

SEEKING JUSTICE TOGETHER CONFERENCE

A GATHERING OF JUSTICE-MINDED
CANADIAN CHRISTIANS

MAY 17-20, 2021

[Seeking Justice Together](#) is a virtual conference being convened using Zoom. All workshops will have dial-in options and automatic closed captioning available. Please let us know if you have any accessibility or accommodation requests when you complete your registration form.

Recordings of ALL workshops and keynotes will be made available to ALL conference participants within 24 hours.

Keynote & Workshop Descriptions

Monday, May 17 - Opening Keynotes

All keynotes will be 1 hour and a half, including Q&A.

Please note that recordings of these keynotes will be shown in the opposite time zones on Tuesday evening, with live Q&A with respondents.

Seeking Justice in Our Systems

Paul Taylor (he/him) & Harsha Walia (she/her)

4pm PT / 5pm MT / 6pm CT
7pm ET / 8pm AT / 8:30pm NT

Paul Taylor is the Executive Director of FoodShare Toronto, and a lifelong anti-poverty activist. Growing up materially poor in Toronto, has inspired Paul to commit his life to doing what he can to dismantle the systems and organizing principles that both cause and uphold poverty, food insecurity and wealth inequality, including racism, white supremacy and neoliberalism. In 2020, Paul was named one of Canada's Top 40 under 40, one of Toronto Life's 50 Most Influential Torontonians and voted as Best Activist by the readers of Now Magazine.

Harsha Walia is a South Asian activist and writer based in Vancouver, BC. She is known for her organizing work with No One Is Illegal, the February 14th Women's Memorial March Committee, the Downtown Eastside Women's Centre, and several Downtown Eastside housing justice coalitions. Harsha has been active in migrant justice, Indigenous solidarity, feminist, anti-racist, and anti-capitalist movements for over a decade. In January 2020 she was announced as the new executive director of the [BC Civil Liberties Association](#). Harsha recently published [Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism](#).

Lessons from First Nations Communities in Seeking Justice for People and the Planet

Melina Laboucan-Massimo (she/her) & Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm (he/him)

7pm PT / 8pm MT / 9pm CT

10pm ET / 11pm AT / 11:30pm NT

Melina Laboucan-Massimo is Lubicon Cree from Northern Alberta. Melina is the Founder of Sacred Earth Solar, co-founder and Just Transition Director at Indigenous Climate Action and a Fellow at the David Suzuki Foundation. She is the Host of a new TV series called Power to the People which profiles renewable energy in Indigenous communities across the country. Melina holds a Masters degree in Indigenous Governance at the University of Victoria with a focus on Renewable Energy. As a part of her Masters thesis Melina implemented a 20.8 kW solar project in her home community of Little Buffalo which powers the health centre in the heart of the tar sands.

Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm was elected Chief of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow, Yukon in 2018. He has been an outspoken voice and activist, both nationally and internationally, on everything from climate change to Indigenous rights.

Tuesday, May 18 - Daytime Workshops

10am PT / 11am MT / 12pm CT

1pm ET / 2pm AT / 2:30pm NT

All workshops will be 1 hour and 15 minutes, including Q&A.

Racism in Canada?

Bernadette Arthur (she/her)

Take an interactive trip down memory lane to (re)discover Canada's relationship to racism. We will discuss how history shapes the present and discuss generative ways for churches to participate in the ministry of racial justice, healing and reconciliation. This is an introductory workshop that will allow us to briefly survey the origins and effects of systemic racism and colonialism. Co-participants will be offered a suggested resource list to assist them on their learning journey. Bernadette Arthur is a lover of Jesus Christ and as a true Enneagram 1 is a reformer at heart and pursuer of justice and truth. She is gifted in designing and facilitating decolonized learning events that offer "safe" space to listen, interrogate, unpack, explore, create and heal.

This workshop is being sponsored through the generosity of the [Anglican Diocese of Niagara](#).

Seeking Justice with LGBTQ2S Christians

Rev. Michiko Bown-Kai (they/them)

How do LGBTQ2S+ people's experiences of oppression impact the ways we seek justice and offer radical hospitality? What might this look like in the Church, in particular? Michiko Bown-Kai is a minister in The United Church of Canada who is passionate about social justice and creative expression. In this workshop, they will engage participants in exploring how we can better understand ourselves and others by opening ourselves up to honest conversations about sexual orientation and gender identity, and how this informs the ways in which we seek justice together.

Churches & Reconciliation

Jodi Spargur (she/her)

What does it look like for Christians to work together for justice in Settler/Indigenous relations? Jodi Spargur (she/her) is a settler of Nordic/German heritage living and working on the unceded territory of the Squamish, Musqueam and Tsleil-Watuth Peoples. Currently Jodi is leading the work of Healing at the Wounding Place, a network looking to engage people of faith and Indigenous communities in walking into whole, healing and just relationships. Healing has begun in Indigenous communities across Canada. The question remains whether the church, one of the primary wounding places, can become a place of healing for Indigenous and non-Indigenous people alike.

Disability, Faith, & Justice

Jasmine Duckworth (she/her)

What does it look like to seek justice with disabled people in the Church and in society at large? Jasmine Duckworth has served people who experience disability for 15 years at Christian Horizons where she works to nurture communities of belonging for people with disabilities. Jasmine is disabled herself and brings that personal experience to her work in supporting others with disabilities. This workshop will look back at the history of disability as well as changes that have been made in both society and the Church in order to understand the current status of disability. Participants will be invited to look forward towards what is on the horizon in terms of theology of disability and the practice of building inclusive communities of faith.

This workshop is being offered through the generosity of [Christian Horizons](#), partnering with people experiencing disabilities to accomplish their goals and thrive in communities where their God-given gifts are valued and respected.

Tuesday, May 18 - Evening Keynotes

All keynotes will be 1 hour and a half, including Q&A.

Recording of "Lessons from First Nations Communities in Seeking Justice for People and the Planet"

Melina Laboucan-Massimo & Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm recorded, followed by a live Q&A with respondents

4pm PT / 5pm MT / 6pm CT
7pm ET / 8pm AT / 8:30pm NT

Recording of "Seeking Justice in Our Systems"

Paul Taylor & Harsha Walia recorded followed by a live Q&A with respondents

7pm PT / 8pm MT / 9pm CT
10pm ET / 11pm AT / 11:30pm NT

Wednesday, May 19 - Daytime Workshops

10am PT / 11am MT / 12pm CT
1pm ET / 2pm AT / 2:30pm NT

All workshops will be 1 hour and 15 minutes, including Q&A.

Income, Immigration, Race, and the Law

Avvy Go (she/her)

Avvy Go is the Clinic Director of the Chinese and Southeast Asian Legal Clinic and a founding steering committee member of Colour of Poverty – Colour of Change. In this workshop, Avvy will discuss and share examples of what an intersectional, rights-based approach looks like in her legal practice and community advocacy with low-income racialized individuals and families, many of whom are immigrants and people with precarious immigration status.

Decolonizing Christianity Canada + Kenosis

Danielle Steenwyk-Rowaan (she/her) & DCC representative (TBD)

What does it look like to seek justice within our own faith traditions? *Decolonizing Christianity Canada (DCC)* and *Kenosis Community Groups* engage people with roots in Christianity and hearts for justice in communities of support, learning, and accountability, also referred to as “caucus spaces.” While all of us need to work together for justice, the needs and experiences of people engaged in this work as Black, Indigenous, or people of colour vary greatly from the needs and experiences of those who are racialized as White. In this workshop, representatives of DCC and Kenosis communities will explore the wisdom and opportunities of caucus spaces, as one way to work together to embody anti-racist, decolonized, and anti-oppressive expressions of our faith.

This workshop is being sponsored through the generosity of the [Institute for Christian Studies](#).

Seeking Justice in the North

Arlene Hache (she/her)

What can we learn from communities in the North about what it looks like to seek justice together? Grounded in stories shared from communities in the Northwest Territories, this workshop will explore the importance of centering local wisdom, culture, and ingenuity in developing meaningful approaches to understanding and eradicating poverty in the North. Arlene is well known as an advocate for social change and was awarded the Order of Canada in 2009 and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal in 2012. She was a founding member of the Yellowknife Women’s Society who established the Yellowknife Women’s Centre in 1990 and the Centre for Northern Families in 2005. Participants will leave this workshop with a better understanding of living conditions in the North and suggested best practices to ensure Northern and Inuit voices are heard in decision-making processes.

LGBTQ2S Youth Homelessness + the Right to Housing

Alex Abramovich (he/him) & Michèle Biss (she/her)

What might the right to adequate housing look like for different groups in Canadian society? In this conversational-style workshop, Alex and Michèle will share how an intersectional approach can help us better understand and respond to homelessness and housing insecurity in Canada. Alex will share from his extensive research with LGBTQ2S youth and their experiences of homelessness, and Michèle will bring her expertise in human rights law and advocacy on the right to housing. Participants can expect to come out of this workshop with a better understanding of the causes and required responses for LGBTQ2S youth homelessness, and what is meant by “the right to adequate housing.” Opportunities for follow-up action and advocacy will also be shared.

Wednesday, May 19 - Evening Workshops (Eastern)

4pm PT / 5pm MT / 6pm CT
7pm ET / 8pm AT / 8:30pm NT

All workshops will be 1 hour and 15 minutes, including Q&A.

Seeking Justice for the Love of Creation

Karri Munn-Venn (she/her) & Keira Kang (she/her)

What are you willing to do for the love of Creation? In this workshop, Karri and Keira will invite participants to explore the critical importance of combining personal and political action to address the global climate emergency. Together, we will examine the complex, overlapping impacts of a warming world; the ways in which social identities, geography, and economics influence how these impacts are experienced; and the challenges and opportunities of taking a multi-faceted approach to reducing emissions and achieving climate justice. Materials for this workshop will draw from resources developed by [For the Love of Creation -- A faith-based climate justice initiative.](#)

A Full Welcome for Refugees in Canada

Stephen Kaduuli (he/him) & Mike Hogeterp (he/him)

How can Canada give a full welcome to refugees? In this fireside chat, Stephen and Mike will share what it will take for Canadians to continue giving a full welcome to refugees – referencing the current travel restrictions, the promising target numbers for 2021 and CPJ’s A Half Welcome and Continuing Welcome reports. The workshop will also include some practical tips on advocating for refugee rights.

Ending Poverty, Honouring Dignity

Natalie Appleyard (she/her) & Leila Sarangi (she/her)

What would it take for us to eradicate poverty in Canada? In this workshop, Natalie and Leila will share examples of how an intersectional, rights-based approach that is grounded in people’s lived experiences helps us better understand and respond to poverty in Canada. Drawing from CPJ’s [Poverty Trends](#) report, and Campaign 2000’s [National Report Card on Child and Family Poverty in Canada](#), participants will be engaged in exploring how systems, social identities, geography, and politics overlap, creating and perpetuating poverty in Canada - and how we can work together as individuals and collectives to bring about the change we need.

Wednesday, May 19 - Evening Workshops (Western)

7pm PT / 8pm MT / 9pm CT
10pm ET / 11pm AT / 11:30pm NT

All workshops will be 1 hour and 15 minutes, including Q&A.

Lessons from Indigenous Spirituality

Rev. Dr. Ray Aldred (he/him)

How can Indigenous spirituality inform our practices of faith and justice? Rev. Dr. Ray Aldred is status Cree from Swan River Band, Treaty 8. He is the director of the Indigenous Studies Program at the Vancouver School of Theology whose mission is to partner with the Indigenous Church around theological education. In this workshop, Ray will engage participants in exploring Indigeneity and what we can learn from Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous spirituality, and Indigenous churches about how we relate to one another, to our faith, and to all of creation, and how this informs how we understand and practice justice together.

This workshop is being sponsored through the generosity of the [Christian Reformed Centre for Public Dialogue](#).

Youth-Led Movements Seeking Justice

Deborah Mebude (she/her)

Youth are at the forefront of many of today's most impactful justice movements. But they are also frequently excluded from decision-making processes. From climate justice, to fighting anti-Black and anti-Asian racism, to calls for economic reform, young people are leading the work of intersectional, anti-oppressive approaches to grassroots activism and demanding that their voices be heard. In this workshop, Deb (she/her) will explore some of the tools and resources available to equip and inform young people in seeking justice, including CPJ's Advocacy Toolkit. Participants will also gain insights on how to ensure young people's voices are heard and heeded by people of all ages.

Unlearning Performative Allyship

Serisha Iyar (she/her)

What does it look like to engage in authentic, meaningful solidarity and allyship? In the wake of events such as the attacks on Mi'kmaq lobster fishers and Indigenous land defenders, on-going killings of Black people at the hands of police, and the rise in Anti-Asian hate crimes and ableism during the pandemic, many people within and outside these communities are asking what they can do to help seek justice. But it is all too easy to find ourselves acting in ways that might make us feel good about being an "ally", while actually doing little to bring about real change, or worse, perpetuating harm. In this workshop, Serisha (she/her) will explore how we can unlearn unhelpful and harmful habits, learn from our mistakes and a wealth of existing resources, and grow in our relationships and practices of justice-seeking in community with others.

This workshop is being offered through the generosity of [Leading in Colour](#), a community organization dedicated to providing racialized youth with the necessary tools, resources and skills training needed to conduct advocacy efforts in and for their communities.

Thursday, May 20 - Closing Keynote

10am PT / 11am MT / 12pm CT
1pm ET / 2pm AT / 2:30pm NT

The closing keynote will be 1 hour and 30 minutes, including Q&A.

Seeking Justice from Within and Outside Systems

Romeo Saganash (he/him) in conversation with Jocelyn Bell (she/her), Broadview Magazine

Romeo Saganash was born in Waswanipi and raised in accordance with the values and traditions of the Cree Nation until he was seven years old. He then spent ten years at a residential school in La Tuque. That separation from his family and community informed everything he went on to achieve in his professional and political career. Throughout his career as legal specialist, negotiator, and politician, Romeo Saganash has sought to defend human rights, especially the human rights of First Nations people. At the federal level, Mr. Saganash was the member of parliament for Abitibi–Baie-James–Nunavik–Eeyou from 2011 to 2019 and New Democratic Party's critic for reconciliation. Internationally he played a key role in drafting the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, which he continues to promote tirelessly.