



SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH

May 13, 2019

The Honorable Bill Lee
Governor of Tennessee

Dear Governor Lee,

I am writing you in regard to Donnie (“Don”) Edward Johnson, who is scheduled to be executed by the state of Tennessee on Thursday, May 16, 2019.

As the Governor of Tennessee, the most profound power and perhaps the most difficult responsibility God has given you is deciding whether a person is to live or die. While the legal system has spoken, finding Mr. Johnson guilty and sentencing him to death, I am appealing to you to consider life.

Over the many years since 1984, Mr. Johnson has experienced a miraculous transformation of mind, heart, and character that only God can accomplish. He has gone from being a hard-hearted criminal to a man who cares for others and seeks to share the hope he has found in his Savior, Jesus Christ, with those who do not yet know Him.

In the course of Mr. Johnson’s spiritual journey, he has become a member of the Seventh-day Adventist church, a protestant Christian denomination with more than 21 million members and a presence in more than 200 countries. As Seventh-day Adventists, we uphold the Bible as the Word of God, and accept Jesus Christ as our only Savior. We teach that we are to be good citizens, obeying the laws of the land, and to honor and pray for our government leaders. We believe we are called to follow in Christ’s footsteps, meeting people’s needs physically, socially, and most important, spiritually. As we understand, Mr. Johnson’s transformation has included his embracing of these Christian values and he is currently serving others in the spiritual leadership capacity of elder. I am told that he has brought other prisoners to Christ, leading them to make a full surrender to God, and that this is having a positive influence throughout the prison and beyond.

Sir, I would request that you prayerfully consider granting mercy to Mr. Johnson by sparing his life so he may continue providing this important spiritual ministry that only he in his unique capacity can do. His death would have no redeeming or deterrent value, and we believe he would better serve the community by leading his fellow prisoners to God.

Thank you for considering this request. Please be assured that I will be praying for you as you weigh this incredibly important decision. As the Bible says, “He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8, NKJV).

Respectfully,

Ted N.C. Wilson, president
Seventh-day Adventist Church

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