

Every month since February 1987 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation has produced one-hour TV programs on issues related to peace, social justice, economics, the environment, and nonviolence. The Olympia FOR's program airs several times every 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 Thurston County's cable TV subscribers. You can see TCTV's current schedule at www.tctv.net.

You can also watch the program described below (and more than 160 of our previous monthly interview programs and also many special programs) at the Olympia FOR's website, www.olympiafor.org. Simply click the "TV programs" link, scroll down, and click the program you want to watch. Many of our website's TV program listings also include links to documents summarizing the program in Word and/or .pdf format.

FEBRUARY 2017

"Innocent, But 49+ Years in Prison, Including Death Row"

by Glen Anderson, this TV series' producer and host

→ Watch this interview at the "TV Programs" part of www.olympiafor.org

The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's February 2017 TV program focuses on the criminal justice system – and especially the death penalty – from the first-hand experience of someone who has lived his entire life right here in Washington State.

Dawud al-Malik was completely innocent of the crimes for which he was prosecuted and imprisoned for more than 49 years, including some years on death row. Dawud went

to prison in 1966 at the age of 19, and was released on parole in February 2015.

Despite the horrible injustices he experienced, Dawud survived with a warm sweetness about him, and a healthy appreciation for the full humanity of himself and other people. I was delighted to develop friendship with Dawud over the past several months, and I'm happy he shared his first-hand experience and his insights during this interview.

The crimes for which Dawud was wrongfully convicted:

We started our conversation with information about the crimes for which Dawud was unjustly prosecuted and imprisoned. He said that on May 27, 1966, Seattle police officers arrested him for one murder and three robberies that had occurred in Seattle. About a month later he was also charged with an additional murder and an additional robbery. Four months later in September 1966 the jury in his trial found him guilty. He was sentenced to the death penalty.

He knew he was innocent, but at age 19 he was too young to fully understand how to cope with this situation. He listened to his attorneys and followed their instructions. Later the person who had actually committed the murders acknowledged Dawud's innocence.

Glen explained to the TV viewers that in 1972, the U.S. Supreme Court's *Furman v. Georgia* decision threw out all states' death sentences nationwide because the procedures

were so sloppy, arbitrary, and inconsistent that many injustices – especially racial discrimination – violated the U.S. Constitution's 8th and 14th Amendments. At that time Dawud's sentence changed to life in prison, and he continued in prison. However, when states began passing new laws to bring back the death penalty in their respective states, the subsequent decades have shown that the same kinds of problems have come back too. Dawud said that the death penalty system is unworkable, unjust, arbitrary and capricious.

Dawud mentioned other elements of injustice too. For example, in his case evidence about his innocence was withheld and suppressed, and the prosecutor acted unjustly. We discussed those concerns a bit later in the interview. These kinds of things happen very often nationwide, especially for people who are poor or black.

Injustices caused by police and prosecutors:

Many, many innocent people across our nation have experienced first-hand injustice. While the details differ from case to case, some recurring patterns do occur at different stages of our criminal justice system. Dawud summarized some of the injustices in his case. For example, some witnesses actually saw the murder being committed, and they might have been able to testify to Dawud's innocence, but the prosecutor never contacted them as potential witnesses for the trial. Dawud did not even find out until 1998 (32 years later!) that those witnesses had even existed.

Glen said, "If we had a justice system that was really committed to justice and truth, they would pursue this stuff." In many cases that Glen has researched, the police seem interested in finding somebody that they can arrest and refer to the prosecutor, but police and prosecutors seem less interested in seeking out the actual truth and finding the witnesses, evidence, etc., that would lead to the truth.

Dawud said this is what he was hoping for when he filed a petition to have the DNA tested. His petition is pending in the federal 9th Circuit Court. Unfortunately, the government says it lost the evidence that could show his innocence and wants to shift the burden of proof onto him to produce the evidence, even though the government says it lost it. He acknowledged that succeeding at the 9th Circuit is nearly impossible. He said there have been some cases like his in which a court has granted a new trial, so he is still hopeful.

Glen pointed out that once the system has convicted and sentenced an innocent person, the system has satisfied itself, so they shift the burden of proof onto the innocent person to prove his or her innocence. Despite the promise, "innocence until proven guilty," now the shoe is on the other foot, and the system makes it hard for an innocent person to pursue

the truth and achieve real justice. Both of us agreed that the "justice" system should seek the real truth, not just settle for a quick decision. Dawud also said the system should protect the innocent even while it convicts the guilty.

We also agreed that in our current system, the prosecutor wants to win at all costs. He said that happened in his case too. He said that a U.S. Supreme Court case in 1963 – three years before his arrest – ruled that it is unconstitutional for prosecutors to withhold or suppress evidence that could show someone innocent. Now – half a century after his own arrest and trial – Dawud is still fighting for the truth. It's frustrating, but he is still determined to establish the fact that he is innocent.

Glen mentioned that Dawud's case occurred in Seattle, and both of us are lifelong Washingtonians. Washingtonians tend to be smug in thinking that Washington is better than other states that make so many mistakes. But the gross injustices we were talking about in this interview occurred right here in Washington State, and the huge problems with the criminal justice system and the death penalty occur here too, not only in states that have bad reputations.

Dawud agreed that systemic injustices occur here too. For example, he had to use the Freedom of Information Act to get information from the Seattle Police Department and the FBI to find out that some witnesses had observed the crime being committed. He always knew that he was innocent. The truth was always there, but the system did not pursue the truth.

During his time in prison, he went through the bitterness and other strong emotions, but he kept wanting to prove his innocence. Later in the interview we discussed how he survived his prison experience.

The death penalty process has much racial bias:

Glen said that the American people have made progress in understanding that racial bias infects many parts of our society, including our criminal justice system, and especially the death penalty. Indeed, when the U.S. Supreme Court threw out all death sentences in 1972, this decision was based largely on the racial bias that resulted from such gross inconsistencies and arbitrariness that the death penalty was violating the U.S. Constitution's 8th and 14th amendments. Indeed, Dawud was one of the persons whose 1966 death sentence was changed to life because of the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court decision.

When states rewrote their death penalty laws starting in 1976, their new procedures failed to solve the problems, the old problems returned, and the death penalty is still applied in extremely racist ways four decades later.

While Glen has studied this for decades, Dawud actually experienced racism first-hand. He grew up in Seattle with many brothers and sisters, and they were known to the Seattle Police Department. When he was a young teenager the police would sometimes pick him up for no reason, drive him across the floating bridge to Mercer Island or Bellevue, and leave him there – in nice white areas where he would be unwelcome – and so he would have to walk back home to Seattle's Central District. He said that the police knew they were putting him at risk by dropping him off in white areas where – if anything had happened to him – people would say he did not belong there.

Dawud said that racism is "totally institutionalized" in every aspect of U.S. society.

Glen said he has been researching the death penalty for decades, including its racial bias, and recently compiled some information about Washington State's death penalty in particular. He shared the information during this part of the interview. Here is some of the information that Glen summarized:

As of May 26, 2015, there were 9 persons on Washington State's death row: **5 White and 4 Black**. The percentage of black people on Washington's death row (44%) is a grossly larger portion than Blacks' portion of the state's population, and it is even a bit higher than the 42% rate of Blacks on all states' death rows nationwide reported on January 1, 2014. [Nationwide data about race on death row came from NAACP-LDF "*Death Row USA (January 1, 2014)*"] It also exceeds the rate at which members of these racial groups commit murders.

Every juror that convicted and sentenced Washington State's black defendants was white. Nationwide, the death penalty process has a number of racial biases built into it. These racial biases pertain to Washington State along with all other states that use the death penalty.

From 1926 to 1949 the State of Washington executed seven black persons (16% of the persons executed in those years). This vastly exceeded the Black portion of our population and their percentage of murderers during those years. Dawud agreed, saying that perhaps 3 or 4 percent of our state's population then was African American.

Glen summarized this information:

In Washington State, when the facts of the cases are similar, jurors are three times more likely to recommend a death sentence if the defendant is black instead of white. The highly respected Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org) reports this startling, upsetting information:

"According to a recent study by Professor Katherine Beckett of the University of Washington, jurors in **Washington** are three times more likely to recommend a death sentence for a black defendant than for a white defendant in a similar case. The disparity in sentencing occurred despite the fact that prosecutors were slightly more likely to seek the death penalty against white defendants.

"The study examined 285 cases in which defendants were convicted of aggravated murder. The cases were analyzed for factors that might influence sentencing, including the number of victims, the prior criminal record of the defendant, and the number of aggravating factors alleged by the prosecutor."

SOURCE: "The Role of Race in Washington State Capital Sentencing, 1981-2012" www.deathpenaltyinfo.org/documents/WashRaceStudy2014.pdf (Jan. 27, 2014). Also see this 27-page report and more information at the Death Penalty Information Center's website, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org

Glen also pointed out that in Washington – as in other states – the race of the victim is also a powerful factor in deciding whether that person's murderer gets sentenced to death. If a white person is murdered, the person convicted – regardless of the offender's race – is much more likely to get a death sentence than if the victim is a person of color. This is yet one more way in which our nation's death penalty system shows racial bias.

Glen also exposed racial bias in how juries are selected. He summarized this information from his research:

Every juror that convicted and sentenced the four black defendants currently on Washington's death row was white. Nationwide, the death penalty process has a number of racial biases built into it. These biases pertain to Washington State along with all other states that use the death penalty.

The jury selection process – especially in death penalty cases – is seriously biased by race. Black defendants are significantly less likely to face "a jury of their peers," because black persons are commonly excluded from juries. Jurors are chosen from lists of registered voters, but black people are less likely to be registered for several reasons, including racist laws and policies that inhibit them from voting, and because felons (disproportionately black) are often prevented from registering even after having "paid their debt to society."

Recent news events remind us that people of color are disproportionately targeted and treated unjustly by police, so prosecutors are likely to exclude them from juries because prosecutors know that many black people's personal experiences have caused them to distrust what prosecutors and police witnesses might say in court. Prosecutors often try various methods (some of them illegal) to exclude blacks from juries. In death penalty cases, the U.S. Supreme Court has upheld excluding persons who oppose the death penalty. Since black people are more likely than whites to oppose the death penalty, they are likely to be excluded from juries for this reason as well.

Dawud agreed. His jury was all-white. He said that anyone who has scruples against the death penalty is excluded from serving on juries in death penalty cases. He said this stacks the jury in favor of people who support the death penalty, and this was one of the reasons mentioned in the 1972 U.S. Supreme Court case that threw out death sentences nationwide. Glen agreed with Dawud. Because African Americans are more likely than white folks to oppose the death penalty, African Americans are more likely than whites to be prevented from serving on those juries.

Innocent people are convicted and sentenced to death:

One of the main reasons why people oppose the death penalty – and perhaps the issue that most troubles people who still support the death penalty – is the risk of executing people who are innocent. This is a very serious problem. A number of innocent persons have indeed been executed!

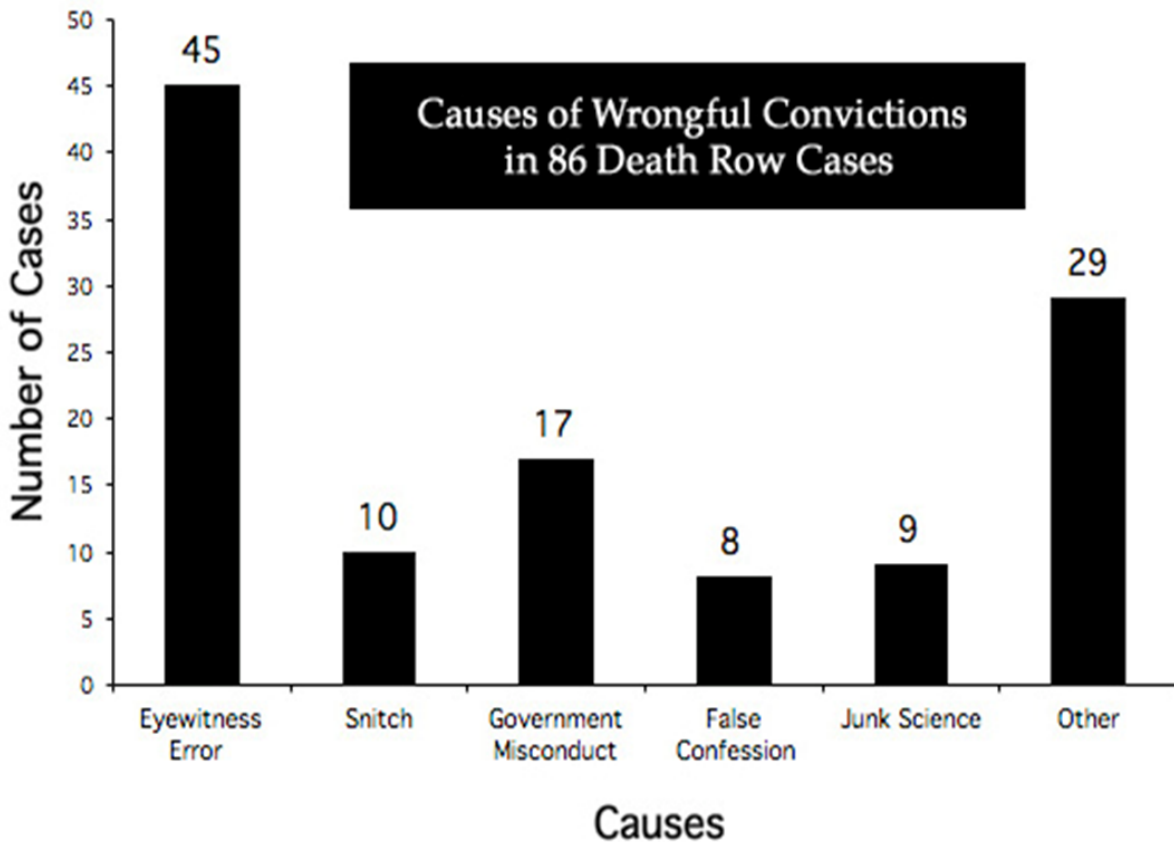
Also, from 1973 to early January 2017, the astounding number of 156 persons have been released from death row because of evidence that they were innocent. They had been sentenced to death even after police investigations, the work of prosecutors and defense attorneys, trials, juries that unanimously found them guilty beyond a reasonable doubt, and appeals that nearly always agreed with the criminal justice system. But despite all of this, 156 persons had to be released from death row because they were innocent!

Dawud was completely innocent of the crime for which he was sent to death row, but although the U.S. Supreme Court changed his sentence from death to life, he stayed in Washington State’s prisons until he was ultimately paroled in February 2015. The State of Washington still insists that he is guilty. Before we talked further about Dawud’s efforts

to clear his name, we talked a bit about the overall problem of wrongfully convicting persons who are innocent.

Many Americans – including people who support the death penalty – are worried about the risk of executing innocent people. This is true nationwide, and research showed that this is true in Thurston County, Washington. In 1999 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation’s Committee for Alternatives to the Death Penalty conducted a scientifically valid survey of registered voters with good voting records. We found that the biggest reason for opposing the death penalty – and the biggest worry for people who said they supported the death penalty – was the danger of executing innocent people. And this was in 1999, before most of the publicity about the growing number of persons freed from death row because they were flat-out innocent.

Glen summarized a few kinds of information about innocence. He showed the bar chart below, which summarizes reasons why innocent people are convicted and sentenced to death.



This table came from the Death Penalty Information Center (DPIC), www.deathpenaltyinfo.org, 1015 18th Street NW Suite 704, Washington DC 20036, Phone: (202) 289-2275

Glen wrote this explanation of this bar chart for a fact sheet about innocence and the death penalty:

In 86 death row cases, 45 (more than half of 86) were based on **eyewitnesses who made mistakes** in what they thought they saw. Juries believe eyewitnesses but do not know that many eyewitnesses are mistaken.

Police sometimes deceive witnesses when they show photos or lineups and subtly induce witnesses to choose the persons that the police want them to identify.

Science shows that people are more likely to make mistakes when identifying persons of races different from their own. ("Those people all look alike.")

Police and prosecutors make deals with other defendants or convicts to make them **"snitch"** on the person that the police and prosecutors want to convict.

"Government Misconduct" includes abuses such as hiding or lying about evidence that would show the defendant is innocent.

Police and prosecutors sometimes bully or trick innocent people (especially those with mental disabilities) into **confessing to crimes they did not commit**.

Forensic analysts and other expert witnesses sometimes **misrepresent science**, either incompetently or deliberately.

Glen showed some photos that were amazing examples of eyewitness errors. The man shown in the middle photo committed rapes and robberies. The police lineups included

the innocent men on the left and right. They look very similar to the man in the middle, and victims mistakenly chose the men on the left and right.



The men on the left and right were picked out of police lineups by victims of rapes and robberies committed by the man in the middle.

See the next page for two additional frightening examples of erroneous eyewitness identification.

Sometimes police ask witnesses to describe the persons who committed crimes and have police artists draw pictures of what the criminals looked like. This procedure is often mistaken, just like police line-ups are. Here are two exam-

ples of totally innocent persons who just happen to look almost identical to the actual criminals. These photos show innocent persons holding copies of composite drawings that the police artists drew based on witness descriptions.



Fortunately for Mr. Kruska, his resemblance to the composite drawing of a slaying suspect only led to his being detained.



Walt Sweeney wasn't as lucky. He was put on trial for robbery. The jury acquitted him of all charges.

The most common cause of wrongful convictions is mistaken identification, according to a U.S. Dept. of Justice Study, "Convicted by Juries, Exonerated by Science." (June 1996, U.S. Dept. of Justice, Office of Justice Programs). Read the full study at www.caught.net/cases/dnaevid.txt. Source: www.caught.net/cases/eyewit.htm

Dawud mentioned the 1989 case of "The Central Park Five." In 1989 a white woman jogging in New York City's Central Park was raped. Five innocent men (4 black, 1 Latino) were arrested, convicted, and imprisoned for more than 20 years before the truth of their innocence came to light. Even though they were absolutely shown to be innocent, Dawud said that the recently elected president still believes they are guilty. Dawud added that eyewitness errors in such cases are common partly because many white folks think that all black folks look alike,

Glen once again showed the bar chart about reasons for convicting and sentencing innocent people to death. Besides "eyewitness error" being the most common reason, and a variety of other reasons grouped in the tall "other" bar on the right side, the next biggest single reason for convicting and sentencing innocent people was "government misconduct." This includes suppressing evidence, tampering with witnesses, etc., because they eagerly want to arrest somebody, even if it's not the right person. Dawud agreed and added that the system should focus on the actual facts, not proceed

from an emotional basis. In his case, he said, the DNA evidence, which the government says it lost, would have shown who the culprit really was. Why would the government want to withhold or suppress that evidence?

Glen said the system does not want to admit that it has made a mistake, so – after making a decision – the various parts of the system (police, prosecutors, judges, news media, etc.) will stand together to prevent the facts from coming to light. He said he has read about a number of prosecutors and judges who – only after they had retired – admitted that they had abused the truth in order to convict persons. They wanted to win more than they wanted to have truth prevail.

In April 2000 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's Committee for Alternatives to the Death Penalty organized a week of varied activities about the problem of innocent people being sentenced to death. Our activities included local speaking engagements by Sonia Jacobs, who had been sentenced to die in Florida's electric chair for a murder she did not commit. She spent some years on death row and a total of 16 years in prison. Before the truth came out her innocent husband had already been executed in Florida's electric chair, which caused his head to catch fire. The person who actually had committed the murder was the main witness for the prosecution. In order to divert police attention from himself, he named Sonia and her husband as the murderers. The Olympia FOR videotaped her April 12,

2000, speaking engagement at the Olympia Timberland Library and showed this as our TV program for May 2000.

You can watch Sonia Jacobs' speaking engagement on your computer at **two** places on Olympia FOR's website, **www.wvfor.org**. One is near the top of the "Death Penalty" section at **www.olympiafor.org/death_penalty.htm**. The other location on our website is in the chronological listing (in the year 2000) of the Olympia FOR's TV programs on

the "TV Programs" part of **www.olympiafor.org**. Visit **www.olympiafor.org/tv_programs.htm** and scroll down to 2000.

You can see much more information about innocence at the fascinating and comprehensive website of the Death Penalty Information Center, **www.deathpenaltyinfo.org**. Click "Issues," and then click "Innocence."

How the crimes affected the victims' families and his own family:

Glen said that when he has talked with our mutual friends – people who know both of us – everybody has said how sweet Dawud is. So I was not surprised that when we were preparing for this interview, he mentioned concern for the family members of the victims of the crimes for which he was unjustly convicted. They still think he committed the crimes, so – through the legal system – he is not allowed to enter King County, even though that's where most of Dawud's family members live. Also, he would like to visit his parents' graves there.

The families on both sides – the victims' families and his family – have been suffering. Some of his surviving family members are very old and are not able to come to visit him. He understands the feelings of people whose family members have been murdered; several of his own close family members have been brutally murdered. He understands the trauma and hard feelings, but he also knows how to let go of hatred and bitterness – and to truly forgive. He has moved through the forgiving process since the age of 19.

Dawud was young then. How did this experience affect him and his family at that time? How did he cope with living on death row – and 49+ years in prison?

In 1966 he was only 19 years old, an 8th grade dropout who did not have enough education to meaningfully help himself during his trial and sentencing processes.

While in prison he grew and healed in a number of ways. He is smart, so as he matured he completed his GED and a bachelor's degree. (This was decades ago when the State of Washington helped prisoners get better educations.)

In several ways he helped prisoners who were even worse off than him, and he started some non-profit organizations for those purposes. He said, "That was my environment. That was my community. So in any community that you're a part of, you try to do the best you can to make it a better community. ... In spite of the oppression and repression, you move forward. You try to maintain the sense of humanity ..."

He mentioned that during the 1970s the State of Washington was making good efforts for prison reform, so opportunities did exist, and he participated in those. Glen mentioned that after "all this tough-on-crime baloney," people do not remember that little window of time during the 1970s when governments actually were trying to promote rehabilitation and other reforms in the prison system. This allowed prisoners to enjoy some respect, some autonomy, some educational opportunities, and so forth. Dawud agreed with Glen's observation that many Americans think the "tough-on-crime" approach has gone too far, that prisons and sentencing have become too harsh, and that it makes sense to

reform the systems in more humane directions. Reforms such as shorter sentences have bi-partisan support now.

Glen expressed appreciation and respect for Dawud's emerging from this half-century of abuse with amazingly positive mental health. He asked Dawud how he was able to transition through the prison experience and emerge with less damage than expected. Dawud expressed appreciation for many people who had helped him along the way. He explicitly expressed appreciation for Bob Rhay, the Warden of the Washington State Penitentiary at Walla Walla. Dawud and Bob Rhay actually became friends. Dawud said that Bob Rhay treated him in a humane and respectful way. Dawud said that when Bob learned the facts of his case, he urged Dawud to pursue his case to achieve the truth and real justice, and to not give up. Dawud mentioned that it's unusual for a prisoner to talk about a warden in a positive way. Glen replied that it's probably unusual for a warden to enjoy such a friendship with a lifer.

Dawud also mentioned several other mentors by name, including Larry Gossett, a friend from childhood who stood with Dawud, and who is now a progressive elected member of the King County Council. Dawud apologized for not listing all of the individuals who had helped him along the way. Glen affirmed that Dawud in turn has helped many people along the way. Dawud affirmed the importance of "each one teach one."

Dawud's spiritual faith journey:

His father was a minister at a Baptist church in Seattle. He grew up in that Christian faith. Throughout the decades – along with his other experiences in prison – his faith journey moved along in several ways, and he converted to Islam in 1976. That has truly kept him grounded.

He said he understands that the Almighty Creator would not put on him a burden greater than he can bear. He said he has been sustained by prayer, patience and perseverance. He has tried to do his best in whatever situation he found himself in.

Paroled and starting to live a normal life outside:

Dawud's case was old enough that it was still governed by the state law that allowed for parole. (The State Legislature abolished parole for new cases after the early 1980s.) Parole was a system that allowed a prisoner who does not need to remain in prison to apply for release from prison and live in the community with certain restrictions and occasional interactions and accountability to a state parole officer.

Dawud kept getting turned down for parole, until finally he was ultimately granted parole in February 2015. Even though the State of Washington still claims that he is guilty, the State finally recognized that he should be free to live

somewhat of a normal life on the outside, although restricted somewhat, as mentioned in the previous paragraph.

The outside world has changed a lot in this past half century. He has been transitioning from living in prison since 1966 to living in the outside community in the modern world, which has changed very much in 50 years. He said that he is still learning, so the transition is still very much underway. He said when he left the community in 1966 the latest inventions were color TV and the transistor radio. In order to adjust and move in this new society, he is learning the new technology. He said he wants to learn and he will learn. "It's a big adjustment, but I'm up for the challenge."

Progress toward abolishing the death penalty in Washington State:

Glen said that one purpose for this interview is to help people meet Dawud as a person – an innocent survivor of an unjust system.

Another purpose is to help people understand the death penalty as an oppressive system and the progress people are making toward abolishing the death penalty in Washington state and elsewhere.

We conducted this interview in January 2017. At that time, 19 states and the District of Columbia did NOT have the death penalty. Since 2007 seven of those states have abolished the death penalty, and four states, including Washington, have moratoriums on executing anyone, although cases can still proceed but stop short of actual execution.

Since the 1970s, Washington State has executed 5 persons, but 20 persons have had their death sentences overturned. That's a terrible error rate! 5 executions but 20 death sentences overturned! Source: www.abolishdeathpenalty.org/facts/death-row Other states also have terrible error rates. Many states have had to release prisoners from death row because they were flat-out innocent. Eight states have each had to release 9 or more death row inmates. Illinois had to release 20, and Florida had to release 26 innocent persons from death row.

In February 2014 Washington State's Governor Jay Inslee said the death penalty has many problems, so he announced a moratorium on executions so long as he is governor. The law still exists, but he will not execute anyone.

His announcement also called for a public conversation about the death penalty. Glen said that when politicians call for a public conversation about a controversial issue, they are implying that they will not move further ahead until public opinion has moved ahead so the issue will become politically safe for the politicians to catch up.

Glen said that when Gov. Inslee created this prompt for public conversation, we must rise to that challenge. Now is the time to inform the public so we can be clear in our own minds, and so we can shift public opinion.

Glen called upon the people watching this interview to join with many Washingtonians, including Dawud and Glen, the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation's Committee for Alternatives to the Death Penalty, and other human rights organizations, to organize at the grassroots to change public opinion enough that the Legislature will repeal this law, which insults human dignity.

Dawud added to this analysis of the progress we're making in Washington by saying that when Gary Ridgway, the convicted murder of 48 women, did not get the death penalty, it makes it hard to sentence anyone else to death. In exchange for a sentence of life without parole instead of

death, Ridgway arranged to tell the locations of the bodies that had not been discovered yet. He said that this case shows that Washington State should abolish the death penalty. There would be no equity in sentencing to death someone who kills one person when the murderer of 48 persons did not get a death sentence.

Dawud also said that the death penalty should be abolished because “it is implemented unfairly in every way,” against the poor another people who are not able to adequately defend themselves. Only certain segments of our society are subject to the death penalty. “We’re supposedly the most civilized nation of the world, and yet we are still practicing that barbaric practice.”

Glen mentioned a few of the many non-profit organizations working to abolish the death penalty here and throughout the U.S. We posted these information resources at the end of the TV program credits – and also near the end of the document you are reading now.

We invite you to share with your friends this .pdf summary the Olympia FOR’s February 2017 TV program. We also posted it next to the link for watching this interview. Please invite your friends to visit www.olympiafor.org, click “TV Programs,” and scroll down to February 2017. Click the program’s title to watch this interview, and click the link next to that for this .pdf document.

Our website’s “Death Penalty” page also includes much information – including resources you won’t see elsewhere. Visit www.olympiafor.org and click “Death Penalty.”

Worldwide progress toward abolishing the death penalty:

Glen said that many people do not know that most of the rest of the world has made huge progress toward abolishing the death penalty. The U.S. is one of very few nations that executes a lot of people. For many years the U.S. has executed more people than nearly any other nation on earth. China executes many more people than any other nation. Saudi Arabia also executes many people. The only other nations executing as many people as U.S. are the world’s most notorious abusers of human rights.

Sometimes I wear a button that says, “Civilized nations abolish the death penalty.”

After Rwanda suffered massive genocidal killings they abolished the death penalty. Dawud mentioned that when South Africa replaced its racist Apartheid government, they also abolished the death penalty. South Africa knew they needed to get rid of racism, so they got rid of the death penalty. Glen mentioned that the European Union and virtually all of Latin America have abolished the death penalty.

On all of the important issues regarding human rights, social justice, economic justice, the environment, and so forth, we make progress only by organizing and taking action from the grassroots up. To abolish the death penalty, we must organize a large grassroots movement!

Nationwide progress toward abolishing the death penalty:

Glen mentioned that a few years ago the public mania for “tough-on-crime” laws peaked, and people started getting more sensible about reducing the excesses of the criminal justice system. Now people are realizing that long, harsh prison sentences and the death penalty simply do not work. Also, they waste our tax dollars. At state and federal levels, politicians of both political parties are taking actions to reduce prison populations and choose better ways to protect the public.

Between 2007 and 2016, seven states abolished the death penalty. As of January 2017, four other states have imposed temporary moratoriums on conducting executions.

Glen mentioned some additional facts showing that the death penalty is being sharply reduced in the U.S.:

- After 1976 the number of **death sentences** imposed in the U.S. grew until they **peaked in 1996 at 315** new death sentences. Since then, they trended downward. By 2012 the number of new death sentences dropped from

1996’s peak of 315 to 80. Just a few years later – from 2012 to 2016 – the number of new death sentences dropped rapidly from 80 to 29. The U.S. has about 3,000 counties, but only 27 of them – less than 1% of the U.S.’s counties – imposed any death sentences in 2016.

- The number of **executions** in the U.S. also **peaked during the 1990s**. During **1999, 98** persons were executed. The number of execution has been declining since then. In 2012, there were 43 executions in the U.S. From 2013 to 2016 the numbers of executions dropped to 39, then 38, then 35, then 20 in 2016. Almost all of those 20 were in Georgia and Texas.
- Public opinion surveys over the years showed that **public support for the death penalty peaked in 1994**. For the past two decades it has dropped significantly from a large majority of the nation’s population to approximately half of the population.

Information sources, organizations, and opportunities to work for abolition:

Glen urged people watching this interview to follow up by learning more and connecting with non-profit organizations working on the criminal justice system and the death penalty:

- **The Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation invites people to connect with our Committee for Alternatives to the Death Penalty.** We share information by e-mail, meet regularly, and organize activities to inform the public and government officials. Call (360) 491-9093 or send an e-mail to deathpenalty@olympiafor.org. We have posted a huge amount of fascinating information – including much that you won’t see anywhere else – on the “Death Penalty” part of our website, www.olympiafor.org. See www.olympiafor.org/death_penalty.htm
- Statewide, the main contact is the Washington Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (WCADP) at (206) 622-8952 www.abolishdeathpenalty.org
- The nationwide coalition working on this is the National Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty (NCADP) at (202) 331-4090 www.ncadp.org
- Very savvy organizing is done by Equal Justice USA, (718) 801-8940 www.ejusa.org

- The most amazingly comprehensive source of information is the Death Penalty Information Center, at (202) 289-2275. Explore their website, www.deathpenaltyinfo.org For example, you can click “Issues” and then click “Racial Bias” or “Innocence.”
- In April 2000 the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation’s Committee for Alternatives to the Death Penalty brought an innocent survivor of death row to Olympia. Sonia Jacobs had been sentenced to die in Florida’s electric chair for a murder she did not commit. She spent several years on death row and a total of 16 years in prison. We organized and videotaped her warm and compelling speaking engagement in April 2000, and this became our May 2000 TV program on TCTV. We encourage people to watch it on either of **two** places on Olympia FOR’s website. We posted it near the top of the “Death Penalty” part of www.olympiafor.org (www.olympiafor.org/death_penalty.htm). We also posted it in the chronological listing (for the year 2000) of the Olympia FOR’s TV programs on the “TV Programs” part of www.olympiafor.org. Visit www.olympiafor.org/tv_programs.htm and scroll down through the chronological list to May 2000.

Dawud offered further thoughts to end the interview:

Dawud concluded our interview by saying that change is inevitable; nothing stays the same. When he left prison, he left many people behind. He said, even those who are guilty have changed. He asked, “When is enough enough?” He said, “Life without the possibility of parole is another unfair sentence” because “everybody deserves another chance.”

Glen agreed. The whole theological notion of “grace” agrees with Dawud’s call for a second chance. We agreed

that it’s not right to condemn anyone forever. Dawud emphasized the importance of forgiveness. He said, “As a society we have to truly have the compassion for forgiveness.”

Dawud offered to do what he can to help change our unjust criminal justice system and abolish the death penalty. He is willing to conduct speaking engagements. Interested? Please contact Glen Anderson through the Olympia FOR.

Glen offered closing encouragement to solve the problems:

The people watching this TV interview series have humane values. They care about truth and human rights. Our criminal justice system often ignores truth and human rights.

When we hear individuals such as Dawud al-Malik share their first-hand experiences, this is more powerful and more memorable than hearing the statistics that have accumulated.

Experiences such as Dawud’s can move us to learn more and get active in solving the problems. Our humane values

compel us to do that. When we do this together, we build people-power from the grassroots up. That’s what we need at the local, national and global levels.

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!

You can get information about a wide variety of issues related to peace, social justice and nonviolence by contacting the Olympia Fellowship of Reconciliation at (360) 491-9093 www.olympiafor.org