



All Peoples
United Church of Christ
SOJOURNER NEWS

A Central Oregon House Church

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UCC CAMPAIGNS FOR PRISON REFORM

Excerpts from a commentary by Linda Jaramillo on the UCC national website

While the U.S. comprises 5% of the total global population; it alone accounts for a staggering 25% of the world's prison population.

This year at the biannual national gathering of the United Church of Christ (General Synod), we will be considering a resolution to address our nation's tragic mass incarceration system of injustice that disproportionately impacts black and brown men.

All totaled, there are over 7 million people currently subject to the U.S. criminal justice system, and it is far from representative of the nation's population as a whole. For instance, while African American males

comprise only 6% of the U.S. population, they make up 40% of those in prison or jail. African American males have a 32% chance of serving time at some point in their lives, while white males have only a 6% chance.

Besides the cost to the human spirit which tears at the fabric of our families and communities, it is an expensive drain of our public resources that would be better directed to quality public education. Estimates indicate that unduplicated expenditures to maintain the prison industrial complex are \$300 billion per year. The burden of such expenditures has led to the increasing privatization of that complex, especially in

Continued page 2

Continued from page 1

rural areas with small populations, where there is a need for jobs and other commerce, including suppliers of goods and services.

As a business, the first priority of private companies is profit; therefore, income for private prisons depends entirely on maintaining a large and stable inmate population. But the demand for guaranteed occupancy rates runs counter to efforts toward early release, alternative sentencing, and other forms of restitution, especially in cases of non-violent crimes.

United Church of Christ intends to mobilize our members to a growing movement of faith and community organizations to halt the rapidly rising trend of mass incarceration. We must dismantle the new caste system it has created by breaking the chains of injustice before another generation is lost.

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As people of faith and conscience we call for respect for all, knowing that all people are bearers of God's image. Jesus tells us to care for those who are often considered "least" among God's children. We are therefore

concerned for the millions of men, women and children who are arrested, sentenced, incarcerated and returned home from incarceration throughout this country.



The federal justice system should lead the nation in ensuring proportional and equitable accountability, not arbitrary and inhumane treatment. Unjust criminal justice practices run contrary to our faith and to our nation's fundamental values of basic dignity, due process, and human rights. In particular, mandatory minimum sentencing prevents us from showing faithful compassion and discretion to those in our criminal justice system based on individual circumstances.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

The May, 2015, Popular Science magazine shows a man wearing calf-high boots with Rube Goldberg devices attached to the soles and a lever system running up behind the boots. These additions look like they came from someone's Erector set. Oh, yes, there are elastic cords connecting the Erector set bars to the tops of the boot backs.

Wearing these "Seven-League" boots, Keahi Seymour, the inventor can run 25 mph! And he is aiming for 40 mph after further improvements.

This is a pretty simple innovation according to "The Second Machine Age" by Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee. According to a book review, these authors lay out the factors leading to an age when fewer and fewer jobs will be available as automation and "smart" devices will rule our lives and run the future's design and manufacturing worlds.

The authors predict that the coming generation will have tremendous powers

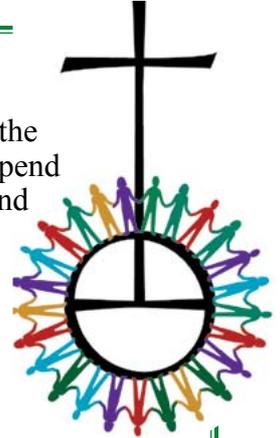
to either improve or destroy the world. Those powers will depend on fewer and fewer people and more and more technology.

BUT, the reviewer paraphrases,

"... it also means that we need to rethink deeply our social contracts, because labor is so important to a person's identity and dignity and to societal stability. They suggest that we consider lowering taxes on human labor to make it cheaper relative to digital labor, that we reinvent education so more people can "race with machines" not against them, that we do much more to foster the entrepreneurship that invents new industries and jobs, and even consider guaranteeing every American a basic income."

Holding these predictions up beside the messages of Barbara Brown Taylor's "An Altar in the World" brings the challenge to

Continued on page 4



progressive Christians into vivid focus. Can a renewed awareness and reverence for the world around us heal the loss of identity and self-worth resulting from a lack of opportunities to work? Can acceptance of self and seeing the Godspark in our own community members boost a personal sense of self-worth? It is up to us and the next generation to **work** it out ...to pray and meditate ...to practice seeing and being through heightened awareness ...to love and respect all of creation.

FIRST-HAND REPORT ON UGANDA!—May 18th; Belfry in Sisters
Mark your calendars for May 18th (Monday) at 6 pm for the Uganda Belfry Benefit, 302 E Main Ave, Sisters, OR. It should be an amazing evening ... filled with photos, videos, stories, crafts for sale, and opportunities to sign up for a number of different projects. The director of The Good Samaritan School will be joining us; Nila and Peggy Lukens are eager to report on their Uganda trip in support of communities there.

NEPAL WEEPS; YOU CAN HELP!

When disaster strikes, appeals come from many directions for aid to those involved. Each of us will choose whether to send aid,



Photo: LWF Nepal/ACT Alliance

how much to send and what aid agency to send to. For a trusted agency with a reliable track record, the Church World Service (CWS) offers help to victims through long-established channels. A joint effort of the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ, CWS does not hesitate to work with additional aid agencies when the situation warrants it. Search for Church World Service on-line or write a check to Church World Service with “Nepal” in the memo line and bring it to church on Sunday.

Y'ALL COME—BANJO SUNDAY

with
LeRoy & Judy
Newport!
May 17



Once more, LeRoy and Judy Newport, Milly Whatley's musical associates, will brighten our worship with 20-25 minutes of music and song! On the third Sunday in May, **bring an instrument if you have one**—that includes your voice. With LeRoy and Judy leading, we will make some joyful noise together. Milly Whatley will lead the rest of the service. Banjo Sunday is already becoming a beloved tradition.

BARBARA BROWN TAYLOR CALLS FOR SPIRITUAL AWARENESS!

The latest Bible Bookworms selection, *An Altar in the World: A Geography of Faith* by Barbara Brown Taylor virtually sings.

Not only does the author's message guide readers in ways to find the richness of the sacred in everything we do. She plays our language like a harp. Sights, sounds, aromas and textures abound with the presence of God; all we have to do is make room for appreciating them in our lives.

The publisher makes a study guide available for readers. You may download the guide at: www.smallgroupguides.com/guides/an-altar-in-the-world-by-barbara-brown-taylor/an-altar-in-the-world-by-barbara-brown-taylor/

Current plans for May will focus on Chapters 3 through 6 with Chaps. 3 (and perhaps 4) on the first Sunday and 4–5 on Banjo Sunday, the 17th. Bible Bookworms discussions sometimes “take longer than they take” so progress may be slower than currently estimated. That is fine as we are all learning; that is why we share in these discussions.

WHAT IS ‘MULTIPLE RELIGIOUS BELONGING’?

Many individuals/families face the issues of two religions coexisting within one household. Yet organized religions have devoted little effort to support people working to resolve the inevitable conflicts. Multiple religious belonging—also known as double belonging, dual religious belonging, or religious pluralism—is a growing, but not a new, movement in which a person or families are living into multi-faith traditions.

In October of 2014, a consultation took place at the Gurukul Lutheran Theological College and Research Institute in Chennai, India. It focused on the academics of multiple-religious-belonging problems faced by people in Asian cultures.

Last month, in conjunction with the world Council of Churches, the United Church of Christ hosted a consultation involving leaders of 30 denominations in the U.S. and Canada. That meeting aimed to address multiple religious belonging in western cultures.

The Rev. Karen Georgia A. Thompson, UCC ecumenical and interfaith officer

explained, “There is still a lot of learning going on around the topic, which is why we are having this consultation. My vision is this conversation will continue to grow, and that it will help provide clergy with support as they deal with the topic and welcome ministry to people in need of community.”

We all know people who are working to reconcile such relationships; has it been ignored by the church? Will this consult open the door to finding some help?

MAY IS JERICHO TABLE TIME

It’s Jericho Table time again. Melanie Feilzer announced that they have purchased a new coffee pot; this should simplify part of our service there. APUC is set to do our part in staffing the table service.

Volunteers are needed for May. Call Mike Lovely to complete the required two person team for each Monday evening. Currently the list of volunteers looks like this:

May 4th—David and Nancy Cook

May 11th—Bill and Pris Hardin

May 18th—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

May 25th—VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Call Mike Lovely at 541-382-6713 to sign up.

Continued next page

Jericho Table Time—continued from page 6

March was APUCC's first month to serve Jericho Table's diners in the new location at the Seventh-day Adventist facility—945 SW Glacier Ave, Redmond, OR. Thanks, volunteers. And, thanks, Melanie, for guiding APUCC's effort.

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.”

Margaret Mead

CONGREGATIONAL LIFE

At the first April worship, Mike Lovely reported that the Ashwood, OR, Grange had burned down. The small, remote community is working hard to rebuild the hall; it was the town's main gathering place. The congregation decided, unanimously, to send Ashwood a \$100 check as part of our mission outreach.

Mission giving in April came from church budget: The Bethlehem Inn—\$125 and Jericho Road—\$50. Donations from individuals: St. Vincent de Paul in Bend (\$60) and in Redmond (\$30), Jericho Road (\$35).



MAY WORSHIP PLANS

All Peoples UCC meets to worship the first and third Sundays of the month at 11 a.m. Bible study meets from 10 to 10:45 a.m. Worship will be in Redmond at St. Charles Hospital's Juniper Room.

FINDING ST. CHARLES HOSPITAL IN REDMOND

- **From the north**—From Hwy 97 reroute in Redmond, right on Larch; first left on Canal, right on Kingwood, 3rd right into parking lot.
- **From the south**—coming north on Redmond Hwy 97 reroute, exit left at Glacier, right on 5th all the way north through town to Kingwood, right on Kingwood, go 1.75 blocks, and turn left into the hospital parking lot.
- **From east or west** on Hwy 126, go north on 5th and follow south-side directions.
- **Finding the Juniper Room**—Enter at the main entrance or the next door on the left. Go left to the end of the hall and then right to the first room on left, opposite the rest rooms.

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

May 3rd— 11 a.m. Worship Leader:
David Cook

10 a.m. Discussing Chapter 2 of *An Altar in the World* by Barbara Brown Taylor, Nancy Cook leading.

May 17th—11 a.m. BANJO SUNDAY!

10 a.m. Chap. 3. of *An Altar in the World*.

Nancy Cook leading.

May 25th, 6 p.m.—"Last Monday" fellowship at home of David and Nancy Cook, Eagle Crest. Bring a side dish or dessert. Nancy will send out a map.



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Please join us every first and third Sunday.
Worship is at 11 a.m.; discussion group at 10 a.m.
For additional information and location/date
of the next worship service,
email the above.

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