

Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty

# On Wings of Hope

Project Hope



Volume 28 Issue 1

Jan. - Mar. 2024

Execute  
Justice  
Not  
People

TRUTH

## YOUR CORNER, MY CORNER

For many of us it seems as though we live in a very noisy world. Was it always that way? Perhaps because if one looks at history or remembers what one's parents used to say life was always a battle. What we can however say that before social media, television and all the other outlets it was not always in one's face. Nowadays it is difficult to escape the constant battering one receives.

Can we escape all this noise, and find peace you ask? Most probably this is something each one of us has to figure out for her/himself. And that is when I would like to suggest that you find your corner where you can find meaning, peace and joy.

So who or what is in our corner you ask? Most probably family, others who are family by choice, an issue and I think you actually know the answer when you give it some thought. For each of us the composition of our corner will be different but there is a fundamental requirement we share. We will not treat everyone in our corner exactly the same as relationships differ but what is important for all healthy corners is consistency. If I am in your corner I must be able to count on you for whatever mutual pattern we have established. And of course you must be able to count on me.

We all have to figure out how much we allow into our corner as we are all different. I would like to suggest that the criterion is fidelity to consistency. If our corner is so full that we cannot keep our word then we are likely to cause harm to others as well as ourselves.

And how does that help us to escape the meaningless noise that surrounds us? I am glad that you used the word meaningless because not only is meaning waiting for you in your corner but also joy, peace and love. Does having our corner imply that we cannot work with others? Not at all, we must collaborate in order to achieve anything worthwhile but we do it while at the same time respecting the uniqueness of each other's corner.

Hope

Esther



**PROJECT HOPE TO ABOLISH THE DEATH PENALTY (phadp)**  
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**MISSION STATEMENT:**  
Working together with friends, supporters and other advocates to educate the public and bring about the abolition of Capital Punishment in Alabama.

**NATIONAL OFFICE:**  
P.O. Box 1362, Lanett, AL 36863  
Email: [beesther@earthlink.net](mailto:beesther@earthlink.net)  
Web: [www.phadp.org](http://www.phadp.org)  
Email group: [brandon@phadp.org](mailto:brandon@phadp.org)  
also on Face Book:  
Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty in Alabama

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



Greetings,

I really don't know where to begin as there are so many topics I have floating around inside my head that I want to address. So many things wrong with this state. So many things wrong with this country. So many things wrong with the human race. Hypocrisy! Egotism! A lack of common decency and humanity!

On January 25th, 2024 the state of Alabama set in motion a time machine like journey, and took the entire world along for the ride. Destination: The Hitleresque execution of Kenneth Eugene Smith. The day before Holocaust Remembrance Day! Hypocrisy! Egotism! A lack of common decency and humanity! Our condolences go out to the Smith family. Not just for the senseless murder of Kenny, but for the torturous, barbaric, heinous, cruel, atrocious, careless, and wreckless manner in which he was made to suffer to death.

Now, the state of Alabama has set its murderous designs on Jamie Mills, Keith Gavin, and Alan Miller, as they have asked for torture dates to be set for these men. Justice? No, the obvious, political posturing. Yes, it is an election year, and as Alabama history shows they attempt to go on killing sprees during election times. The death penalty is not a deterrant, but it makes for one helluva political posturing tool when trying to play on the heart strings of misinformed, misguided, and/or revenge seeking voters. Hypocrisy! Egotism! A lack of common decency and humanity! To promote hatred and revenge goes against the most

*Courage*

(continued...)

fundamental, rudimentary, miniscule, and minute beliefs and understandings of the Bible. However, the Bible Belt openly, unbridled, and unacquaintedly promote both in the name of God and under the facade of justice. Beware of false prophets, the devil himself was an angel once. Hypocrisy! Egotism! A lack of common decency and humanity!

Following the torturous nitrogen asphyxiation murder of Kenny Smith, which was declared by a person who was not even at the scene of the crime to have been "textbook," a handful of misinformed, bloodthirsty, revenge seeking states quickly put forth legislation to add nitrogen asphyxiation as a way to murder its citizens to their arsenal. Louisiana's Governor quickly ran the insanity up the flag pole. First, someone should have informed that genius that Alabama's near the very bottom when it comes to education, so the knowledge of what's in "textbooks" is something that seems to elude them. Secondly, was it just me or did anyone else notice that the very same week the Louisiana Governor decided to follow Alabama into lunacyville he stepped to a podium and declared a state of emergency in Louisiana due to a shortage of police officers. Huh? What?? Asinine! Ludicrous! He wants to take taxpayer dollars and throw them down a hole somewhere (probably in his backyard) trying to murder people who are already in prison, rather than use that same money to hire more officers to help prevent crime. If no one else sees the problem with this logic then the world has truly gone to hell in a hand basket. The question stands to be asked, "Where did he go to school, Alabama?" The death penalty is not, never was, and never will be a deterrant. Crime rates are lower in states that don't have the death penalty, and crime is lower in areas that have more of a police presence. No one commits crimes where the police are!

*Compassion  
Eagerness*

In Solidarity,  
Anthony Boyd,  
Chairman, PHADP

*Focus*

*Unity*

**CARING**

*interconnectedness*

Alabama News

First Quarter 2024

Fortitude

\* Tuesday, Jan 23 on the steps of the capitol in Montgomery a rally, protest, and vigil was held. Protesting state killing, specifically the gassing of Kenny Smith, rallying for reconciliation, not retribution. Many thanks to those who showed up, participated, spoke, and a special shout-out to those who organized, coordinated, funded, and essentially made it happen.

\* Representing us, our Executive Director Esther Brown, spoke about the awful antiquated practice of judicial override, and said of Alabama, we can do better, we must do better.

\* Advisory Board member Rev. Lynn Hopkins acted as emcee for the event, and was just incredible!

\* Representing Amnesty International protesting this and all executions was T.J. Riggs.

\* Claire Milligan shared a letter from Sarah Gregory, who couldn't make it because she was advocating for us elsewhere. In the letter she offered love and support for Kenny's wife Dee, as she knows what those closest to the condemned go through.

\* Alabama Rep. Jeremy Gray had this to say "I work for the people, but I stand with the people when they're right

\* Advisory Board member Gary Drinkard was joined by two other Witness to Innocence members, Randall Padgett and Ron White saying that God had saved Kenny once, and we were asking Him to do it again. And as Ron White pointed out, executions change nothing, benefits no one, and it's time to stop.

\* Julie Conradi from the Birmingham congregation of Unitarian Universalists urged Alabama not to bring back gassing our people.

\* Shake the Field performed and got the crowd going with this chant "They want Executions" "That's not the Solution!"

\* Long time friend, advocate, and Advisory Board member Sen. Hank Sanders was, as he put it "a human being, calling on the human being of Gov. Ivey" not to go forward with this business of killing.

*Freedom*

Alabama News continued

\* AL NAACP president Bernard Simelton simply asked Gov. Ivey to pray about it.

\* Abe Bonowitz from DPA who was instrumental in bringing this all together did what he does best. Thank you for doing what you do Abe.

\* Rev. Dr. Jeff Hood shared his many fears about what was to come, many of which came to pass. He boldly invited Gov. Ivey to come stand next to him and witness the atrocities she helped perpetuate against Kenny Smith.

\* Both the vigil in Montgomery, and the vigil here at Holman began with a rendition of This Little Light of Mine. I would love to say we planned it that way, but that was orchestrated on a much higher level. Especially now that we know the message of Peace, Love, and Light that Kenny brought to the last leg of his earthly journey. Knowing Kenny was a blessing to myself, and so many others. So I'm going to try to do the best I can to let my light shine, and bring as much peace and love wherever I go.

Rest In Peace, Love, & Light Kenneth Eugene Smith.

*Strength*

Love Light Shine

*Solidarity  
Justice*

When there is no such thing to replace  
When there is a lot of open space  
A chance to not hate  
All that anger can dictate  
In the time of forebiddness  
There is always forgiveness  
Betrayal, is the car you drove  
Flip that feeling over, you'll find love  
Monsters in the dark shadows will be undermined  
Let that love light shine  
It's hard and gets harder to let go in the end  
Heart is beating, fueling the thoughts of revenge  
Clear your thoughts of the evil lurking  
It's there inside, waiting for you to decide to stop hurting  
Finding peace, love, and joy  
Forgiving, respecting, uplifting is no toy  
It's in your life's details  
High above, notes taken, you won't see that in any email  
Within each, a space carved out, darken not  
Loet love shine in, as not to do so, soul will rot  
Love Light Shine

Marcus Williams

Untitled

The state of Alabama told the world that it planned to start gassing its citizens and proceeded to do just that. The world since Alabama's proud declaration has been up in arms, utterly shocked, horrified, and mortified at the brazen audacity of the thoughtless leaders of Alabama to revisit one of the most vile stains in the history of the world perpetrated by Adolf Hitler, but certainly Hitler had to smile a little bit.

The state of Alabama told Kenneth Eugene Smith that on January 25th, 2024 that they would attempt to make him the guinea pig for their experimental nitrogen asphyxiation execution method and they did just that. Despite numerous warnings that Mr. Smith would be tortured, in a November court filing, the director of the assisted suicide organization Exit International wrote that "It is difficult to see how an effective air-seal could be initially established, let alone maintained, without Mr. Smith's participation and cooperation." The director, a medical doctor, noted that very few details about Alabama's execution protocol have been publicly released. He concluded "there is good reason to be concerned about the planned procedure," and that "there is a significant possibility that Mr. Smith will be subject to incomplete cerebral hypoxia," and experience permanent brain damage. Which would draw the attention and ire of the United Nations, who found that Mr. Smith's subsequent execution would be a violation of international law as University of Oxford Death Penalty Research Unit, Professor John Bessler argues that since psychological torture is prohibited under the most fundamental principles of international law and since death threats are a form of psychological torture, then governmental death threats as part of the death penalty are torturous and a violation of international law. Death threats are an integral part of death sentences, from the time they are pronounced to the time they are either carried out or overturned.

What constitutes torture must be determined by an act's objective characteristics, not by how state officials characterized an act. For too long torture and capital punishment have been considered in separate legal silos. He concludes that international law should categorize the death penalty as torture per se.

Knowing all this, Alabama did as it said it would do. They gassed one of their citizens. And like everyone told them, it went wrong. It took 30 minutes for Mr. Smith to die, "we think" Not the 3 - 5 minutes the state said it would. Then they ask the other states in the U.S. to try it on their own citizens also like it was something good. The state of Alabama is really out here promoting torture, and telling other states that the UN and the rest of the world, has no say in what they do to their citizens.

It's like Alabama is saying "Down here in the south we do what we want to , we don't care about international law, the UN, and anyone else that thinks it can tell us what to do. we will kill our citizens how we want to.

22 Minutes 2 Death



"Have at 'em" at your will says the USSC  
Them "people" and their high dollar lawyers  
Use any method you feel  
Their lives shall proceed no further

30 years plus, contemplating murders  
The state of Dixie plots  
While feasting on hamburgers  
Who will tell them it's not right or stop

Coughing, convulsing, writhing  
The state of Alabama (with smiles) advertising  
"We'll choke you to death"  
To your very last breath, no compromising

Mental and physical turture is the AmeriKKKan way  
Try and try again  
Nothing's impossible they say

-Remember this corporation attaches the word "legal" with  
meaning "right" or "just" but "slavery" is still legal in this  
United States according to their Constitution and so is  
"lynching", right?

RESILIENCE  
Motivation  
Joy  
Fearless  
Allies  
Change  
VISION  
Presence  
Trust  
INSIGHT  
Humanity  
understanding  
Make It Plain

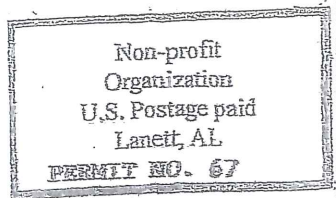


**Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty**  
P.O. Box 1362 Lanett, AL, 36863  
[beesther@earthlink.net](mailto:beesther@earthlink.net) • [www.phadp.org](http://www.phadp.org)  
*Project Hope to Abolish the Death Penalty is an interfaith 501 C 3 organization whose mission is to educate and mobilize 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. Donations may also be made on line by going to our website and clicking on "donate" on the right hand top corner of the front page.*

*Project Hope to Abolish  
the Death Penalty*

P.O. Box 1362  
Lanett, AL 36863

*Execute  
Justice  
for  
People*



What is Love?

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. Faith, hope, and love. But the greatest is love. There is so much that could be said about love. So just as you read this try and show someone this day what love really is. Love someone just today and tomorrow love will take care of itself. Put a little love in your heart.

Brandon Sykes

*TRUMP*



# A Christian Perspective

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GOD

## Organizational Information

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correspondence to: Bart  
Johnson, Editor  
(Z-778-F-18), Holman 3700,  
Atmore, AL 36503

## Editorial Staff

Editor  
Bart Johnson  
Assistant Editor

Writers-Contributing  
Jeffery Lee

## Executive Committee

Anthony Boyd  
President/CEO  
Bart Johnson  
Vice President  
Esther Brown  
Executive Director

Spiritual Advisor  
Donald Blocker

For more information  
about Project Hope to  
Abolish the Death Penalty,  
write to:  
PHADP, P.O. Box 1362  
Lanett, AL 36863

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Lanett, AL, 36863*  
\*\*\*\*\*

Greetings Friends and Family,

I hope this edition of "Wings" finds you where you are. Because that is where we want to be. Yes, physically not in prison, but more than just that. We know that if you're reading this you care about us. And we want to be where we're surrounded by love, which means we ourselves must first learn to be it. We've set out with this issue to explore this "it" to dig in and find out all about it and share it with you all.

In order for us to be able to become "it," walk "it," share "it," we must practice "it!" Setting aside our differences, setting aside ourselves, even setting aside our agenda to do the work that is cut out for us. Yes, the work we were cut out for.

So as we've tried to put into words in this newsletter, we continue to set aside self-sih motives, greed, envy, lust, and pride to try to be "it," for each other, for there will be times of need; for our families, for there will be times of need; for those of you who pour out your hearts, time, and energy, for there will be times of need.

To be loved and supported as y'all do for us, we try, in some small way, to keep it going. In words and works. And that is the "other Voice" we strive to be.

Yours in Christ

Bart Johnson  
Vice-Chairman, PHADP

Relentless  
Faith

PEACE

What's Love Gotta Do With It?

O' how often we say that word "Love" to something or somebody daily! You know exactly what I'm talking about - I love my family, this person, that person, certain food, sports, activities, hobbies, vehicles, some people and God. Which we, or rather I, know that I have put them all in the same category. I realize now that what I really was saying was that I took pleasure in doing and enjoyed the pleasure that I received from the relationships and things.

Don't be too quick to judge me, I believe that I have received love before, which started with my mother. But for me to give it back was a whole different story. Because my interpretation of "Love" was - What's in it for me? That's the type of darkness or selfishness that I was walking in.

It's only when I came to death row that I was confronted by, and experienced true love, which was, and is from the Creator of the heaven, the earth and seas along with everythin in them. I remember reading a verse of scripture from my Bible that said we are to love the Lord God with all of our thoughts, will, emotions, and strength, also to love your neighbor as yourself.

Well, at that particular time in my life, I knew that it wasn't going to happen, because I didn't even like who I was or who I had become. It was only until I asked the Ruler and Creator of all to forgive me of my sins, and fill my heart with His love that I have learned and experienced so much in this walk with God.

That Love is the Spirit given us to replace our indifference. Joy is love singing to counter sadness; Peace is love resting to replace our anxiety; Patience is love working to push our impulsiveness aside; Kindness is showing love to others that you care; Goodness is allowing God's love to work and see to their needs; Faithfulness is love trusting to keep our promises; Gentleness is love with no pride or harshness; Self-Control is love in action, lifting us beyond self centeredness.

I have come to the conclusion that God's love has everything to do with it, not only does love have the power to cover your sins, but also when we choose to forgive others, love covers a multitude of their sins as well.

In closing, I would like to thank the readers, families, supporters of PHADP and my prayers are that the love of God would comfort you, that the grace of Jesus would teach you, and the union of the Holy Spirit would guide you this day and always. Amen

With much love and appreciation!

Earl J. McGahee  
Z-466 / L-24

Movement

## Never Alone

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life. John 3:16

His love for us abounds even when we are destitute, having little, or even nothing. Once you've lived that, you begin to understand what role that love plays in your life.

That love was enough to destroy every barrier between you and God. (Yes, even as you are still living in this world, in this flesh) He stays with us. It is no secret or surprise that when things look the bleakest, His love shines the brightest, that is the sufficiency inherent in God's love, it grows to meet the need. All we have to do is need it more than the things we think we need.

*Believe*

*encouragement*

### Do Your Love Make Others Better?

Everyone wants to be loved and everyone wants to experience love, but here is the key, are you loving others right? To make them better? Before I had a personal encounter with Jesus I wasn't loving my family, friends, or women to make them better, and why? I were sharing my wounded love, with them. Once I received Jesus's love and start sharing Jesus's love, it started to help others become better. When Jesus's love showed up in my life I seen the world different. Jesus's love never told me I were a prisoner, I am worthless, I am a bad father, or I am ashamed of you, but it said to others, this is a valuable vessel to advance my kingdom. I used to hear this a lot. "If you love me, prove it" well Jesus proved His love to me by going to the cross and dying for my sins, so I make sure to give others that love, which can make others better.

Jimmy Davis Jr.

*Acknowledgment*



### True Love

The things that I love that I miss so much. I used to love fishing with my grandma. Just catching the fish and watching her take the fish off the hook, cause I wouldn't touch the fish. I look back on it now, that was love from her to me, cause the only thing I would do is throw the line in the water.

You know I got to write about my true first love, because she loved me before I took my first breath. That is my mother and that love is unconditionally equal to any other love on this earth. I would walk through hell for her because I know she will and have for me already. I know we all can relate because we all have mothers and I think that we all should give credit to our first true loves because our mothers and grandmothers will always love us differently.

Darryl Turner

## Love Thy Neighbor...

Love is an emotion... It's something we feel, think and live for. To love thy neighbor we must first love thy self. This is an important factor because if a person doesn't love thy self "how can they love someone else?"

So, what does it mean to love thy self? For me, loving thy self means caring about yourself. not doing things that would hurt you, attending to your needs, never neglecting the things most important to you being or becoming the best person that you can become. In doing these things, I feel that I am loving myself and if I love myself, I am capable of loving thy neighbor.

What could I do by loving my neighbor? In loving thy neighbor I could maybe save a life, or I could feed the hungry, I could provide someone with some good advice and more. Anything helpful in my eyes would be showing love to my neighbor. For the people of Alabama we need to know, whether the government officials of this state believe in loving thy neighbor? If so, why are they so anxious to kill in the name of the law or the people? I am asking everyone to love thy neighbor and make a stance against the unjust treatment that's being handed down in this state as punishment, by the government officials. Show them that mercy is a sign of love and with this love, God's most gracious creation, which is life, can be saved. In love, peace, and harmony and as always God's blessing, take care and stay safe!

Mario Woodward

Humbleness

mindfulness

endurance

## The Essence of Valentine's Day

Every year on February 14th, people around the world come together to celebrate love and affection on Valentine's Day. This day, marked by expressions of love, gift-giving, and acts of kindness holds a special place in the hearts of many.

Regardless of how one chooses to celebrate or perceive Valentine's Day, at its core, it serves as a reminder of the power of love and human connection. Love transcends cultural boundaries, language barriers, and differences in beliefs. It's a universal language that brings people together and enriches our lives in countless ways.

Valentine's Day is more than just a holiday; it's a celebration of love in all its forms. Whether you're expressing affection to a romantic partner, spending time with friends and family, or practicing self-love, this day serves as a reminder to cherish the relationships that enrich our lives. In a world that can often feel divided, Valentine's Day bears a moment of unity, reminding us of the protocol of love.

N.O.

FRESH  
NEED  
LOVE

Achievement

L.O.V.E.

To me love is a sentiment not able to be characterized or described with words. Love just is, and always will be. The professionals will give you the different types of love. While most people will agree love implies strong feelings of affection, there are many disagreements about its requirements.

Love can also be used to apply to things that aren't human, to principles, and to religious beliefs. For example, a person might say he or she loves their dog, they might love freedom, or their country, or love God. Those concepts of love ask the question is it a choice or is it something we are able to feel from birth? Each of these debates may be accurate in some time and some place. For example, in some instances love may be a choice, while in others it may feel uncontrollable. Love is a seed that must be cultivated. It must be watered with time and effort. It must involve commitment. time, mutual trust, and acceptance.

"But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection." Colossians 3:14. Love is supposed to be put on like an article of clothing. To me love means nothing apart from my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The example that He showed by laying down His life for the sins of humanity. This is the example that means the most to me. People who both feel loved by others and who report loving other people tend to be happier. Love isn't just about giving your last to those in need. It's about the willingness to turn the other cheek, to love to show love is easier than to show hate. Love is the ability not to do harm to those that means you evil. As love grows in your heart and life, the pressures of hate will be easier to overcome. Being respectful to others is the meaning of love to me and it will not cost you anything to be kind to someone else. Stay safe and blessed!

Mr. Jeffery Lee  
Sec/Treasurer  
Z - 674 / L - 12

Wisdom

Progress  
Visions

*Together*

Romans Chapter 12

I'm on some new new,  
Not chasing a dream,  
Through thru some ravine,  
Conjured by a human scheme,  
Yea,  
I used to be Jack,  
Who misused his magical bean,  
If you can,  
Glean what I mean,  
Because in reality,  
Nothing is as it seems,  
Muscle fatigue, the pain of endurance,  
Yet spiritually, my smile beams,  
I'm on some new new,  
Trying to merge the two,  
So, who I believe in,  
Is reflected, thru me to you,  
May that light,  
Guide you across the ravine,  
It's what guided me too,  
I'm but one of many lights,  
To help others make it thru,  
The rapids of past decisions,  
That reflected we didn't have a clue,  
A life under constant review,  
While dreams floated away,  
Destroying what we knew,  
TO be made anew,  
To walk in God's will,  
There are things we must undo,  
I knoww serving two masters is one of them,  
True,  
Him or me, ((  
His or my,  
Here is where the physical and spiritual,  
Entwine,  
Dispursing the chaos,  
Making way for the Divine,  
But others can't see,  
What you wont let shine,  
I'm on some new new!

*Forgiveness*

Romans Chapter 12

Tony Barksdale

*Humility*