

# The Holy Hustler



May 2020

Hello everyone,

We are a group of chaplains who seek to "restore the streets to live in" by pastoring, organizing, and empowering the leadership of poor people in Grays Harbor County.

Hope you are all staying as safe as you can during these crazy times. You are in the my thoughts and prayers always. We are still serving everything to go and trying to keep people as safe as we can.

Here on the harbor, Spring is finally here. On the farm, the greenhouse has been built and the field is getting tilled. All our cucumbers and squash and potatoes and cabbages and melons and herbs and beans and peas are all starting to grow. We have some tomatoes coming this week. Blueberries are in the grounds too. We are starting to plan what we can do for next year-- maybe raise some bees and chickens and fruit trees. It is a fun time for us.

Notice that we have a new address on the back-- its faster for us to get mail there, although our PO box in Westport will stay open too.

I am planning a sabbatical for next year-- I am applying for a grant to take three months off. I have a specific question for you all:

I want to make sure the rest of our team (especially Rev. Bonnie) knows how to support you all while I'm away. What is the MOST important thing the rest of our staff here should know about supporting our community in jail and prison?

Please let us know!!!

Much love and respect,  
Rev Sarah

## Kingmakers from the Bottom

Preached by Aaron Scott

### **Luke 23:33-43:**

*When they came to the place called the Skull, they crucified him there, along with the criminals—one on his right, the other on his left. Jesus said, “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.” And they divided up his clothes by casting lots. The people stood watching, and the rulers even sneered at him. They said, “He saved others; let him save himself if he is God’s Messiah, the Chosen One.”*

*The soldiers also came up and mocked him. They offered him wine vinegar and said, “If you are the king of the Judeans, save yourself.”*

*There was a written notice above him, which read: this is the king of the Judeans. One of the criminals who hung there hurled insults at him: “Aren’t you the*

*Messiah? Save yourself and us!”*

*But the other criminal rebuked him. “Don’t you fear God,” he said, “since you are under the same sentence? We are punished justly, for we are getting what our deeds deserve. But this man has done nothing wrong.”*

*Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”*

Nice respectable church people get uncomfortable about Christ as king sometimes. Why is that? So often I hear this preference—specifically from middle class and wealthy Christians—that they want Jesus as an ethereal poet and a gentle shepherd. Meek. Modest. Long-suffering but sweetly smiling anyway. Endlessly patient with the problems of this world.

Too bad! That kind of Jesus is nowhere to be found in the scriptures. He’s a king. He is our king. He is The



King. And his throne is not at Buckingham Palace. Where is it? Where is the true throne of Christ the King?

Where was it back then?

The throne of Christ was the manger: an impoverished infant hidden away from a murderous regime, squatting with his family among livestock, nursed and protected by his mother Mary—the Queen of Heaven, the Queen of Refugees.

The throne of Christ was the poor house. That is what Bethany literally translates as: “house of the poor.” King of the poor. King of the lepers. King of the sex workers. King of the criminals. King of everyone so broke they had no choice but to engage in some shady business to survive.

King of the crucified.

The throne of Christ was the cross. A king on a cross. A king assassinated by the most brutal imperial power the world has ever seen until today. A king executed by state violence in the same manner as rebel slaves were executed. Not because he was meek but because he turned the world upside down, putting the last first.

So where is the throne of Christ the King today? We know he lives. We say he lives. But where?

The throne of Christ is anywhere a homeless mother wraps her body around her children to keep

them warm and alive as they sleep in their vehicle through the dead of winter. The system which forces her into these circumstances is empire, just as it was in Jesus’ time, and it is sinful. This system is blasphemy against God’s precious creation. But her refusal to give up, to do anything less than fight for her family’s survival every single day—within that tenacious love is the kind of fire that holds the key to the salvation of the entire world.

The throne of Christ is in the love poor people choose to show each other in the most desolating circumstances, even as our entire political economy is hell bent on maintaining their isolation and destruction. For us, today, Christ is King in the detention centers. King in the homeless camps. King in the prisons. King of the streets. King of the felons. King of the trap houses. King of the trailer parks. King of the projects. King of the squats.

The kingship of Christ is wherever the leadership of poor people continues to turn the world upside down. This is not abstract. This is concrete, and it is happening.

I work at Chaplains on the Harbor. We are a mission station of this diocese, in rural Grays Harbor County. We do a lot of things but I think the most important thing we do is invest in the leadership of poor people. We believe fully that poor people are experts on their

own struggles, and experts on what needs to change in this society to make it more fair and more reconciled to the dream God has for all of us—not only the poor but with poor people leading the way for the redemption of the entire earth.

At Chaplains on the Harbor we invest in leaders in both small and big ways. For folks who have been homeless, who have been incarcerated, who have been stigmatized for their addiction and criminalized for their poverty, who have been shamed over and over again and told for most of their lives that they’re worthless, stepping into leadership can be terrifying. So maybe you start small: by putting someone in charge of making the sandwiches for the free lunch program. And then maybe you put them in charge of buying the food for the lunch program. And then you put them in charge of supervising other sandwich makers.

And then you get them up and speaking about their experiences, their observations, and their analysis—first in front of people who they know. And then in front of strangers. In front of churches. In front of city councils. In front of senators. Until eventually they are directly addressing the highest levels of governance in this country, speaking their truths to power. Royalty from the bottom like Jesus, stepping into their authority and confronting the empire.

In this way—in our raising up of leaders from the shelter floor to the Senate floor—I like to think of us king-makers from the bottom.

What is a king?

A king is a leader.

A king is an authority.

A king is a leader whose authority is believed to be, at least in some part, granted by God.

When we choose to follow Christ the King, we are making a choice about where we will seek out authority in this world. If we choose Jesus, we choose to see and hear *and follow* the queens and kings and leaders chosen by God among crucified peoples today.

Why would we do this? It flies in the face of everything we are told about whose leadership matters. It is foolishness in the eyes of pundits, politicians, and the powerful.

Well: what has the leadership from the top brought us? Has it brought us less suffering? Has it brought us less poverty? Has it brought us less violence? Has it brought us more love, more justice, more of God's dream? No!

So maybe we could be brave and try something new. Maybe we could finally try things Jesus' way. We could try walking among the poorest places—the places

about which respectable people ask, "Can anything good come out of here? Can anything good come out of Aberdeen? Out of Flint? Out of the border? Out of the reservations?"—and trusting in God's unequivocal "YES! This is my modern-day throne!" Yes—leaders can and do and will continue to rise up out of these places to lead the way to a kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven. It is already happening. The time is at hand. Our King—and all the kings and queens and royalty of the bottom—are waiting on us to join them in making good news: of the poor, by the poor, and for the poor, for the sake of the liberation of all creation.

## **Aberdeen Council set to rescind closure of homeless camp**

*KXRO Newsradio  
Aberdeen WA 4/28/2020*

After voting to close the Temporary Alternative Shelter Location (TASL), the City of Aberdeen will rescind that vote due to a statewide moratorium on evictions. On March 11, the Aberdeen City Council voted to close the TASL next to City Hall citing lack of supportive funding from outside the City budget, confirming that vote on April 8. However, at their Wednesday meeting the

Council will look to rescind those motions and extend the Temporary Use Permit as well as authorize the budget required to maintain operations after guidance from the Ad Hoc Committee of Homeless response and Corporation Counsel. According to the agenda for the meeting, this move is to maintain compliance with the current Governors Proclamations. Following their original motion to place a May 15, 2020 end date on the TASL, Governor Inslee issued Proclamation 20-19 on March 18, which placed a moratorium on evictions through May 4, 2020, followed by an extension to that Proclamation that moved the moratorium until June 4, 2020. According to a report from the Ad Hoc Committee, on Friday, April 24, 2020, the City of Aberdeen was informed by the Office of the Washington State Attorney General that the state interprets the Proclamations to be applicable to the TASL and therefore the planned closure is prohibited. On Wednesday, the City Council is expected to rescind their motions and allocate funding from their own budget to extend the operation for the time being.

# The Prison Industry: Mapping Private Sector Players

Study by [WorthRises.org](http://WorthRises.org)  
May 2020 [excerpt]

Every year, the U.S. spends more than \$80 billion incarcerating 2.3 million people in federal and state prisons, county jails, youth correctional facilities, and immigration detention centers. Of that, tens of billions are then funneled into the private sector through vendor contracts with healthcare providers, food suppliers, commissary merchants, prison contractors, and countless others. And if that was not enough, these corporations have also devised strategies to extract billions *more* from the communities supporting incarcerated loved ones.

Hidden from public view, these private corporations have fully monetized crime and punishment with the help of their government partners. Whether they draw money straight out of the pockets of incarcerated people and their support networks or from taxpayer coffers, they put profit over everything with grave consequences. And the COVID-19 pandemic has only further highlighted their cruelty. As the virus rampages through prisons and jails, these corporations have continued to prey on the communities decimated by our carceral crisis.

## SECTOR SUMMARY & DEVELOPMENTS

### 1) COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS

Includes stuff like: [Bail & Surety](#), [Electronic Monitoring](#), [Outpatient](#)

[Programs](#), [Day Reporting Center](#), [Residential Programs](#)

### COMPANIES PROFITING?

Bail: Endeavor Capital/Aladdin Bail Bonds, Fairfax Financial, Libre by Nexus, Tokio Marine  
Community surveillance: Apax Partners/Attenti, CoreCivic/Avalon, GEO Group, The/BI, Libre by Nexus, Track Group

### DEVELOPMENTS

Since 2018, the bail bonds industry has spent more than \$3.5 million to prevent the implementation of SB 10 in California, which would have replaced cash bail with a concerning risk assessment-based system. The measure will appear on the 2020 ballot.

In July 2019, the Federal Bureau of Prisons began implementing provisions of the First Step Act that would move more people to private halfway houses and increase the number of people required to wear an electronic monitor after they are released. The legislation was supported by the largest private prison corporations, which have expanded into the community corrections business and are slated to benefit significantly from the implementation of these provisions.

In March 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic spread into prisons and jails, major electronic monitoring corporations like Attenti rebranded their products as tools to monitor people's compliance with quarantine orders.

### 2) CONSTRUCTION & MAINTENANCE

Includes stuff like: [Architecture & Engineering](#), [Construction](#), [Maintenance Services](#), [Utility/Energy](#)

### COMPANIES PROFITING?

AECOM, Hill International, HOK,

Johnson Controls, McCarthy Building Companies, Turner Construction

### DEVELOPMENTS

In August 2019, activists successfully pressured Los Angeles County to cancel a proposed \$2.2 billion contract with McCarthy Building Companies to construct the state's largest jail and mental health facility.

In October 2019, the New York City Council awarded a \$8.7 billion plan to close the infamous jail on Rikers Island by 2026 and replace it with four newly constructed jails to a joint venture between AECOM and Hill International.

### 3) DATA & INFORMATION SYSTEMS

Includes stuff like: [Arrest/Court/Probation Data Systems](#), [Corrections Data Systems](#), [Immigration Data Systems](#), [IT & Communications Infrastructure & Services](#), [Medical Records Systems](#)

### COMPANIES PROFITING?

Amazon, Equivant, Microsoft, Northrop Gumman, Palantir

### DEVELOPMENTS

Throughout 2019, immigration advocates, Whole Foods employees, and musicians called on Amazon to cut ties with U.S. Immigration Customs & Enforcement.

In February 2020, organizations and foundations that formerly supported the development and implementation of risk assessment tools in efforts to end cash bail reversed their position and joined a growing chorus of advocates warning against the use of risk assessment tools as they further promote racial inequalities.

# THE PRISON INDUSTRY

4,135

corporations profiting off mass incarceration & surveillance

182

corporations recommended for divestment

300

corporations supporting prison labor

[bit.ly/theprisonindustry2020](http://bit.ly/theprisonindustry2020)



## Recipe for Strawberry Bliss

*By James Armas*

Be born again, grow up, go to college, get a job. Take your dull but comfortable middle-class life for granted. Spend entirely too much time at work, chowing down on fast food without tasting it while staring at a computer screen and wondering occasionally if there's more to life than this. Learn the word "Ennui." Resolve to do something meaningful with your life.

Do something selfish and stupid instead. Go to prison.

Lie awake in your bunk at night dwelling on the choices that you've made. Resolve to become a better person. Three times a day, eat thrown-together slop with the texture of greased sawdust and an empty no-flavor that you imagine is what the dead taste for eternity. Read. Write bleak, angst-ridden poetry and fantasize literary fame between hour-long conversations about food. Resolve to enjoy your life.

Repeat for 4.5 years. (Adjust to taste)

Get out of prison.

Go to a supermarket, a big one - the cheaper the better. Feel overwhelmed by the sheer number of people bustling blithely about, as if all this choice and freedom were completely normal. Resolve to become normal again, then cringe when someone gets too close. Agonize over every purchase because you don't know when you'll get a job and the food stamps have to last all month. Treat yourself anyway. Escape out the door.

Go home. Calm down.

Eat a fresh ripe strawberry, slowly.

## Bible verse

“Attend to my cry for I am brought very low! Deliver me from my persecutors for they are too strong for me! Bring me out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name! The righteous will surround me, for you will deal bountifully with me.”

Psalm 142

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**NEW YORK CITY STREET GRAFFITI: "HOUSING IS A HUMAN RIGHT / MAKE THE RICH PAY 4 COVID-19"**