

On Wings of Hope

Project Hope



Vol. 20 Issue II
Apr. - Jun. 2016



GREETINGS FROM ABROAD

Good morning America! Congratulations on being the fifth-best executioner of the world! Don't be disappointed, it's a good result because - if you had had your way, many more executions would have taken place! But among others, those "guerilla warriors" (quote from the US Supreme Court) have achieved that medicine, initially made for healing people, cannot be used for state sanctioned killings, and therefore a lot of planned executions couldn't be carried out. Let alone all these private organizations, pro bono lawyers, and many individuals who give you a hard fight and hamper some executions that way.

What's more, there is another ranking you can be proud of: You're the leader in the number of prisoners awaiting execution. Imagine - nearly 3,000 out of the world-wide 20,000 death row inmates rot in YOUR prisons! Yes you've got an adequate position among the barbaric, uncivilized states such as China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Iran. Russia, for example, is not fit to hold a candle to you since they have had a de facto abolition of the death penalty for decades.

America, you need to learn more from your fellow travelers! Indeed there is still a lot you can do to improve your killing skills. First of all: Kill your prisoners publicly! Nobody buys it when you claim the death penalty as a deterrent. On the contrary - as long as you make the public believe executions are just a peacefully "going-to-sleep", the deterrent argument has no bite. Show the blood thirsty mob what the death penalty really is! Of course, your method of killing - the lethal injection method - is more cruel and painful than hanging or beheading; but what's the use if nobody knows about it? As long as you've got a paralytic in your three-drug-protocol, which paralyzes the delinquent and masks his pain and suffering (it's said that it feels like being burned at the stake), as long as none of the few execution witnesses can tell the public how horrible a death by being poisoned really is, there is no deterrent. So come on America, pull the plug on hypocrisy, and be up front about literally torturing your death row inmates to death!

Ursula Malchau

Advisory Board Member

Greetings from the Editor's Desk:

**PROJECT HOPE TO ABOLISH
THE DEATH PENALTY** (phadp)
501 (C) (3) non-profit.

MISSION STATEMENT:

Working together with friends, supporters and other advocates to educate the public and bring about the abolition of Capital Punishment in Alabama.

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THIS NEWSLETTER WAS WRITTEN,
TYPED AND FORMATTED ON DEATH
ROW AT HOLMAN PRISON

As United States citizens, we deplore the fact that our nation is at risk of forgetting the promise made to generations by our Declaration of Independence: That our nation would respect life as first among the inalienable rights bestowed on us by our Creator. To uphold that promise the nation's founders pledged their lives, their fortunes and their sacred honor We must also do no less.

In 1972, the United States Supreme Court halted executions because it found that death sentences were arbitrarily administered. Yet, in 1976 the death penalty was reinstated. In another case the Supreme Court struck down a sentence when jurors were not told that the alternative to death was life imprisonment without parole. With executions, details matter, methods matter. In Oklahoma a grand jury is learning that first hand. In a case out of Georgia the U.S. Supreme Court recently ruled in favor of an inmate who had an all-white jury. Race matters. Black lives matter.

Over 100 people have been exonerated from death rows since 1976 when the death penalty was reinstated. And because we know for certain that those exonerates are innocent, it is highly likely that we have executed a person whose innocence could not be established in time to prevent their death. Yet, U.S. Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia went so far as to state that "mere factual innocence is no reason not to carry out a death sentence properly reached."

Reaching a culture of life will require more than legal reform. We must end trivializing life whether by abortion or capital punishment. All life has value. Yet our legal system and our national culture is declaring that the value of human life can be assigned by the powerful and the protection of the vulnerable is arbitrary. We must dedicate ourselves to education, public policy advocacy and eventually legal reform. In the mean time fervent prayer for the cause of human life is not a bad place to start.

As always, i want to thank all those who give of themselves, their time, money and talents to helping us "Keep Hope Alive!"

Ronald B. Smith Jr.
Chairman/PHADP
Z-586/H1-6a

ALABAMA NEWS
2016 2nd QTR

- * On may 12th the 11th circuit issued a stay of execution for Vernon Madison and granted him a competency hearing. The Attorney General appealed the decision, but it was upheld by the U.S. Supreme Court. We are grateful to EJI for their efforts for Mr. Madison, as well as for their dedication to fighting injustice.
- * The Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals unanimously ordered a new trial for another EJI client, Derek Horton. He was convicted and sentenced after prosecutors in Mobile County improperly presented irrelevant and prejudicial information to the jury.
- * We are encouraged by the organization Public Safety Officials on the Death Penalty (PSODP). They were created with the purpose of "elevating the voices of public safety officials who are prepared to discuss and explore alternative ways to achieve a more just and effective safety system." The resources wasted on capital punishment could certainly be put to better use for public safety. Anyone willing to look at fairness and efficacy in the system cannot consider the death penalty a viable option.
- * The 2016 Legislative session has come to an end. No bills concerning the death penalty were passed. We thank our friends at Alabama Arise, especially Stan Johnson, for their efforts in Montgomery.
- * The U.S. Supreme Court remanded the case of Bart Johnson, also an EJI client, back to the Alabama Court of Criminal Appeals to be reviewed in light of **Hurst v. Florida**. The 8 - 1 decision in **Hurst** declared Florida's sentencing scheme unconstitutional. Alabama shares that system, so as we said previously, we refuse to be anything but positive and hopeful about this.
- * Executive Director, Esther Brown attended the Alabama NAACP quarterly meeting. One particular focus at the meeting was the importance of voting and registering to vote. So remember to register now, so you can vote later.
- * We would like to thank all of you who responded to the Execution Alert for Vernon Madison. Among that group we would like to give a special thanks to Judy Collins, Ursula Malchau, Louis Richard, Rev. Cathy C. Hoop and the congregation at University Presbyterian Church in Tuscaloosa. Thanks for being the voice of common sense and decency.
- * In March The Alabama New South Coalition began distributing our weekly updates to their SOS members. We are proud to support this organization that is devoted to "Making a Change for the Better in our Lifetime."

* Esther attended the Alabama State NAACP Quarterly Meeting. The Alabama NAACP sent out Execution Alerts on Vernon Madison as did the Women In NAACP (WIN) for which we are grateful. Just another example of cooperation with our partners against injustice. Thanks to Mr. Bernard Simelton and all the great folks at the Alabama NAACP.

* A special congratulations goes out to Miss Petra Jackson, PHADP's Student Representative, who has decided to attend the University of Vermont. Petra received the Presidential Scholarship will go along way to making her academic dreams a reality. We wish her all the best in her future endeavors.

**Execute
Justice
Not
People**

Judicial Chess

As the political propaganda machine continues to spin it's rhetoric towards the White House, the highest court in the land is being held hostage. The only ransom demand so far has been "give us the White House, and we'll give you a Supreme Court Justice."

It is being made (which it should have already been...) blatantly obvious, that it is no longer about justice. The highest court in the land, is now being used in a political game of judicial chess. Words like: conservative, liberal and moderate have no place when defining justice. Terms such as constitutionally sound, fair and politically untainted should be used in describing a United States Supreme Court Justice. However, a seat continues to sit vacant, while the political jostling for the prime real estate rages on, and the countries citizens are being denied their rights to due process. That is a part of the constitution... just in case, the judicial chess players didn't know that. Check!

There are plenty of qualified candidates, who are well versed in the law and the constitution, willing and ready to step into the vacancy on the judicial chess board. However, being a diligent practitioner of the law comes second to whether they are a conservative, liberal or moderate in this nation where justice is supposed to be blind! I guess ol' Lady Justice can see what she wants too, when she wants too! Checkmate!

quis cus-to-di-et ip-sos cus-todes?
(who will keep the keepers themselves?)

Be Blessed,
Maximus Strong

Win, Lose, or Draw

Thanks to the recent Hurst case in Florida hundreds of inmates are going to have their death sentences converted to life without the possibility of parole. This is a "win" we are hoping to see in the rest of the states that still have and/or practice this cruel and unusual punishment. But is this really a win, is there really that much of a difference in spending 20 - 30 years on death row awaiting execution as opposed to spending 20 - 30 years, the average life-span of an inmate, in population? Either way, men and women are being sentenced to die in prison. That doesn't sound like a win to me. A step in the right direction, maybe, but not a win.

When the Hurst case was presented in front of the United States Supreme Court they could've chose to ignore it, as they have so many prior cases claiming legitimate issues, or they could have decided that the case wasn't strong enough and turned a blind-eye towards it, but thank God they didn't. In this sense you could say we, opponents of the death penalty won. But then you will have to admit that we only won the fight and not the war; the battle rages on.

So when states continue to push for the death penalty in many cases, while they continue to find ways to execute inmates, we must continue to fight this monster we call the justice system. And until the death penalty is ruled unconstitutional country-wide and done away with entirely, we must stay strong, keep the faith, and stand together. Whether you view this as a win, lose, or draw we must keep fighting.

Castro

sweat'n in a box
twenty three hours ev'ry day
wait'n on word from the courts
hope'n and pray'n i get some play
haven't heard from my lawyer
sweat'n in a box
twenty three hours ev'ry day
watch'n and wait'n for the mail
pray'n and cuss'n i don't fail
all of these years
been treated like some ol' mangy cur

sweat'n in a box
twenty three hours ev'ry day
pen friends come and go
friends in agony die very slow
family, friends, and memories fade
sweat'n in a box
twenty three hours ev'ry day

Kim Van Pelt
I-26/Z-737

What PHADP Has Done For Me

By: AMIGO

This organization is a group of men, and volunteers on the street that are focussed on becoming better people. Project Hope has given me that hope to become a good person. As I speak of the family of Hope I must mention all of these members are from various walks of life. The communities we left are not forgotten, they are the grass roots that bind us together.

As I speak of this organization, it gives me a joy that you can see. Educating one's mind is a gift that only Project Hope has given me. Helping me grow into a man. All of us have our own faults in life, but being a part of Project Hope has helped me to better understand and overcome my faults.

As men die across this country, Project Hope stays on that straight line, constantly moving forward. Together, as family, we can overcome these odds. As the holidays come and go, our lives depend on each other for happiness and yes, understanding. Each of these men bring a unique gift to Hope, that's what makes Hope so special.

Not every inmate here on the row, cares about Project Hope. Some support us, some don't, and some are stuck in the middle. This in no way, will slow Hope down. Through friendship and understanding, we hope to bring them all on board, for the fight depends on us. Interacting with my family in here, I am now more able to understand my family on the street.

You must be thinking, how can a bunch of death row inmates be family. You would have to be here to see the friendships, and yes, the love for one another. The odds will always be against Project Hope in here and out there, but as family, we will win this fight for our lives. If you do not believe that family can overcome the odds, we ask you to join our family and see what we can accomplish together. We will invite you to share in our understanding and growth.

Let Freedom Ring

When Dr. King, and the rest of our vanguards of civil rights were marching all over the map, being locked down in jail after jail, facing down freezing cold water, as giant hoses were turned on them and vicious attack dogs turned loose as they tried to get to the mountain top... they weren't thinking, "our vote won't matter anyway!" They were thinking, "we want and deserve the right to vote!" They weren't thinking, "well, it doesn't matter whether we sit at the back of the bus, as long as we are riding." They were thinking, "we should have

the right to sit anywhere on the bus that we want." They weren't thinking, "water is water, it doesn't matter which fountain we drink it from." They were thinking, "we deserve the right to quench our thirst from any fountain we choose." They did not know if having those rights would definitely change anything. But, they did know that they wanted those rights to have a chance to change things. The very rights that we have now! The rights and civil liberties that are slowly but surely being eroded on a daily basis by greedy politicians more concerned with their bank accounts than their constituents.

It is time for us as a people, not any specific race, but "A PEOPLE" to take back and assert the voice given to us by a vanguard who suffered many atrocities in trying to get us to a mountain top they knew they might not reach with us but still did it for us. Let's not dishonor or disrespect all their efforts and sacrifices by saying, "Why should I vote, my vote won't matter anyway." Instead let's honor our vanguard by being as dedicated and diligent to change and progress as they were and as we should be! Show up to the polls, vote, and then become active in communicating with the people elected.

If you want your vote to matter...then make it matter! Remember that politicians really and truly work for us. Without the "PEOPLE" voting them in they don't have jobs. So it is time to start handing out work evaluations! Voting is not a chore! Voting is a right! Voting is a duty! A duty that we have to "our vanguard" who fought to get us that right. So, be assertive, be dutiful, be a voter and become "the New Vanguard" for our future generations.

uno animo
(with one mind)
Maximus Strong

To Really Be In Love

To really be in love is to reach your breaking point and realize you didn't have a breaking point. Because if you truly love that person, you can forgive that person. Because you love that person with so much passion from so many different aspects, that person has become as one with you. So how could you stop loving yourself, you can't. That is why so many people die from breaking heart aches and suicides because when you truly love someone your heart don't beat for you no more, it beats for your significant other. That is the closest you can get to the love of a mother.

Scarface

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NEVER GIVE UP!

The United States of America is a place of opportunity. The land of the free. This is a country that anyone (with a legitimate visa and passport) can come to from anywhere in the world, with dusty tattered clothes and a few dollars and coins in their pocket, and in just a few days or weeks have what they need to function in a great country. To achieve their goal required a plan or strategy. They may have had to give up their car, home or business to get here to the land of milk and honey in order to gain their freedom and prosperity, but they did it and they didn't give up. Those are good words to live by. "Never Give Up!"

We, Death Row Prisoners have a great fight ahead of us in abolishing the death penalty, but the key factor is, "Never giving up" the fight.

A Christian Perspective

Produced By
Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty



Vol. 20 Issue II
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Greetings Family,

We are half way through another year. things here at Holman were a little off balance with the activities and the meals for a short spell, but everything is back to normal. And the fight must go on and we are keeping hope alive. A lot of things have been happening this year in the courts. We are now starting to see some rays bursting through the clouds. The USSC has spoken loudly to the state of Alabama. SCOTUS remanded Johnson v. Alabama to the lower courts in Alabama to re-examine their death penalty statute in relation to a recent ruling out of Florida. Alabama and Florida's death penalty statute are almost identical, with some of the same flaws. Such as, a judge taking the power as the Constitutional right that's given to us by the 6th amendment. That gives us a right to a fair trial by a jury of our peers. But I am in no delusion that this state will automatically do the right thing. We live in a very blood-thirsty state that thrives on Revenge Killing. We kill more than any other state per-capita in the south. So this ruling, while it's a great step in the right direction for us, it's only the beginning of the process.

But what's more ironic about this ruling that comes from the high court. That which they are

Organizational Information

A Christian Perspective is
Published by Project Hope
To Abolish the Death
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asking Alabama to do in their remand is the EXACT same thing we here at PHADP, EJI, Hank Sanders, and others have been asking for or proposing legislation for for years now. A moratorium years ago would have re-examined this statute as well. A moratorium would have paused this system and looked at the same constitutional violations that SCOTUS is now pointing out. And this is why we must continue to fight. And we will need all of you all's support. We have to continue to put faith in our message. Habakkuk 2:2 says to write the vision and make it plain for those who may hear it and receive it. Well, SCOTUS has heard our cry. We are under an unconstitutional death penalty statute, and not only on the sentencing level. But again, this is only the beginning. And as we watch Florida in a debate right now about how to rectify their statute, we can only keep hope alive and push the voice of our own fight here in Alabama. So to EJI, the Federal Defenders, Hank Sanders, and others that stand in this endeavor with us. Thank you, and let's continue. We will do our part here, by keeping hope alive!

Standing Strong,

Vice Chairman
Anthony Tyson
N - 17 / Z 641

Untitled

Why is Alabama still killing? Why is Alabama still defiant? Alabama is only concerned with blood, despite the claims of innocence, despite the Hurst ruling, despite the mentally retarded...However, when it comes time for an Alabama official to face the penalties of their deliberate actions of wrong - doings... Gov. Bentley has been cheating on his wife since his first year in office, with his top advisor... Now Gov. Bentley says that he made a mistake and we should move on from focusing on or discussing his mistake... What about the countless number of prisoners who have made mistakes due to their lack of guidance, lack of education and opportunity.

Well, what about them??? They don't get to say "I made a mistake, so let's move on." No, they are serving life, life without, 20-100 years for their mistakes. They were immediately stripped of their freedom and their lives were taken due to their mistakes...

Since they don't matter what does?

Signing of Death Warrants by Robert Bentley the Adulterous Governor....

Randy Lewis
Z-741 / O-19
T.V.O.A.I.M.

Poison Your Way to Perdition

The state of Alabama is asking several men on death row to further condemn themselves and make a deal with the devil.

The deal consists of selling their rights to salvation away for an easy and so-called painless death, which isn't guaranteed, but saved men and women of God have been guaranteed an afterlife in heaven if they keep themselves true to the Almighty One God. This deal would take away that right to enter heaven.

Our Christian, our Jewish, and our Muslim brothers in every denomination preaches against suicide, yet the states interpretation of Baze v. Kentucky suggests that an inmate, no matter what faith he practices, must suggest a suitable alternative if he or she challenges the current method of execution. This gives the inmate a "suicide burden", which is against the aforementioned teachings of faiths, thus denying the person entrance into heaven.

Our United States Constitution, 1st Amendment right gives every citizen a right to practice their religious belief without the burden of a sacrifice to give up their salvation and heavenly afterlife.

The Alabama capital punishment alternative execution method, or suicide burden requirement is a pact with the devil to sell our souls and the rights to the hereafter in paradise. When the state of Alabama forces us to offer an alternative method, or self death potion, it is not permissible under our oath and agreement with our forgiving, merciful God!

Internal Exiler

Post Traumatic Stress Disorder or Guilty Conscience?

Post traumatic stress disorder, or PTSD, is defined as a mental health condition that's triggered by a terrifying event - either experiencing it or witnessing it. What causes PTSD is inherited mental health risks and the way your brain regulates the chemicals and hormones your body releases in response to stress. Some of the symptoms are recurring, unwanted distressing memories of the traumatic event. Experiencing intense or long-lasting trauma and lacking a good support system of family and friends contribute to PTSD.

They said that 31% of corrections officers that actually carry out executions could get PTSD, like 20% of Iraq veterans that suffer with PTSD. These stats don't tell you that years before they carry out executions these officers build a friendship with the inmates. Proverbs 17:17 says a friend loveth at all times, and verse 18:24 says a man that hath friends must show himself friendly: and there is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

I have to argue that it is not PTSD, but a guilty conscience that a person suffers from when they take an inmate who has become a friend to the execution chamber.

An Angel in the Shadows

Sometimes Things Work

If you've ever had anything that served a useful purpose, you know that there is very little permanence in that.

For one reason or another everything breaks down, wears out, or otherwise ceases to serve its purpose. Sometimes it's a long slow process that you can see coming, like a pen running out of ink. Sometimes it's a split second change, like a light bulb blowing. There are all sorts of ways for things to stop working, and depending on how vital their function is, there are as many different ways to repair, replace, or learn to live without them.

Sometimes things work better when they get a little wear and tear. Shoes and blue jeans are good examples of this. You've got to wear them for awhile to get them comfortable, now that they aren't new you don't have to be so careful with them. And everyone knows that the best seat in the house is the one with the permanent indentation to match your backside.

Sometimes things stop working and have a beneficial result. Like if your microwave goes out and you lose 10 lbs., or your freezer goes out and ruins the ice cream that was contaminated with listeria, and you don't get sick.

Well, I'm not sure what category this would fall into, but every since Scalia's death, the Supreme Court has been down a judge. And while there has been a lot of political maneuvering, the seat remains open. Therefore, the court isn't functioning normally. Despite that fact, the court upheld an 11th circuit stay for Vernon Madison, and also remanded a case back to the lower court in light of Hurst. That was my case, but more importantly, a broad issue to reconsider.

Sometimes blessings come in unexpected ways, sometimes you see it coming and it still overwhelms you.

Stay strong and have faith, because sometimes, things work.

Bart Johnson
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Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty is an Interfaith 501 C 3 organization whose mission is to educate and mobilize communities to act to abolish the death penalty in Alabama. PHADP relies on YOU for support. Suggested donations: \$25/individual, \$40/household, and \$100/congregation, or whatever amount is affordable. Checks should be made out to "PHADP" and sent to the above address.

Trusting God? Why Should I?

By, Ronald B. Smith Jr.

"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen". (Hebrews 11:1)

It is well known that our emotions can have a profound effect on our bodies. And the condition of our bodies can affect our emotions. The relationship between one's emotional well-being and physical condition, however, is not a modern discovery. In the Old Testament book of Proverbs, We read that "A merry heart does good, like medicine" (17:22) and that the wisdom found in God's words "Are life to those who find them, and health to all their flesh" (4:22).

A proper relationship to God and his word can benefit us spiritually, physically, and emotionally. This is true no matter what situation or circumstance we find ourselves. "Evening, and morning, and at noon, will I pray, and cry aloud; and He shall hear my voice" (Psalms 55:17). No one is perfect and yet He loves us. That is why He gave us Jesus and the gospel. The central concern of the gospel is to bring us into a right relationship with God through faith in Christ.

A blessed by-product of a right relationship with God is an abundant life filled with health promoting hope, the assurance of total forgiveness of sin, and eternal life with Christ. We have to trust in and seek God. "But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." (Matthew 6:33-34)

Studies have shown that those who have experienced extreme feelings of despair have a greater increase in health problems such as heart disease, heart attacks, and excessive hardening of the arteries. Hopelessness kills. God saves!

"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope." (Romans 15:13)

**Execute
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Not
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Respecting Our Children

I don't have any kids but I sincerely love children. Being polite to children means respecting their humanity. Therefore, it is wrong to yell at children and scream out orders. Or to call them names, mock them or to use techniques such as sarcasm to humiliate and put them down. If you think about it, there are many positive ways to instruct children. The above are all bad behaviors that are not accepted among adults and should also not be inflicted upon the youngest members of our society, who depend on us to protect, guide and take care of them.

Raising or working with children provides us with a wonderful opportunity to become better people as we examine our character and become more aware of it's influence on the future of our children. With their eagle eyes and intuition about the meaning of justice, hypocrisy, sincerity and compassion. Kids don't let us get away with much. In return, how we treat young people is a test of our own sense of justice and how well we understand our duty before Allah (God) to uphold the concept of human rights in Islam (submission to the will of God).

When you look at your child, what do you see? What do you feel?

Craig Newton

Holy Year of Mercy

2016 is being called Jubilee of Mercy, or The Holy Year of Mercy by the people's Pope, Pope Francis. Every since Pope Francis was elected as Pope, he has tried to push the call against the death penalty. Pope Francis is saying that the commandment "You shall not kill" has lost all meaning. Right now as Pope Francis is trying to remind the whole world that human life is the biggest of God's plan. We here at Project Hope bring the truth that the death penalty is a violation of the 8th amendment, as the Pope shows that the death penalty is against God's plan.

An Angel in the Shadows