



CALIFORNIA PEOPLE OF FAITH
working against the death penalty

www.californiapopleoffaith.org

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THE FACES OF WRONGFUL CONVICTION

Speaker's Tour

Organized by ACLU, Amnesty International, California People of Faith, Death Penalty Focus, Progressive Jewish Alliance and The Life After Exoneration Program

May 30, 2006

Dear Congregation Leader:

Twenty two men and one woman, all of them wrongfully convicted of crimes they did not commit, gathered in Los Angeles to tell their stories on April 7-9 of this year at the Faces of Wrongful Conviction Conference. Some of them had been wrongfully sentenced to death for another person's crime; several had narrowly escaped the death penalty only to spend decades behind bars for crimes they did not commit.

These wrongfully convicted people were joined by murder victim family members, former prosecutors, and legal experts to discuss the failings of California's criminal justice system generally, and the failure of California's death penalty specifically. Exonerees told of their struggle for freedom; murder victims' family members shared how they found a path to healing and away from vengeance; one former prosecutor said for the first time in public that he was responsible for the execution of an innocent man.

Now, we invite you to bring these incredible stories to your community.

The Faces of Wrongful Conviction Speakers Series is intended to bring these powerful voices to churches, synagogues, schools, and community centers across California. We will provide you a "tool kit" with everything you need to put on a small, medium, or large event including such things as a flier, press release, sign-in sheets, and discussion questions. We will arrange the speakers and provide you with multimedia elements such as films and a power point

presentation. You will have many elements to choose from, to make the event just right for you and your audience.

We will launch the speaking tour the weekend of June 30th, to mark the 30th anniversary of the court decision which returned the death penalty to the United States, *Greg v. Georgia*. This anniversary provides an excellent opportunity to reflect on and to discuss the death penalty and the criminal justice system here in California.

We invite you and your congregation to be part of the initial launch by hosting an event during the weekend of June 30-July 2; although you may schedule your own event for anytime through September. We will begin arranging speakers for interested congregations immediately. The tool kit will be available in early June. If you are interested, I encourage you to respond by June 16th, so that we may be sure to have your speakers arranged and to include you in the statewide media events.

Thank you,

Eric DeBode
California People of Faith
Ad-hoc Planning Committee