

A Culture of Vengeance

Another down side to execution is that it breeds a worldview that includes vengeance as a virtue. There is an element of justice and fairness in getting even. Someone hurts you and you want to hurt them back. Paying the price for sin is deeply engrained in our culture. But is it the best solution? The problem with vengeance is that the cost is often too high. The Christian and Muslim religions have been at war for almost 1000 years and what good has come of it? Both sides have lots of atrocities to point to in order to justify their right to revenge. And so the wars continue with blood still flowing and as the innocent are slaughtered in what they see as "justified murder." In reality they are laying the groundwork for future vengeance. These two religions are forever caught in a loop of senseless killing and it's all in the name of justice.

The death penalty is an extension of the culture of revenge. It breeds from the "eye for an eye" worldview. Our worldview sees that an eye for an eye leaves everyone blind. We have to put aside our emotions to see a bigger picture and decide that generations of war is wrong. But to do that we are going to have to give up some justice in exchange for peace. We have to look towards the future and decide what we want tomorrow to look like. Do we want a world of war and vengeance, or do we want a world of peace and forgiveness?

Even when murder is right, murder is still wrong. Our society is our collective soul and what we do as a culture is part of each of our souls. It affects the way we think about things. It colors our worldview. It influences how often we choose revenge over forgiveness. This is an important factor because if we, as a society, choose the death penalty solution out of vengeance, then we give power to revenge as part of our worldview and we have to ask ourselves if it is worth the price. Our conclusion is that it is not worth it.