

Council of Churches

Since its founding in 1950, the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA has been the leading force for ecumenical cooperation among Christians in the United States. The NCC's member faith groups—from a wide spectrum of Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, Evangelical, historic African American and Living Peace churches—include 45 million persons in more than 100,000 local congregations in communities across the nation.

<http://www.ncccusa.org/>
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202-544-2350 in Washington, D.C.

American Friends Service Committee

The American Friends Service Committee carries out service, development, social justice, and peace programs throughout the world. Founded by Quakers in 1917 to provide conscientious objectors with an opportunity to aid civilian war victims, AFSC's work attracts the support and partnership of people of many races, religions, and cultures.

AFSC's work is based on the Quaker belief in the worth of every person and faith in the power of love to overcome violence and injustice. The organization's mission and achievements won worldwide recognition in 1947 when it accepted the Nobel Peace Prize with the British Friends Service Council on behalf of all Quakers.

The AFSC is directed by a Quaker board and staffed by Quakers and other people of faith who share the Friends' desire for peace and social justice.

<http://www.afsc.org/>

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AFSC Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project

The Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project seeks to build a powerful coalition of faith-based activists. Nationally, it works with official religious bodies to develop strategies and to promote anti-death penalty activism within each faith tradition. At the grassroots level, the Project links with individuals and faith communities, establishing "covenant" relationships to foster local abolition efforts.

The work of the Religious Organizing Against the Death Penalty Project comprises four central components:

Education

One of the Project's major functions is to provide individuals and faith groups with religiously oriented anti-death penalty materials. Resources available include:

- Dead Man Walking study packets
- a compilation of national religious bodies' statements on the death penalty
- a compendium of powerful sermons against the death penalty
- educational videos for people of faith
- national conferences and smaller gatherings that provide training and inspiration

Commitment

We provide individuals and communities of faith with tangible ways of expressing their opposition to the death penalty. These include:

- signing the declaration of life, a pledge to express one's individual opposition to capital punishment
- developing a statement to reflect one's faith community's opposition to the death penalty
- becoming a member of the Religious Organizing Project
- designing action plans for working for the abolition of the death penalty
- signing the moratorium petition

Ministry

The Project works with individuals whose lives are deeply touched by the specter of the death penalty. We help faith communities:

- to address the needs of murder victims so that true healing may occur
- to reach out to family members of those on death row, the "invisible victims" of the death penalty
- to assist death row inmates in a variety of ways

Action

We provide people of faith with tangible ways to work for the abolition of the death penalty. We help individuals and groups to:

- organize anti-death penalty demonstrations and vigils
- publicly challenge politicians and prosecutors who support the death penalty
- testify and lobby against the death penalty
- monitor capital cases to witness against injustice in the courtroom
- develop a strong anti-death penalty voice in the media

Each of us can make a meaningful contribution. People of faith helped spearhead the first abolitionist movement in the United States—the movement to abolish slavery. The time is long overdue for the religious community to play a decisive role in the second abolitionist movement—the movement to abolish the death penalty.

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