

**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.

**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]