and Contacts

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE)

www.curenational.org

The Constitution Project- Death Penalty Initiative

www.constitutionproject.org/dpi

Death Penalty Information Center

www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Engaged Zen Foundation

www.engaged-zen.org

Equal Justice USA/Quixote Center

www.quixote.org/ej

Fellowship of Reconciliation

www.forusa.org

For Whom the Bells Toll

www.curenational.org/bells

Innocence Project

www.innocenceproject.org

Journey of Hope...From Violence to Healing

www.journeyofhope.org

The Justice Project

www.thejusticeproject.org

Mennonite Central Committee U.S.

www.mcc.org/us/washington/cap_pun/cap.html

Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation

www.mvfr.org

NAACP Legal Defense Fund

www.naacpldf.org

National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

www.ncadp.org

People of Faith Against the Death Penalty (based in North Carolina)

www.pfadp.org

Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism

<http://uahc.org/reform/rac/issues/issuedp.html>

Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project

www.deathpenaltyreligious.org

Southern Center for Human Rights

www.schr.org

International, National, State, and Local Organizations

Unitarian Universalists Against the Death Penalty

www.uuadp.org

U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

www.usccb.org

Witness to Innocence

www.witnesstoinnocence.org

State and Local Coalitions

(Please note: These groups are listed alphabetically by state.)

ALABAMA

Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Esther Brown
334-499-0003

beesther@earthlink.net
www.phadp.org

ALASKA

Alaskans Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Kathy Harris
907-258-2296

kathyh@gci.net
www.aadp.info

ARIZONA

Arizona Death Penalty Forum

Contact: Marty Lieberman
602-370-4465

marty@azdeathpenalty.org
www.azdeathpenalty.org/

Coalition of Arizonans to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Kathy Norgard
520-325-6240

knorgard@aol.com
www.azabolitionist.org

Sanctity of Life, People Against Executions

Contact: Claudia Ellquist
520-792-9867

cequist@juno.com

ARKANSAS

Arkansans Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Betsey Wright
479-925-4440

betseyw@specent.com

Arkansas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: David L. Rickard
501-868-6480

rickardd@comcast.net

CALIFORNIA

ACLU of Northern California

Contact: Natasha Minsker
415-621-2493

nminsker@aclunc.org
www.aclunc.org/deathpenalty

Part Five: Death Penalty Resources and Contacts

California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Terry McCaffrey (North) terrymc@igc.org
408-257-4611 www.CaliforniaPeopleofFaith.org

Contact: Eric DeBode (South) cpf@la-archdiocese.org
213-235-8305 www.CaliforniaPeopleofFaith.org

Death Penalty Focus

Contact: Stefanie Faucher stefanie@deathpenalty.org
415-243-0143 www.deathpenalty.org
www.CaliforniaMoratorium.org

COLORADO

Coloradans Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Don Bounds info@coadp.org
303-715-3163 www.coadp.org

CONNECTICUT

Connecticut Network to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Robert Nave naverobert@cnadp.org
203-206-9854 www.cnadp.org

DELAWARE

Delaware Citizens Opposed to the Death Penalty

Contact: Sally Milbury-Steen pinterris@aol.com
302-656-2721 www.depaceminterris.org/home/programs/deathpenalty.htm

FLORIDA

Floridians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Contact: Mark Elliott mark@fadp.org
800-973-6548 or 727-215-9646 www.fadp.org

GEORGIA

Georgians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Contact: Laura Moye gfadp@yahoo.com
404-572-6226 www.geocities.com/gfadp

Georgia Moratorium Campaign

Contact: Laura Moye info@georgiamoratorium.org
404-876-5661 x12 www.GeorgiaMoratorium.org

IDAHO

Idahoans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Contacts: Henry Krewer, Mia Crosthwaite mia@dynamicmotion.net
208-426-0045

ILLINOIS

Illinois Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Jane Bohman info@icadp.org
312-849-2279 www.icadp.org

International, National, State, and Local Organizations

INDIANA

Bloomington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Bill and Glenda Breeden breeden@ccrtc.com
812-829-3431 www.iicacp.org

Duneland Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Contacts: Marti Pizzini or Fr. Charles Doyle pizzinis@comcast.net
219-877-7097 or 219-874-7680 www.iicacp.org

Indiana Information Center on the Abolition of Capital Punishment

Contact: Chris Hitz-Bradley info@iicacp.org
317-466-7128 www.iicacp.org

Terra Haute Abolition Network

Contacts: Suzanne Carter or Kevin Griffith matreshka@aol.com
812-234-3226

IOWA

Iowans Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Marty Ryan mryan@iowaclu.org
515-243-3988 x12 www.iadp.org

KANSAS

Kansas Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Bill Lucero kcadp1176@earthlink.net
785-232-5958 www.kscadp.org

KENTUCKY

Kentucky Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Pat Delahanty kcadp@earthlink.net
502-721-8885 www.kcadp.org

MAINE

Mainers Against the Death Penalty

info@nodp.org www.nodp.org/me

MARYLAND

Maryland Citizens Against State Executions

Contacts:
Jane Henderson, Executive Director janehenderson@mdcase.org
Rion Dennis, Statewide Organizer riondennis@mdcase.org
301-779-5230 www.mdcase.org

MASSACHUSETTS

Massachusetts Citizens Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Martina Jackson mcadp@earthlink.net
617-523-3951 www.mcadp.org

MICHIGAN

Michigan Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Beth Arnovits mail@miccd.org
517-482-4161 www.miccd.org

Part Five: Death Penalty Resources and Contacts

MINNESOTA

Minnesotans Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Jordan Kushner
651-649-4618

mnadp_web@yahoo.com
www.mnadp.org

MISSISSIPPI

Mississippians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Contact: Ken McGill
662-416-1981

mcgillken1@aol.com

Mississippians Educating for Smart Justice

Contact: Dr. James Bowley
601-974-1328

bowleje@millsaps.edu or info@mesj.info
www.mesj.info/

MISSOURI

Eastern Missouri Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Mary C. Mifflin
314-241-8062

emcadp@mindspring.com
www.mindspring.com/~emcadp/

Mid-Missouri Fellowship of Reconciliation

Contact: Jeff Stack
573-449-4585

jstack@no2death.org
http://for.missouri.org

Missourians Against State Killing

Contact: Tom and Jeanette Block
314-962-4937

tjblockmask@aol.com

Missouri Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Rita Linhardt
573-635-7239

lindhardtr@mocatholic.org
www.moabolition.org

Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty-Greater Kansas City Chapter

Contact: Barbara Poe
816-756-0911

wmcadp@sbcglobal.net
http://home.kc.rr.com/wmcadp/wmcadp.htm

MONTANA

Montana Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Estella Vilasenor
406-585-2408

NEBRASKA

Nebraskans Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Eric Aspengren
402-477-7787

info@nadp.net
www.nadp.net

NEVADA

Nevada Coalition Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Nancy Hart
775-233-9733

nh@pinecrest.reno.nv.us

International, National, State, and Local Organizations

NEW ENGLAND

The Northeastern United States Coalition Against the Death Penalty (NUSCADP)

[Includes Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont]

Contact: Robert Nave
203.206.9854

naverobert@yahoo.com

NEW JERSEY

New Jerseyans for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Contact: Celeste Fitzgerald
973-635-6396 or 609-278-6719

cfitzgerald@njadp.org
www.njadp.org

NEW MEXICO

New Mexico Coalition to Repeal the Death Penalty

Contact: Kathleen MacRae
505-986-9536

info@nmrepeal.org
www.nmrepeal.org

NEW YORK

New Yorkers Against Death Penalty

Contact: David Kaczynski
518-453-6797

info@nyadp.org
www.nyadp.org

New York Religious Leaders Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Thomas Boland, Jr.
518-453-6797

info@nyadp.org
www.nyadp.org

NORTH CAROLINA

North Carolina Coalition for Moratorium

Contact: Jeremy Collins
919-491-2917

jcollins@ncmoratorium.org
www.ncmoratorium.org

People of Faith Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Stephen Dear
919-933-7567

info@pfadp.org
www.pfadp.org

OHIO

Ohioans to STOP Executions

Contact: Alice Gerdeman
614-560-0654

alice@ijpc-cincinnati.org
www.otse.org

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contacts:

Camille Landry
Lydia Gill-Polley
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sojournerc@gmail.com
lydiapolley@cox.net
www.ocadp.org

OREGON

Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Contact: Clarence Pugh
503-362-6328

info@oadp.org
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International, National, State, and Local Organizations

Texas Moratorium Network

Contact: Scott Cobb
512-302-6715

admin@texasmoratorium.org
www.texasmoratorium.org

Texas Students Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Hooman Hedayati

hooman@texasabolition.org
www.texasabolition.org

VERMONT

Vermonters Against the Death Penalty

Contact: Rachel Lawler
203-228-2610

rachel.y.lawler@gmail.com
<http://members.cox.net/sagaciousmeerkat/vadp>

VIRGINIA

Virginians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty

Contact: Jack Payden-Travers
888-567-8237

office@vadp.org
www.vadp.org

WASHINGTON

Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Jeff Wilson
206-622-8952

info@abolishdeathpenalty.org
www.abolishdeathpenalty.org

WISCONSIN

Wisconsin Coalition Against the Death Penalty

wcadp@mailbag.com

www.wcadp.org

WYOMING

Wyoming Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty

Contact: Fr. Carl Gallinger
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The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

In 1948, the United Nations adopted the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR). The Declaration, which was adopted without dissent, is a pledge among nations to promote these fundamental rights as the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world. The 30 articles of the UDHR together form a comprehensive statement covering the civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights of all people.

A declaration lacks enforcement provisions. Instead, it is a statement of intent, which is a set of principles to which United Nations member states commit themselves. The UDHR has acquired the status of customary international law because most states treat it as though it were law, although governments have not applied this common law equally.

The Universal Declaration proclaims the right to:

- life, liberty, and security of person
- equality before the law
- a fair and public trial and the presumption of innocence
- freedom of movement
- freedom of thought, conscience, and religion
- freedom of opinion and expression
- freedom of assembly and association

It insists that no one shall:

- be held in slavery
- be subjected to torture or cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment
- be arbitrarily arrested, detained, or exiled

Furthermore, it establishes that everyone has the right:

- to a nationality
- to marry
- to own property
- to take part in the government of his or her country
- to work and to receive equal pay for equal work
- to enjoy rest and leisure
- to have an adequate standard of living and education
- to form and join trade unions
- to seek asylum from persecution

The Declaration proclaims each person's right to protection from deprivation of life, and it categorically states that no one shall be subjected to cruel or degrading punishment. The death penalty - the pre-meditated killing of prisoners in state custody - violates both of these rights. For a full text of the UDHR, go to <http://web.amnesty.org/pages/aboutai-udhr-eng>.

“Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.”

-Article 3, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

“No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.”

-Article 5, Universal Declaration of Human Rights

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