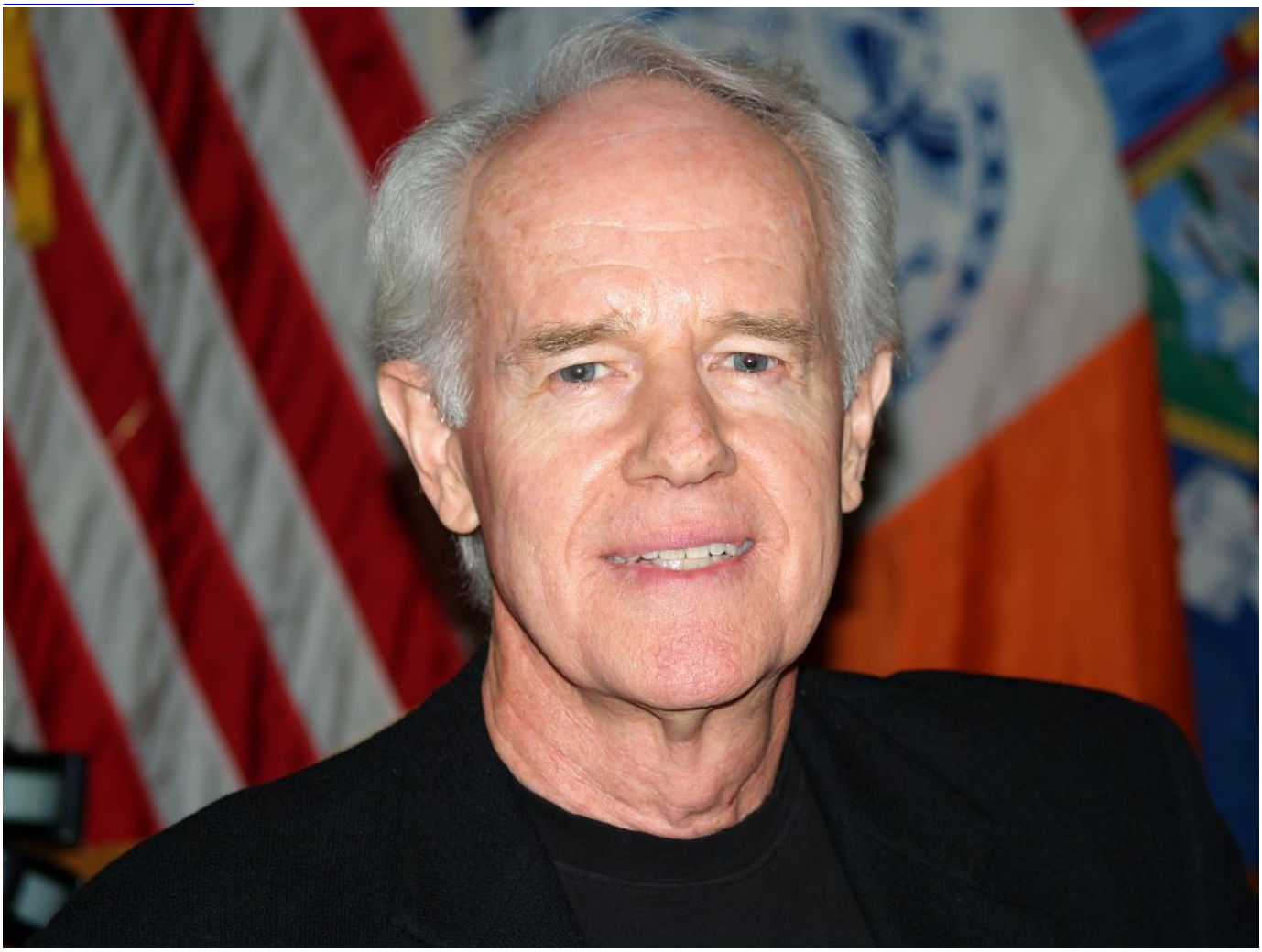
Opinion
Guest Voices



Mike Farrell, the actor and activist, is pictured in 2007. (Wikimedia Commons/David Shankbone)



by John Dear

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On this week's episode of "The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast," I speak with my friend, actor and activist Mike Farrell. Farrell is one of the beloved stars of the hit 1970s TV show "M*A*S*H," and later "Providence." He is also a writer, director and producer of TV films and has appeared in several movies. For three years he served as first vice president of the Screen Actors Guild, and as a member of the Guild's national board of directors.

But what you might not know is that Farrell is also an anti-war and anti-death penalty activist. I first met Mike in 1990, protesting U.S. military aid to El Salvador, and have worked with him over the decades. A lifelong opponent of the death penalty, he has led Death Penalty Focus for 38 years, since 1988, and speaks, debates, writes and campaigns across the country in opposition to state killing. He helped lead the 2021 campaign to abolish the death penalty in California, which required a statewide vote, and came within 2% of succeeding. Their 2016 proposition just barely lost, too. He is the author of a great memoir, which I recommend, called *Just Call Me Mike: A Journey to Actor and Activist*.

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Farrell has traveled the world working with Concern America and Human Rights Watch, and in particular, has visited many death rows.

"I don't understand how anybody who believes in Christ could support the death penalty," he said. "I think the tide is turning against the death penalty. More juries have refused to give the death sentence to people. The youth in this country are very opposed to the death penalty, and they are becoming more aware and becoming activists."

When I asked for his parting wisdom, he said, "I have a deep sense that everybody needs to be loved. All human beings want three things: Love, attention and respect. There is a way to model that. Love people!"

Listen to the full episode here.

This story appears in the **The Nonviolent Jesus Podcast** feature series. View the full series.