**“Glen’s Parallax Perspectives”** is a series of TV programs offering **fresh ways for people to see issues** such as foreign policy, social and economic justice, the environment, governmental functioning, and so forth. We provide **voices and viewpoints that are rarely heard in mainstream media**.

**Mainstream media, politicians, and culture see the world in conventional ways. Therefore, in order to solve problems, we need to see things in fresh ways.** Glen Anderson created this TV series to help people see things differently so we can solve problems at all levels from the local to the global.

This series title refers to “***parallax***,” which is the view you get by looking from a different perspective. For example, put one finger in front of your nose and another finger farther away. Close one eye. Then open that eye and close the other. Your fingers will seem to move. This is called a “parallax” view. **This TV series invites you to look at issues from fresh perspectives.**

Each program airs three times a week (currently every Monday at 1:30 pm, every Wednesday at 5:00 pm, and every Thursday at 9:00 pm) for the entire month on Thurston Community Television (TCTV), channel 22 for cable TV subscribers in Thurston County, Washington. TCTV is part of Thurston County Media. You can see their schedule at [**www.tcmedia.org**](http://www.tcmedia.org)

**You can also watch the program summarized below through your computer** at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). All episodes of “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” are posted on this blog’s “TV Programs” part and also in one or more of the categories listed in the right side of the blog home page. Also, see information about various issues at the category headings at [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org).

Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 **glen@parallaxperspectives.org**

**🡪 This document provides a clear summary of what we said in the one-hour TV program. I encourage people to watch the interview and also to read this document for some additional information and links to more sources of information.**

**🡪 I saved this document in Word format with live links.** If this document does not load or print properly for you, please e-mail me at **glen@parallaxperspectives.org** and I’ll promptly send you the links you request.

**🡪 Please invite other people to watch this video and/or read this thorough summary through these parts of my blog,** [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)**, including the categories for “TV Programs” and “Economics” and “Race” and “Nonviolence” and “Organizing.”**

**“Poor People’s Campaign”**

Glen’s Parallax Perspectives TV Series

February 2024

Glen Anderson (360) 491-9093 **glen@parallaxperspectives.org**

**Glen welcomed viewers & introduced this month’s topic and Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown:**

This month’s interview on “Glen’s Parallax Perspectives” provides information, insights, and enthusiasm for supporting social and economic justice through the Poor People’s Campaign.

You might know that the Campaign had existed in the late 1960s. Well, it is back and organizing vigorously for the original purposes – and for making progress on related issues.

Glen said today he is interviewing one of the tri-chairs for Washington State’s Poor People’s Campaign.

The Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown is Senior Pastor of Seattle’s Plymouth Church. This congregation is in the United Church of Christ denomination and has a long background in working for peace and social justice.

Pastor Brown combines a long, profound and varied background in religious leadership, music, psychology, and the full range of social justice issues, including racial and economic justice. Her academic accomplishments include a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Master of Divinity, and a Doctorate of Ministry.

She has served Seattle’s Plymouth Church since 2015.

Now she is also serving as one of three co-chairs for Washington State’s Poor People’s Campaign.

Glen welcomed Pastor Brown. He said our interview will provide a lot of information and also will improve people’s hearts as we move together to solve our nation’s problems.

**The 1963 March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom:**

Glen said the Poor People’s Campaign has a long history, so he summarized its historical background.

On August 28, **1963**, a quarter of a million people came together in Washington DC for the **“March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.”**  It focused on racial justice AND ALSO on economic justice.

Two of its main organizers were African Americans who worked for **civil rights and the labor movement**: A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin. Martin Luther King, Jr., was the best-known featured speaker. This historically powerful event brought together diverse people, including religious people.

He invited Pastor Brown to tell us more about the 1963 “March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom.”

She said this was a critical point in the Civil Rights Movement. Until that event, there had been a scattering of events throughout the nation – especially in the South – to raise awareness about the realities of racial minorities. She said this 1963 event – including leadership from Randolph and Rustin – brought people together from throughout the nation to form “a moral force for good.”

Glen said we would return to the moral aspect later during our interview, because that is so important.

**The 1968 Poor People’s Campaign that gathered in Washington DC:**

Glen said he would summarize the next step in its history – the great **1968 “Poor People’s Campaign”** event in Washington DC. Then after providing this background about the 1968 event he would ask Pastor Brown for more information about the history of the Poor People’s Campaign.

In November 1967, Martin Luther King, Jr., envisioned and started organizing a **Poor People’s Campaign**. He intended to bring together in Washington DC poor people from southern states and northern cities to demand several kinds of economic justice. Replacing racial segregation with an integrated society was crucial – and so also was profound economic justice for people of all races who had been kept poor.

After King’s assassination in April 1968, other people – including his widow Coretta Scott King and Ralph Abernathy, the new head of King’s organization, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference – provided leadership to accomplish a major gathering that brought people together in Washington DC on Mother’s Day 1968. He wanted to accomplish goals that would be practical and achievable – and strong enough to withstand the backlash that he knew would occur.

Glen asked Pastor Brown what else she wants people to know about the Poor People’s Campaign at that early stage of its history and how it moved ahead.

Pastor Brown said it’s important to understand Dr. King’s brilliance in recognizing the importance of a movement for racial justice to fix what Jim Wallis has called our nation’s “original sin.” We absolutely must deal with our nation’s history of white supremacy and racism. King knew that was not enough. He also urged us to solve profound, deep-seated economic injustice.

Pastor Brown said King knew that even if we desegregated and integrated and brought all races and ethnic groups together for fairness nationwide, many people would still remain poor. King knew we must end poverty and economic injustice along with ending racial injustice. We need economic justice for all people.

She said putting these issues together was “an important turning” that was being urged not only by Martin Luther King, Jr., but also by his wife, Coretta Scott King, who was an activist in her own right, and by Ralph Abernathy, Ella Baker, and others.

She called this “an eye-opener.” She said this also was something that “put a target on King’s back.” The movement asserted that economic justice is something we must struggle for – along with racial fairness.

Glen added that later in this interview we would discuss poverty and economic justice as deep, systemic issues that need profound change. He said nowadays the Poor People’s Campaign is actively working with that consciousness and that bold commitment to changing issues at their depth.

**The Poor People’s Campaign nowadays:**

In the next few minutes we discussed the Poor People’s Campaign’s explicit principles and demands.

But first, Glen showed on the TV screen the websites for the nationwide Poor People’s Campaign and for the Washington State level of the PPC. He said each website has a lot of information and several ways for people to connect with them:

Nationwide:

[**www.poorpeoplescampaign.org**](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org)

Washington State Poor People’s Campaign:

[**www.washingtonppc.org**](http://www.washingtonppc.org)

**PPC’s PRINCIPLES:**

Glen said he strongly supports the Poor People’s Campaign’s principles. He showed these principles on the TV screen and invited Pastor Brown to discuss them. You can read them directly at their website: [**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-principles/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-principles/) Glen showed this on the TV screen:

[**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-principles/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-principles/)

**Fundamental Principles**

1. We are rooted in a moral analysis based on our deepest religious and constitutional values that demand justice for all. Moral revival is necessary to save the heart and soul of our democracy.
2. We are committed to lifting up and deepening the leadership of those most affected by systemic racism, poverty, the war economy, and ecological devastation and to building unity across lines of division.
3. We believe in the dismantling of unjust criminalization systems that exploit poor communities and communities of color and the transformation of the “War Economy” into a “Peace Economy” that values all humanity.
4. We believe that equal protection under the law is non-negotiable.
5. We believe that people should not live in or die from poverty in the richest nation ever to exist. Blaming the poor and claiming that the United States does not have an abundance of resources to overcome poverty are false narratives used to perpetuate economic exploitation, exclusion, and deep inequality.
6. We recognize the centrality of systemic racism in maintaining economic oppression must be named, detailed and exposed empirically, morally and spiritually. Poverty and economic inequality cannot be understood apart from a society built on white supremacy.
7. Whereas the distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism blames poor and oppressed people for our poverty and oppression, our deepest religious and constitutional values insist that the primary moral issues of our day must be how our society treats the poor, those on the margins, women, LGBTQIA2S+ folks, workers, immigrants, the disabled and the sick; equal protection under the law; and the desire for peace, love and harmony within and among nations.
8. We will build up the power of people and state-based movements to serve as a vehicle for a powerful moral movement in the country and to transform the political, economic and moral structures of our society.
9. We recognize the need to organize at the state and local level—many of the most regressive policies are being passed at the state level, and these policies will have long and lasting effect, past even executive orders. The movement is not from above but below.
10. We will do our work in a non-partisan way—no elected officials or candidates get the stage or serve on the State Organizing Committee of the Campaign. This is not about left and right, Democrat or Republican but about right and wrong.
11. We uphold the need to do a season of sustained moral direct action as a way to break through the tweets and shift the moral narrative. We are demonstrating the power of people coming together across issues and geography and putting our bodies on the line to the issues that are affecting us all.
12. The Campaign and all its Participants and Endorsers embrace nonviolence. Violent tactics or actions will not be tolerated.

Pastor Brown said the nationwide Poor People’s Campaign has worked hard to focus people on our core principles. She said they emphasize “a moral analysis” that goes beyond any particular religion. This “moral analysis” is based on deep religious and constitutional values demanding justice for everyone. Regardless of anyone’s specific faith – and including people who do not claim any faith – all of us can agree that justice is necessary, and we need to work for profound justice.

She said we work with people who are most impacted by racism, poverty, militarism, ecological devastation, social disunity, and other injustices – and we work directly with them to solve the deep problems.

She said our Principles keep us grounded and focused, so we won’t slide into diversions. We keep centering poor people. We keep centering people whose circumstances are not adequately considered. These Principles are a plumb line that keeps us centered on what we need to be doing.

Glen said that when he posts this video to his blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org), he will post to the blog a thorough summary of what we said, including the materials he is showing on the TV screen during this TV program. (*You are reading this thorough summary document now*.)

He said he very much appreciates and support these Principles that are guiding the Poor People’s Campaign.

**PPC’s DEMANDS:**

Glen said he also appreciates the long, thorough, and informative Demands of the Poor People’s Campaign. He said a HUGE amount of good, solid stuff is posted to this part of the PPC’s website, so he encouraged people to visit the website and read all of it.

For this TV program, he had room to show on the TV screen only the headings. Please read the Demands’ full text at this part of the PPC’s website: [**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands/)

He showed these headings of the PPC’s Demands:

[**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands/)

**A Moral Agenda Based on Fundamental Rights**

… We must stop the attention violence that refuses to see these injustices and acknowledge the human and economic costs of inequality.

This document is organized in two parts:

 **Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Poor People’s Moral Agenda**

 **The history behind and moral justification for this Moral Agenda**

**I. Declaration of Fundamental Rights and Poor People’s Moral Agenda**

**Systemic Racism:**  Did you know that there are fewer voting rights in 2018 than there were 50 years ago when the Civil Rights Act and Voting Rights Act were passed? …

**Poverty and Inequality:** Did you know that while the U.S. economy has grown 18-fold in the past 50 years, wealth inequality has expanded, the costs of living have increased, and social programs have been restructured and cut dramatically? …

**Ecological Devastation:** Did you know 13.8 million U.S. households cannot afford water?

**War Economy and Militarism:** Did you know that currently 53 cents of every federal discretionary dollar goes to military spending and only 15 cents is spent on anti-poverty programs? …

**National Morality:** Did you know that thousands of people die every year from anti-poor policies, while an extremist religious and Christian nationalist agenda deliberately diverts attention from the key issues and challenges facing the majority of Americans? …

**II. History and Moral Justification …**

Glen encouraged people to visit the PPC’s website to read these Demands in their entirety, because it is a HUGE amount of very good material.

He invited Pastor Brown to discuss these Demands, which say they are **“a moral agenda based on fundamental rights.”**

She said it is important to know that many, many people are impacted and are suffering. “The weight of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, and other kinds of oppression and discrimination and bias have weighed so heavily on folks that many people’s backs are breaking.”

“These Demands come from the lived experiences” of people who are suffering from a lack of basic needs. Poverty and low wages are part of the problems. She gave several examples,

She said these are Demands, not Suggestions.

She pointed out that people with governmental power should be in solidarity with us, but they are not. Those people should be working with us to solve the problems, but they keep failing to do that. Therefore, these are Demands, not Gentle Suggestions.

We need to change the narrative in the U.S. to start prioritizing human rights, start recognizing that everyone has a right to decent housing, start recognizing that everyone has a right to good medical care, and food, and so on. She said she is grateful that the national Poor People’s Campaign has chosen to issue these Demands – which are directly purposeful – as it has done.

Glen agreed with everything Pastor Brown said. He said we’ll discuss the political implications later in this interview. He reinforced her emphasis that we must demand these necessary solutions instead of merely asking, “Would you please do these things **for** us?” No, these are RIGHTS! We have a RIGHT to these! We DEMAND YOU RESPECT OUR RIGHTS!

He said the U.S. is ruled by two big political parties. One party DENIES that we even have these rights. The other party sometimes “pays lip service” to the issues without really doing what we need. That party expects people to vote for it – but always refuses to follow through and make the systemic changes that we need. That party joins with the other party in lavishing massive amounts of our money for the Pentagon and nuclear weapons and keeps refusing to end homelessness or poverty or to provide health care for everyone or to seriously protect the environment.

**PPC’s COVENANT OF NONVIOLENCE:**

Glen said that just like the rest of the Civil Rights Movement, the Poor People’s Campaign is grounded in – and committed to – nonviolence. He showed on the TV screen the **Covenant of Nonviolence**. You can see it here:

[**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/covenant-of-nonviolence/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/covenant-of-nonviolence/)

This Covenant of Nonviolence draws on lessons from historic nonviolent social movements and our experiences in building this Campaign. At all our activities, events and actions, we seek to uphold the following principles:

1. **I will act with respect towards all.** Nonviolence is a way of life for courageous people. It is active resistance to the interlocking injustices we face every day. It requires presence of mind and a profound moral and spiritual commitment to ending injustice. I will maintain my presence of mind and walk with dignity in my actions.
2. **I will speak truth to power.** Nonviolence seeks to win friendship and understanding. I will confront those who disagree with our position using grace, intelligence, truth and compassion and never compromise my principles.
3. **I will seek to defeat injustice, not people.** Nonviolence recognizes that we are all impacted by the systemic root causes of injustice. I will not humiliate my opponent, but call forth the good in them and challenge them and our society to live up to our true potential.
4. **I will accept the consequences of my actions for justice.** Nonviolence prepares us to accept the consequences of our actions without retaliation and to not respond violently even to acts of violence.
5. **I will not resist arrest, use hostile language or insults, carry or use weapons or make any threats of violence.**
6. **I will walk in love.** Nonviolence resists violence of both the body and the spirit and demands that we love our neighbor. Nonviolence love is active, spontaneous, unselfish and generous, giving willingly even when it may be returned with hostility.
7. **I may wear a face mask for the health and safety of myself and others.** However, I will not otherwise obstruct my ability to tell my story about why the PPC is important to me in a public and accessible manner.
8. **I believe the universe is on the side of justice.** Nonviolence is rooted in the belief that justice will ultimately win against injustice. All of history is moving us in this direction.
9. **I am committed to a movement, not a moment.** The changes we seek require long hours of work, strength, courage, creativity and commitment to an effort that is beyond any individual. Nonviolence compels us to act in community, to learn with and from others, to build fusion unity across lines of division – including race, ethnicity, class, sexual orientation, immigration and documentation status, gender and gender identity – and to prioritize the leadership and demands of those most impacted by the injustices we face.

**In committing to these principles, I will tap into a power and soulforce that exists within each of us**. I will be firmly grounded in nonviolence as a philosophy, practice, and moral and spiritual discipline. I will strive to embody the values of courage, inclusion, justice, truth and love for all that connect me to every human being.

Glen encouraged people to read this nonviolent covenant at the Poor People’s Campaign’s website: [**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/covenant-of-nonviolence/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/covenant-of-nonviolence/)

Glen asked Pastor Brown to help us understand this.

She said “the Poor People’s Campaign is absolutely grounded in a nonviolent commitment.” She said that even beyond its roots in the Civil Rights Movement, it draws from the nonviolent grounding from people such as Howard Thurman ([**https://www.bu.edu/thurman/about-us/who-is-howard-thurman**/](https://www.bu.edu/thurman/about-us/who-is-howard-thurman/)). She said King studied Thurman, Gandhi, and Bayard Rustin. King brought into the Civil Rights Movement a deep understanding and commitment for nonviolence.

She said it’s important to recognize that poverty is a construct that has been made – rather than a matter of individual human failure – so this leads us to recognize that “poverty is violence that has been set upon people.” This is another reason why our movement must be “steeped in nonviolence” so we can share “how to become a moral force” without letting it get lost in the violence that is so pervasive in our world.

Glen said that when we were on the phone preparing for this interview, he had mentioned that one of the inspirations from the 1950s that helped to make nonviolence a core part of the movement was Jim Lawson. Jim Lawson had resisted the military draft for the Korean War and spent time in federal prison. He is an African American who became a Methodist minister. After leaving prison in the early 1950s he went to India and talked directly with some of the people who had worked with Gandi (just a few years after Gandhi’s January 1948 assassination) to figure out whether Gandhi’s nonviolent movement strategies might be relevant for black people in the U.S. to solve problems of racial injustice. Could insights and nonviolent methodologies that had worked for Gandhi’s movement to liberate that population of color from white British colonialism could be relevant here in the U.S. to liberate people of color here from white racist oppression. Yes, of course! So Jim Lawson returned to the U.S. and helped our Civil Rights Movement ground itself in nonviolent ethics and methodology starting in the mid-1950s. Many years ago Glen worked closely with Jim on some national level committees working for peace & justice.

Glen added that when the Montgomery Bus Boycott began in December 1955, some of the black supporters were carrying guns for self-defense, because they had been so seriously endangered and attacked by violent white people for many, many years in Alabama. But several of the nonviolent leaders convinced King and all of the other participants to prohibit guns and rely entirely upon nonviolence. After the first few days, the Montgomery Bus Boycott prohibited guns and committed itself to absolute nonviolence. By committing themselves to doing their work in a moral, nonviolent way, they pivoted to claiming moral high ground with credibility.

Glen said he conducts many workshops and trainings in nonviolence, and explains how nonviolence “rewrites the script of what the conflict is and how it will play out.” Nonviolence “taps into a deeper moral sense that is practical and powerful.” This can help the movement prevail and accomplish its goals.

He said the Montgomery Bus Boycott – against very steep odds and the white power structure – actually succeeded in integrating the buses in just over one year, winning in late December 1956. He mentioned the famous photo of the first integrated bus in Montgomery shows King sitting next to a white man wearing a hat. **(See photo on next page.)**



Glen said he knew that man, Glenn Smiley, who was a minister who also had a strong background in labor organizing along with organizing in the religious community and organizing for racial justice. He traveled around the South and reached out to predominantly white churches to warm them up to understanding and supporting the Civil Rights Movement so they would be receptive when Civil Rights organizers would soon be visiting their towns.

Glen said this white minister – Glenn Smiley ([**https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/smiley-glenn-e**](https://kinginstitute.stanford.edu/smiley-glenn-e)) – performed a great mixture of racial solidarity and organizing among religious people, the labor movement, and others.

Pastor Brown expressed appreciation for Glen’s strong experience and knowledge with the movement. She said she also needed to say that now – in 2024 – when many Americans think our nation is “post racial” – we must recognize that the construct of “race” is so deep and so fierce that skin color itself was weaponized even if the oppressor was not carrying a weapon.

She said in light of the violence of white gun supporters and the NRA, it’s not surprising that the Black Panther Party felt it needed to carry guns for self-defense. She said that – as an African American – she understands that white supremacy says African Americans cannot walk around with guns to protect themselves. She said that disarming, renouncing guns, and choosing nonviolence instead of guns was NOT being mild or “giving in.” Rather, “we have something deeper and stronger and more powerful that comes out of our experience.” She said, “we can trust that more than bullets.”

She said she is glad to be part of this movement. She said the national co-chairs walk around without armed security in Washington DC every day, even though some people want to kill them. “There is something about the moral force about what we are doing together that disallows one to be afraid all the time.” When we need strength, we will get it. We are willing to stand on a balcony and die for the millions of poor people.

Glen said when someone thinks they are strong because they have a gun in their pocket, they are wrong. “Their strength comes only in the gun in the pocket, not from their heart. Nonviolence is stronger because it recognizes there is a deeper strength in our heads and in our hearts. That nonviolent strength rewrites the script of what the conflict is about, so we can draw from strength that is deeper than a mere gun. The gun is superficial and trivial in terms of the power that human beings have to rewrite history.”

**PPC’s current national co-chairs: Rev. William Barber + Rev. Liz Theoharis:**

Glen said he is glad this movement has smart, savvy people at the grassroots level. He said he also greatly appreciates the Poor People’s Campaign’s wise and bold national leaders.

A few minutes before, Pastor Brown had mentioned national co-chairs are the Rev. William Barber and the Rev. Liz Theoharis. Now he invited her to tell us a bit more about them.

She described them as “brilliant,” “bright,” and “committed.” She said they have been living their lives in the movement.

She said the Rev. Dr. Liz Theoharis is an ordained Presbyterian minister who is the Executive Director of the Kairos Center ([**https://kairoscenter.org**](https://kairoscenter.org)). That is a nationwide organization working to end poverty with leadership from poor people. It works with faith-based people and works on other justice-related issues too. She teaches at Union Theological Seminary in New York City.

She said the Rev. William Barber is a bishop in the Disciples of Christ denomination. He became well known for the “Moral Mondays” when he would go to North Carolina’s state capital and boldly urge the legislators and other officials to take strong moral actions for social and economic justice. She said his insights and strategies have significantly helped people shape this movement to accomplish wholeness and liberation for all people.

She said both of them are deeply wise and are published authors. They are so heavily involved in the movement that this has impacted their lives and their families. They have been doing all of this in order to accomplish justice. She said she is happy to be their colleague and follower.

Glen added that we have smart, savvy people all the way from the top down to the grassroots. He said that’s what we need to continue building up. He said he keeps telling people that the problems keep coming from the top down, so the solutions need to come from the bottom up.

**Why “a national call for moral revival”:**

Glen said the Poor People’s Campaign calls itself “a national call for moral revival.” He asked Pastor Brown why the organization chose this concept – and this motivating call – as important enough to be used as the organization’s subtitle.

Pastor Brown said this is a movement of restoration and continuation. She said we have already discussed that this is not a new movement. She said it comes from an awareness from looking around. People with religious faith and people who do not identify with any faith recognize that we need to return to being a moral people. Our society has stepped away from the morality that we need, so now we need to revive this.

She said Isaiah 10 in the Hebrew scriptures says, “Woe to those who legislate evil, who make unjust laws to deprive the poor of their rights and withhold justice from the oppressed.”

She said Matthew 25 in the Christian scriptures reports Jesus saying, “Truly I say to you, as you did not do this to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.”

She said this is about recovering relationship instead of the hyper-individualism that allows some people to claim they had pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps – and to use this claim in order to avoid recognizing the responsibility to help other people who are stuck in deep need.

She said we must recognize that powerful structures and systems are keeping people stuck. We must recognize and dismantle those instead of blaming individuals who are trapped in deprivation without the resources they need.

She said, “this is a sacred, moral, holy moment” that we are stepping into “for the sake of all of us.”

**Let’s understand poverty nationwide:**

Glen said that in the modern era – after the 1930s Great Depression ended – most Americans did not pay attention to the problem of poverty until several persons raised the issue boldly in the early 1960s. They showed poverty still existed in many places, including Appalachia, rural areas, big cities, and elsewhere.

The Civil Rights Movement included economic justice – ending poverty – along with racial justice. Poverty still exists nationwide. But, he said, we have systems, media, and politicians that are blaming poor people for being poor – instead of looking at the systemic causes of poverty. He said we need to understand that poverty is a systemic problem. It results directly from how our politics and our economics function.

He said that in the early 1970s he worked for the Washington State Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) – as a front-line worker in public assistance offices – “welfare” offices. He interacted directly with the clients. He said his first-hand experiences deepened his understanding of the systemic problems of poverty. He interacted with the clients respectfully and supportively, so sometimes they recognized that he was on their side, despite his official job.

In 1974 when he was nearing the end of his second year on that job, he decided to move to Olympia to keep a close eye on DSHS and the state legislature. The lobbyist for a Seattle-based racial justice organization asked him to share his insights with Washington State legislative committees, so – at her request – he testified about pending legislation several times in 1975.

He told the legislative committees that the welfare system was designed partly in order to humiliate and punish poor people **because** they are poor. They political system does this as a way of denying the systemic causes of poverty – and to distract the public and politicians in order to avoid having to deal with the root causes of poverty, which include racism and the abuses of our national economic system.

**Poverty exists in Washington State too:**

Glen said it’s convenient to think about poverty as a problem that occurs elsewhere – in the South, in big cities – but not here. Actually, we do have poverty here in Washington State.

He expressed appreciation for Pastor Brown’s organizing efforts within Washington State’s Poor People’s Campaign. He invited her to help us understand poverty in Washington State.

She said more than 140 million people in the U.S. are experiencing poverty. It exists everywhere – “down the street from you, around the corner from you.” She said, “there are no safe enclaves where poverty does not exist.” This is true in the U.S. and here in Washington State.

She said the great wealth that exists mesmerizes people so we do not see the poverty that is prevalent in King County, Pierce County, Thurston County, Mason County, and all over our state.

She said the most significant change in poverty has been in children. More than 63,000 children experienced poverty in 2021. Now 186,000 children are poor. She said that’s about one of every ten children in Washington State.

She mentioned factors such as xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, racism, classism, and other oppressions that make poverty even worse.

She said we need an analysis that will help us recognize that poverty exists all around us. This is a problem not just for poor people, but it’s a problem that all of us need to deal with.

Glen added that her mention of xenophobia and other oppressions show that part of the problem is that our society keeps trying to project problems onto other people and keeps wanting to blame other people instead of solving the problems inherent in the big systems that run our country – and the rich people and big businesses that run our country.

She said, “We need a mirror.”

**We must understand that poverty is a political problem:**

Glen said that a few minutes ago we had talked about poverty resulting from systemic problems. A society’s problems are solved – or ignored – through the political process.

He expressed strong concern that neither of the U.S.’s two big political parties is serious about ending poverty. Both parties keep escalating the military budget, but we could end poverty by diverting just a tiny percentage of the military budget. He said that just a few days before we produced this TV program, Congress added MUCH MORE money to the Pentagon’s budget than the Pentagon had requested. Congress also has been radically escalating spending for nuclear weapons. This pattern has been increasing for a number of years now from both of the big political parties.

He said that for a tiny fraction of the Pentagon budget we could end homelessness and end hunger and end poverty. But BOTH of the big political parties refuse to do that. BOTH political parties want poverty to continue. They could end poverty if they wanted to, but they keep refusing because they want to spend that money instead on huge amounts of military violence.

He said a few years ago at one of our peace vigils he has maintained every week for decades in downtown Olympia, he was holding a sign opposing nuclear weapons. A homeless man told him that every year Congress spends billions of dollars for more nuclear weapons while he is still homeless. Glen agreed with and told him, “We need you in Congress!”

Glen said a great diversity of pedestrians – working people, elderly folks, homeless persons, and so forth – walk past our peace vigils and nearly everyone agrees with our signs calling for peace, human rights, a fair economy, and so forth. Clearly, the vast majority of ordinary people have better sense – and more compassionate hearts – than our presidents and our Congress do. He expressed great appreciation for the Poor People’s Campaign for informing and mobilizing greatly diverse ordinary people to apply their brains and their hearts toward solving the big, important problems.

He said these are political problems. The government keeps refusing to solve them. The problems can be solved ONLY if **a great diversity of ordinary people** organize ourselves into a powerful nonviolent political movement that pushes in strategically smart ways from the bottom up.

Pastor Brown added that Bishop Barber often says that this is not a Democratic or Republican problem – and not a “left” or “right” problem. This is about right and wrong. She said we need to prioritize people over politics.

Glen added that one of the signs he often holds at peace vigils says, “Act on your best values.” He said people respond positively to that sign, because they like to be affirmed. They know they have good values that are being ignored. They like that sign, which affirms that they are part of the solution.

He said another sign he holds also gets very positive responses. It says, “Choose a bold, humane future.” People want to have a better future – one that will be significantly better than what our political system is imposing upon us. We ordinary people can empower ouselves to choose – and organize to create – a bold, humane future. He said the general public is on our side, and the politicians – whose campaigns are funded by extremely rich people and big businesses that profit from the current injustices (including the Military-Industrial Complex) – are horribly failing to take the actions they should be taking.

**Interconnectedness and Intersectionality:**

Glen said that when we work on issues related to social justice and economic justice, nowadays people are seeing more interconnections among issues – more than they did some decades ago. These insights can help us bring more kinds of people into our big, broad, multi-issue movements.

He said people also talk about “intersectionality,” which is related but somewhat different. He invited Pastor Brown to help us understand the concept of “intersectionality” and how it pertains to the subjects we are discussing.

She said she appreciates the term “interconnectedness,” because people understand and use that term.

She said folks who are experiencing poverty are in solidarity with people who are impacted by the Military-Industrial Complex and with people who are impacted by other problems. She said this is “interconnectedness.”

She said the term “intersectionality” came from Dr. Kimberly Crenshaw. [She is a civil rights supporter, legal scholar, and law school professor.]

“Intersectionality” refers to “the layering of oppression.” Pastor Brown said she is a middle-aged African American woman from Columbus, Georgia. She said she is affected by “layers of oppression” related to race, sex, and class. She said this “intersectionality” is somewhat different from “interconnectedness.”

She said these concepts are important. The Poor People’s Campaign has identified FIVE INTERLOCKING INJUSTICES. [*See explanations at the website of North Carolina’s PPC:* [***https://ppc-nc.org/learn/***](https://ppc-nc.org/learn/)]

* Systemic racism
* Poverty and inequality
* Economic devastation
* War economy and militarism
* National morality

Pastor Brown used some slightly different words to express these:

* Systemic racism
* Poverty
* Economic devastation
* The war economy and militarism
* The distorted moral narrative of religious nationalism

She said these injustices are interconnected and interlocking. She said the Poor People’s Campaign exposes these and mobilizes people to solve these injustices because “these are the inner workings of why we are where we are.”

Glen said he will mention these five in his closing comments at the end of this TV program.

He thanked her for mentioning the layering of different kinds of oppression. Some people are hurting in multiple ways. He said all of these are rooted in systems that we need to change significantly in order to provide justice and fairness for everyone.

He said sexism is not inherent. It was imposed upon folks. Racism is not inherent. It was imposed upon folks. Likewise the bias against people with disabilities. (“Oh, she can’t do that because she has a disability.”) All of that crap has been imposed upon us. Some people suffer from multiple layers, so we need to deal with all of those injustices.

Pastor Brown added that we need to do this not only for the persons impacted but also for the people who are carrying out those injustices. She said we need to free those people too.

Glen agreed. He said we not only need to liberate people who are oppressed, but we also need to liberate the oppressors. He said, “they will have better heads and better hearts if they can let go of the violence that they’re doing to people through repressive behaviors.”

**Washington State’s Poor People’s Campaign:**

Glen thanked Pastor Brown for serving as one of the three people chairing Washington State’s Poor People’s Campaign. He showed the website on the screen again and invited her to tell us about our statewide organization – and what it does.

Nationwide:

[**www.poorpeoplescampaign.org**](http://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org)

Washington State Poor People’s Campaign:

[**www.washingtonppc.org**](http://www.washingtonppc.org)

She is one of the tri-chairs for Washington State’s Poor People’s Campaign. She identified the other two. She said this is a statewide movement – not just in Olympia, Seattle, or other localities. We include people from every part of the state, and she mentioned some examples of locations in Eastern Washington and Grays Harbor. Our statewide movement includes First Nations people, people with disabilities, and other kinds of people. Many kinds of people throughout our state are impacted by poverty. We pull together everybody’s energies statewide to serve the broad public interest.

Glen said he knows good grassroots organizing is occurring in many local communities throughout Washington State. Some of those efforts deal directly with problems affecting those specific local communities and specific populations. These include local abuses from fossil fuel industries, nuclear radiation related to Hanford, the injustices farm workers experience in Whatcom and Skagit Counties, and so forth. He said local people are doing smart organizing in many places about many issues. When we pull it all together, we produce a confluence of good-hearted and good-minded people to join together for a powerful movement.

Washington’s Poor People’s Campaign has a Facebook page.

**Many organizations and movements come together to support PPC:**

Glen said he appreciates the organization’s breadth – and the variety of grassroots organizations that have committed themselves to become **“mobilizing partners”** of the Poor People’s Campaign. He said he is active with two of them in the Olympia WA area: the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons. He said he started the Olympia FOR chapter in 1976 and OCANW in 2017.

He said many kinds of organizations would be suitable to become “mobilizing partners,” and he invited Pastor Brown to tell us about how interested organizations could proceed with helping the Poor People’s Campaign in this way.

Pastor Brown suggested visiting the website to sign up for their e-mails and newsletters – and also suggested participating in the rally that will occur on Saturday March 2 at the State Capitol in Olympia. Mobilizing Partners can encourage their people to participate there, bring their banners, handouts, and so forth.

They are expecting participants from many kinds of organizations, including labor unions, faith congregations, colleges and universities, and many other groups that care about these issues and want to build the grassroots movements necessary for making progress.

Glen said that in the local meetings of the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation and the Olympia Coalition to Abolish Nuclear Weapons – because we are “mobilizing partners” – each meeting agenda includes time for an update about what’s new with the Poor People’s Campaign and how we can help locally. He said he would like other organizations to do this too.

**Religious reasons for supporting PPC:**

Glen said that he is 75 years old now. For many decades he has been active in a variety of organizations and movements that have included significant participation by people of faith. These include organizations and movements working for peace, human rights, the environment, economic justice, and so forth. He said local congregations and a great variety of faith-based organizations at local and national levels mobilize their values and ethics to support peace, human rights, caring for Mother Earth, and many other important issues.

He said he has especially enjoyed connecting with people of widely diverse religious and spiritual backgrounds – Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, Muslim, Buddhist, Baha’i, and others, including earth-based religions. He said at their deepest core, each faith strongly affirms love, compassion, fairness, and other positive values. These naturally lead them to work together in diverse coalitions for peace, human rights, the environment, and so forth.

He invited Pastor Brown to tell us about interfaith collaboration for the Poor People’s Campaign.

She said that while some people are promoting religious nationalism, others of us must reach out to each other. No religion is better or worse than another. She said, “all of us are siblings journeying home together.”

She said the interfaith aspect of the Poor People’s Campaign includes people who do not identify with any faith and people who are agnostics, atheists, and other varieties. She said this welcoming and diversity allows us to “do this moral work together.” She said if we leave anyone away from the table, our work is only partial.

Glen said that for many years he volunteered extensively in this kind of a broadly interfaith pacifist organization. One of the most active members was explicitly an atheist, but she said she belonged in the organization because she had a strong faith in the power of nonviolence. He said this depth goes beyond the brand names of any particular religion. Commitment to nonviolence and peace & justice is what held us together and kept us positively productive for many decades.

**Promote SATURDAY MARCH 2, 2024, at State Capitol buildings nationwide:**

Pastor Brown has already mentioned that on Saturday March 2, 2024, big events will occur in dozens of state capitals, including Olympia, Washington. Glen invited her to tell us about this.

Pastor Brown said people will come together. We’ll start at about 10 a.m. at Sylvester Park (on Capitol Way between Legion and 7th Ave) for a rally. Then we’ll proceed on a march to the Capitol steps for a 12 noon assembly. People who have been affected by the problems will testify to the audience. Music will add to the event. This event will add momentum to the nationwide movement that will run about 40 weeks up to the November election, when so much will be at stake.

On Monday February 19, they’ll conduct a press conference to promote March 2.

Glen said we need to mark our calendars for these events and tell other people about them. We can’t trust mainstream media, because they do not tell us about the things we need to know and understand. We need to get onto the e-mail lists of good organizations such as the Poor People’s Campaign and many others, so we’ll learn about what is happening.

**What else could people do to help?**

Glen asked Pastor Brown how people could help the Poor People’s Campaign – and all of the important issues the PPC works on.

She said the organizers hope to bring 1,000 people together at the Capitol in Olympia. Also, they hope the events at 30 state capitols throughout the nation will be such a great event that the Poor People’s Campaign intends to make the news media start paying attention and stop ignoring the movement that is arising from vulnerable people who are impacted by the big problems. She encouraged each of us to participate – and to bring five friends. If these 30 events are big, they will strengthen the movements to solve these big problems.

Beyond that, she urged people to please get active in the campaigns, including a variety of direct-action campaigns. For example, she has an Indigenous friend in Aberdeen WA who individually provides winter coats to people who need them in the absence of cold-weather shelters. She urged us to do the work individually and also cooperatively with other concerned people.

Glen agreed that “it really is about people-power from the bottom up, because we really can change things for the better if ordinary people will take action with this vision: ‘I think I’ll stick my neck out a little and do this.’”

**Glen encouraged financial support for PPC in WA and nationwide:**

He said that since the 1960s he has been working as a volunteer for a wide variety of good issues. When he was young, he could not afford to donate financial support, but now – as an older adult who has lived cheaply all his life – he enjoys donating as much financial support as he can to many good organizations.

He hopes some of the people watching this interview will be moved to donate to the Poor People’s Campaign – at either the national level or the state level. People can donate through the websites of the national and state levels.

National information and donation opportunity: [**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/)

Washington State Poor People’s Campaign information and donations: [**www.washingtonppc.org**](http://www.washingtonppc.org)

If you prefer to mail a check to the WA PPC, you can send personal checks (made out to Global Citizen Journey, with WAPPC in the memo line) to WAPPC c/o Ming Chen, 112 North 83rd St, Seattle, WA 98103.

**Sources of more information:**

People in Thurston County WA who have cable TV can watch this TV interview program through Cable Channel 22 of Thurston Community Media three times a week throughout February 2024:

* every Monday at 1:30 pm
* every Wednesday at 5:00 pm
* every Thursday at 9:00 pm

People anywhere can watch it at any time – and/or read the thorough summary you are reading now – through the “TV Programs” category of Glen’s blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org). It’s also posted to the blog categories for “Race” and “Economics” and “Nonviolence” and “Organizing.”

Glen said he appreciates the Poor People’s Campaign’s websites at both the national and state level. Both of them provide plenty of information.

See much more info at their national website: [**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/)

The website for the Washington State Poor People’s Campaign is [**www.washingtonppc.or**g](http://www.washingtonppc.org)

E-mail the Washington group at **washington@poorpeoplescampaign.org**

[**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-principles/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-principles/)

[**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/about/our-demands/)

[**https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/covenant-of-nonviolence/**](https://www.poorpeoplescampaign.org/covenant-of-nonviolence/)

The Poor People’s campaign in Washington State has a Facebook page.

Here is a resource that is relevant to the Poor People’s Campaign’s ethics and range of concerns, although the PPC was not mentioned explicitly. Glen encourages people to learn by watching his recent speaking engagement at this link: [**https://youtu.be/G\_prW1IMngA?feature=shared**](https://youtu.be/G_prW1IMngA?feature=shared)

An Olympia church invited him to speak to the congregation on the topic, “Active Nonviolence in Daily Life.” He prepared a message that solidly delivered on the topic they gave him. The audience liked very much – and they told him so. Although this was a speaking engagement rather than a sermon, one person said it was the best sermon they had ever heard. Much of what he said will be new to the people reading this document or watching the video. He shared:

• Insights into understanding profoundly what nonviolence is – and why it is powerful and practical.

• Insights from what Jesus and the Early Church taught and practiced.

• Directly relevant experiences from various times throughout his own life.

• Expanding the “daily lives” aspect into applying nonviolence in public policy throughout society.

He spoke for less than 40 minutes. The final third of the hour featured Q&A that was richly informative and further fleshed out the topic with examples and depth.

Fortunately, a member recorded it and converted it to YouTube. The recording at this link – [**https://youtu.be/G\_prW1IMngA?feature=shared**](https://youtu.be/G_prW1IMngA?feature=shared)started 2 minutes before the host introduced Glen, so you can skip ahead until his microphone is turned on. The room’s background noise fades away soon after that. Then the video image and sound work very well.

**Glen’s closing encouragement:**

Glen thanked the Rev. Dr. Kelle Brown for sharing her knowledge, insights and good energy.

And he thanked the people who have been watching this TV program.

He said we live in a society that suffers badly from a number of systemic problems. The Poor People’s Campaign identifies five major problems:

* **Systemic racism**
* **Poverty and inequality**
* **Ecological devastation**
* **War economy and militarism**
* **National morality**

The first four obviously mean what they say.

The fifth one is NOT the kind of narrow “morality” that the right wing complains about. The Poor People’s Campaign wisely opposes the immorality of avoiding the real problems and attacking vulnerable people with self-righteousness that masks cruelty. We must not let the right wing impose their religious biases upon us and oppress vulnerable people.

All of us can speak up – and take action – to heal our society from racism, poverty, militarism, and violence to Mother Earth. All of us can act on our best values and restore true morality for our society.

Glen said he appreciates the efforts of the Poor People’s Campaign to help us do all of this.

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence through my blog, [**www.parallaxperspectives.org**](http://www.parallaxperspectives.org)or by phoning me at
(360) 491-9093 or e-mailing me at **glen@parallaxperspectives.org**

I end each TV program with this invitation to help make progress:

**We're all one human family, and we all share one planet.**

**We can create a better world, but we all have to work at it.**

**The world needs whatever you can do to help!**