The Bible-Belt is the American Death Penalty Belt

"So many of the executions occur in the south," says Richard Dieter, director of the Death Penalty Information Center in Washington, "It is still more than 80 percent—in some years it tops 85 percent—making the region even more isolated or marginalized. They tend to be more conservative voters. It's partly history. It's partly religion."

Dieter says the Southern Baptist religion's view of executions—the Old Testament "eye for an eye" dictum—is much different from the stance taken by the Catholic and the mainline Protestant churches of the north and northeast. "There are definite religious roots to this."

"Capital Punishment: It's Still Rooted in Red States," *Toronto Star,* January 23, 2005

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The Bible-Belt consists of those U.S. States whose largest religious affiliation is Baptist. That is virtually synonymous with the slave-holding states and territories of the Old Confederacy and the slave-holding Border States.

Slave States	Bible-Belt States[a]	Rank in Executions 1976 – 2015 (Number) #
Alabama	Alabama	7th (56)
Arkansas	Arkansas	12th (27)
Florida	Florida	4th (91)
Georgia	Georgia	6th (60)
Kentucky*	Kentucky	21st (3) tied with 5 others
Louisiana	Louisiana	11th (28)
Maryland*		20th (5)
--- Death Penalty Repealed 2013		
Mississippi	Mississippi	13th (21)
Missouri*	Missouri	5th (86)
North Carolina	North Carolina	9th (43) tied with SC
	Oklahoma**	2nd (112)
Tennessee	Tennessee	19th (6)
Texas	Texas	1st (531)
South Carolina	South Carolina	9th (43) tied with NC
Virginia	Virginia	3rd (111)
West Virginia*	West Virginia*	-- No Death Penalty

* These States were Border States, had divided loyalties internally, and did not secede with the Confederacy.

** Oklahoma was an Indian Territory at the time of the Civil War and did not achieve statehood until the 20th century. The Five Civilized Tribes, the key Native American populations in the Indian Territory, allied with the Confederacy.

Nine of the top 10 states in executions are Bible-Belt States.

"With 16 million members, the Southern Baptist Convention is now the largest non-Catholic Christian denomination in America. It is the second largest religious denomination in the U.S. and is the largest in the Bible-belt. … The largely fundamentalist and evangelical church communities of the Bible-belt believe that the death penalty is mandated by the Hebrew Scriptures, is not prohibited by the Gospels, and seems supported by the Epistles in the Christian scriptures."[b]

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[a] "Catholic America—The Trend Report: Regional Distribution of Major Denominations," *Newsweek,* March 4, 2004, at 46.

[b] Recinella, Dale S., *The Biblical Truth about America's Death Penalty* (Boston 2004) at 48-49, citing, Thomas C. Berg, "Religious Conservatives and the Death Penalty," 9 *William and Mary Bill of Rights Journal* 31 (Dec. 2000).