



# FAITH & FACTS

## Death Penalty

Civil and Human Rights

### What does the Bible say?

Thou shalt not kill. (**Exodus 20:13**)

Say to them, "As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live." (**Ezekiel 33:11**)



Do not seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone among your people, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD. (**Leviticus 19:18**)

Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. (**John 8:3-11**) Jesus spares the life of a woman caught in adultery.

caught in adultery.

You have heard that it was said, "Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth." But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. (**Matthew 5:38-39**)

You have heard that it was said, "Love your neighbor and hate your enemy." But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you. (**Matthew 5:43-44**)

### What does The United Methodist Church say?

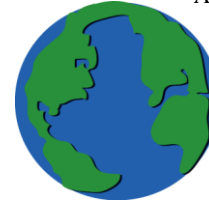
We believe the death penalty denies the power of Christ to redeem, restore, and transform all human beings... We believe all human life is sacred and created by God and therefore, we must see all human life as significant and valuable. (Social Principles, ¶164.G)

The United Methodist Church declares its opposition to the retention and use of capital punishment and urges its abolition. In spite of a common assumption to the contrary, "an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth," does not give justification for the imposing of the penalty of death. Jesus explicitly repudiated retaliation (Matthew 5:38-39), and the Talmud denies its literal meaning and holds that it refers to financial indemnities. (2004 Book of Resolutions, "In Opposition to Capital Punishment")



### What do the facts say?

Since 1973, over 120 people have been released from death row with evidence of their innocence. (See Staff report, House Judiciary Subcommittee on Civil and Constitutional Rights, Oct. 1993, with updates from the Death Penalty Information Center)



A 1995 Hart Research Poll of police chiefs in the U.S. found that the majority of the chiefs do not believe that the death penalty is an effective law enforcement tool, and only 1% thought expanding the death penalty would help reduce violent crime.

Of the states that have conducted comprehensive cost studies, all have found that the pursuit of death penalty sentences is tremendously more expensive than life without parole.

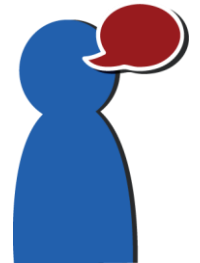
135 countries have abolished the death penalty in law or practice. This includes nearly all of Europe, Central and South America, and numerous countries in Africa.

States that practice the death penalty have higher murder rates than states that do not. Specifically, in 2006, states that had capital punishment had a 40% higher murder rate than states which did not have capital punishment. (See <http://www.deathpenaltyinfo.org>, keyword: "Deterrence, Consistently Lower Murder Rates")

### What do you say?

Take action for justice ...

- Urge your church and churches in your area to sponsor a dialogue on topics related to the death penalty (innocence: wrongful conviction, severe mental illness; murder victim family members: reconciliation and forgiveness.) Films, resource materials and speakers are available through GBCS.
- Participate in an established prison ministry. Have a craft option at your alternative giving fair that sends cards to inmates on death row.
- If you reside in the U.S., tell your State Representative and Senator that the death penalty does not work in restoring victims or protecting society. Important resources used in pursuing and enforcing the death penalty must be redistributed to increase resources for crime prevention and victims' services.



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