



# Statement of Conscience

Recognizing our communities' pressing concerns about crime and punishment, we come together as people of faith representing California's faith traditions to address the question of the death penalty.

We are deeply disturbed by violent crime and are grieved by the suffering of its victims. Our hearts and hands reach out to those victims and their families, and we acknowledge the natural fear created by the violence in many of our communities. We affirm that the people in our communities are entitled to protection from those who would do harm.

We acknowledge that violent actions have consequences, that offenders should be held accountable, and that communities need ways to find healing. We affirm that restitution to victims and their loved ones and rehabilitation of the offender should be our goals rather than punishment meted out for its own sake or in a spirit of vengeance. Capital punishment serves no purpose other than that of revenge. Taking life for the purpose of revenge is abhorrent.

This is a key moment in the history of our state. California now has the largest death row in the United States. Most faith communities have strong statements of opposition and numerous resolutions on the death penalty, and we are called upon to actively work for its abolition. The death penalty system is inequitable and unfair in its implementation. It is racist, predisposed to executing the poor and destitute among us. The gates have opened for an onslaught of an unprecedented number of executions. We pledge to maintain a strong voice of opposition to the death penalty. We will educate our religious communities about the death penalty and its alternatives, such as life imprisonment without the possibility of parole and restitution to the family of the victim.

Together we call upon our sisters and brothers in our faith communities, as well as California's elected leaders, to join us in working toward the abolition of the death penalty. Finally, we invite all people of good will to join us in choosing moral courage over fear, and creative solutions over ineffective responses to questions of violent crime and punishment. Together we can create truly just solutions that respect the human dignity of each and every member of society.

Print Name \_\_\_\_\_

Faith Affiliation/Title \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Tel. No. \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign this statement and return to : CPF (North California) Terry McCaffrey, 11154 La Paloma Drive, Cupertino CA 95014. CPF (Southern California), Eric De Bode, 3424 Wilshire Boulevard Los Angeles, CA 90010.

The Statement of Conscience is an interfaith declaration of opposition to the death penalty and commitment to work in solidarity for its abolition in California. The statement was first presented to the public in a press conference at Grace Episcopal Cathedral in San Francisco on October 8, 1998. It is sponsored by California People of Faith Working Against the Death Penalty.