

# A Reading with Don Wagner: *Glory to God in the Lowest*

Journeys to an Unholy Land

Phinney Books

7405 Greenwood Ave. N, Seattle

September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 7:30 p.m.

**A personal, political, and religious journey from Evangelical Christian faith and conservative politics to solidarity with the poor and advocacy for anti-war, anti-racism, and Palestinian rights.**

After serving for five years as a pastor in a remarkable Black church, Donald Wagner comes to fully understand the original sin of racism. As his journey continues, he encounters another marginalized people—the Palestinians—and witnesses their struggle for justice and equality. Touched by their resilience and fight against injustice, he leaves the pastorate to assume full time work as an advocate for Palestinian political and human rights.

The memoir begins in mid-September 1982, with a gut-wrenching day interviewing survivors of the Sabra-Shatila massacre in Lebanon, as they wept and waited for the bodies of family members to be pulled from the rubble. Donald Wagner's conversation with the local Imam ended with a challenge: "You must return home and tell what you have seen. This is all we ask. Go back and tell the truth."

*Glory to God in the Lowest* is a metaphor for his counter intuitive journey with the victims of the "chosen people" in the "unholy land," also called historic Palestine or Israel. The irony of the journey reminds us that God is everywhere especially with the disinherited, the victims of the powerful, including the victims of Israeli oppression.

The memoir touches on history and includes political analysis and theological reflection. In it, Donald Wagner describes Israel's continued colonization and destruction of Palestinian lives and chronicles his involvement in a grassroots movement of resistance that demands justice based on full equality, an end to the Israeli military occupation and settler colonization project, the right of return for Palestinian refugees, and full political rights for the Palestinian people.

Filled with stories—some humorous and some shocking—as well as encounters with people of every race, gender, and religious affiliation working below the radar, this book will inspire, challenge, and offer a narrative that envisions a transformed “unholy land,” where justice, liberation, and equality for all is the reality for every citizen.

**Forwards by William Barber and Phyllis Bennis.**

Donald E. Wagner received a Master of Divinity from Princeton Theological Seminary and a Doctor of Ministry degree from McCormick Theological Seminary. He was Director of the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Chicago’s North Park University. He served as National Director of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign (1980-89), was Director of Middle East Programs for Mercy Corps International (1990-94), and was co-founder of Evangelicals for Middle East Understanding. He is the author of five previous books on Palestinian rights.