

## OREGONIANS FOR ALTERNATIVES TO THE DEATH PENALTY

---

### Religion and the Bible

Some individuals who support the death penalty say: The Bible points out that the death penalty is justified..... “an eye for an eye” is often cited as justification for having the death penalty. Since someone took a life, the only fair repayment would be the perpetrator’s life in return.

Oregonians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty’s response:

The Bible does contain many pieces of text that support revenge and retribution as a response to murder. Most of those can be found in the Old Testament that also calls for death to those who commit adultery, talk back to parents, and steal from a neighbor and other offenses that would never rise to the same level of punishment today. The Old Covenant also contains “thou shalt not kill” as one of the 10 Commandments.

The New Testament leads its readers and followers to messages of “love thy neighbor”, “do no harm”, non-violence, compassion and following the example of Jesus Christ who sat with the downtrodden and admonished the people for retaliating in violent ways.

Most of the main-stream religions practiced in the United States and Oregon, preach against a death penalty: Christians, Jews (Orthodox, Conservative, Reform and Reconstructionist), Buddhists, Sikhs, and Muslims in this country speak against the death penalty as another act of violence.

Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon and the leadership in the Catholic Archdiocese of Oregon, the United Methodist Conference, the Episcopal Diocese, the ELCA Lutheran Synod, the American Baptist Church, the Presbytery of the Cascades, the United Church of Christ, the Jewish Federation of Greater Portland, the Unitarian Universalist congregations of Oregon and other faith communities in Oregon all agree in their opposition to the death penalty.

Every human being, in spite of their worst deeds, has value. To kill people, who kill people, in order to show that killing people is wrong, just does not make sense. Life without the possibility of parole works to keep the public safe, impose severe punishment on the convicted and provide for an opportunity for the convicted to work to make amends and restitution to the murder victim’s family. More killing by the State is not an appropriate way to “respect life”. We are the State, therefore all citizens of the state play a role in this act of violence, which most faith communities oppose.