

# the Catalyst

Citizens for Public Justice

Summer 2021

Pub. Mail Agreement no: 40022119



## Stephen's enduring legacy

By Willard Metzger

For our staff, CPJ is more than a place of employment. People who work at CPJ are drawn by the faith-based platform promoting and advocating for policies that will help develop a just society for Canada. Striving for public justice is a cause, a worthwhile ministry.

CPJ is funded by thousands of donors, many of whom have been supporting the work for decades. These faithful donors see their support as an expression of their faith. Both staff and donors invest much into CPJ.

This personal investment by the CPJ family is what makes the loss of Stephen Kaduuli, our Refugee Rights Policy Analyst hurt so much. Stephen died suddenly on April 15, 2021, after a short battle with the COVID-19 virus. His death is mourned across Canada and the world.

Stephen was the kind of person who brought an easy smile to many people. That was because his smile was so irresistible. His smile used up every muscle on his face and radiated out of his eyes. It

was genuine, sincere, and impacted people across the globe. That smile will remain with us in our memories, for it is a smile that is impossible to forget.

I am pretty certain Stephen has impacted more people than he knew. That is because he carried himself with a humble realism. He knew he had much to offer, but he did not present himself as better than others. Instead, he sought to empower other voices.

Working for refugee rights was a passion for Stephen—a passion he carried with determination and deep sensitivity. His research on what he called “Canada’s Border Wall” was an example of this. In the shadow of a United States political campaign to build a 55-foot concrete wall across 2,600 miles, Stephen poked at Canada’s self-perception as being a contrasting friendly and accepting nation. But self-perceptions are often blinded to the lived experiences of others. Newcomers in Canada face discrimination especially in obtaining available housing and employment.

Although more subtle and hidden behind politeness, Canada maintains a wall of exclusion. And Canada’s wall is not limited to a physical border. It is a wall that permeates across the country.

Stephen poured himself into helping people recognize this wall and calling all to help dismantle this barrier. A fitting passion for a deeply devoted husband and a loving, protective father. He wanted to help improve the country to which he relocated his family.

We have lost a colleague, friend, and partner in the fight for public justice. Stephen’s research and writing on refugee rights have been recognized and valued by all who read it. The work will be accessed for years to come.

As a CPJ family, we will strive to continue to build on the work conducted by Stephen. But for now, we mourn. We pray for his family. And we lift our hands in gratitude to the God who created him and shared his life with us.

Willard Metzger is CPJ’s executive director.

# In Review

## Seeking Justice Together

In May, CPJ hosted *Seeking Justice Together*, a four-day virtual conference. Keynote speakers included **Melina Laboucan-Massimo**, **Harsha Walia**, **Chief Dana Tizya Tramm**, **Paul Taylor**, and **Romeo Saganash** (below). More than 300 people registered for the conference, taking part in workshops and small group discussions. Twenty-five speakers and facilitators addressed issues of racism, Indigenous/settler reconciliation, 2SLGBTQIA+ rights, disability rights, poverty in Canada, climate justice, and refugee rights. Read an excerpt of Melina Laboucan-Massimo and Chief Dana Tizya Tramm's keynote conversation on page 9.



## Annual General Meeting

On June 17, CPJ held our Annual General Meeting online. CPJ's membership affirmed the election of four new Board members: **Ian Van Haren** from Montreal; **Monica Tang** from Burnaby, B.C.; **Tenielle Patterson** from Thunder Bay, Ont.; and **Keira Kang** from Toronto.

## Voices for Peace

CPJ has partnered with the **Canadian Council of Churches**, the **Basilian Centre for Peace and Justice**, the **Henri Nouwen Society**, and **Church of the Redeemer** for a series of *Voices for Peace* webinars on the theme "Radical Hope, Radical Resistance." In April, **Sylvia Keesmaat** gave a keynote address, and CPJ's senior policy analyst **Karri Munn-Venn** responded. The June event featured **Terry Leblanc**, and plans are underway for an event in September.

## Earth Day

CPJ was involved in a number of Earth Day events in April. We co-sponsored a press conference with Climate Action Network ahead of President Biden's Earth Day Summit. Anglican Indigenous Archbishop **Mark Macdonald** presented on behalf of *For the Love of Creation*.

On Earth Day itself, CPJ issued a brief response to the announcement of Canada's new climate target, and Karri co-hosted a *For the Love of Creation* Earth Day Celebration along with **Beth Lorimer** from KAIROS and **Lori Neale** of the United Church of Canada.

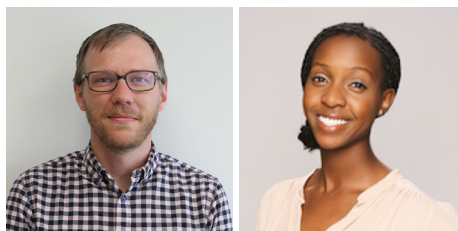
It isn't too late to participate in the *For the Love of Creation's* faith-in-action campaign. Visit [cpj.ca/flc-action](http://cpj.ca/flc-action) to join!

## Budget 2021

The long-awaited federal budget was released on April 19. CPJ's analysis, *A Pandemic Response Without a Just Recovery*, was published on our website on May 5.

## Thank you, Brad; and Welcome Back, Deb!

In June, CPJ bid farewell to **Brad Wassink**, our communications coordinator since 2013. We also welcomed **Deborah Mebude** back to the team. Deb had previously been a public justice intern at CPJ and served as our communications coordinator during Brad's parental leave.



## Editor's Note

It has been an honour to serve as CPJ's communications coordinator and *Catalyst* editor for these past seven and a half years. As my time at CPJ comes to an end, I want to thank the staff, Board, and members for your dedication to public justice. I have learned so much from so many of you and have been inspired and challenged to deepen my own understanding of justice. As we explore our three key policy areas through a lens of intersectionality, I'm excited about the future of CPJ.

—Brad Wassink

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Citizens for Public Justice's mission is to promote public justice in Canada by shaping key public policy debates through research and analysis, publishing, and public dialogue. CPJ encourages citizens, leaders in society, and governments to support policies and practices which reflect God's call for love, justice, and the flourishing of creation.

**CPJ annual membership fee** includes the *Catalyst*:  
Suggested donation of \$50

Summer 2021 (Volume 44, Number 2)  
ISSN 0824-2062  
Agreement no. 40022119  
Editor: Brad Wassink & Deborah Mebude

*the Catalyst*, a publication of Citizens for Public Justice, reports on public justice issues in Canada and reviews CPJ activities.

**the Catalyst subscription:**  
\$20 (three issues)

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## Continuing the Fight to Uphold Refugee Rights

By Serisha Iyar

Like many others, I was shocked, saddened, and at a loss for words when I heard of Stephen's tragic and sudden passing. Alongside my former colleagues at Citizens for Public Justice, I continue to grieve this loss of life amongst the ongoing inequities and injustices of the COVID-19 pandemic.

While working together at CPJ, Stephen and I collaborated on a few projects, bringing him up to speed on our work surrounding eliminating the repayment of travel loans for refugees, identifying discrimination in both policies and practices towards racialized refugees in particular, and continued work advocating for the end of the Canada-US Safe Third Country Agreement. I remember Stephen as a devoted advocate, a proud family man, and an accomplished academic. I cherish memories of our staff gatherings at lunch, bond-

ing as peoples of the African diasporas, and recall how beneath his quiet demeanour stood a great sense of humour. As we continue to grieve this loss collectively, there is much of Stephen's work on refugee rights that must be continued.

I first met Stephen when he joined CPJ as the inaugural, full-time Refugee Rights policy analyst. He had started this position during my tenure as the Public Justice Intern working on the same portfolio, so we had the opportunity to collaborate on projects and work together closely, even if for a short period of time. Our alignment centred largely on a shared passion for addressing systemic barriers, racism and other forms of discrimination within immigration policies as they affected refugees and refugee claimants while highlighting areas where churches and faith groups

could have an impact in supporting positive changes to said policies. Stephen was additionally, particularly supportive of my work providing intersectional analysis to refugee rights policymaking while focusing on anti-oppressive ways of conducting advocacy. I also had the opportunity to travel and work with Stephen in Montreal during CPJ's Fall Tour, witnessing firsthand his calming presence in a room and how well he was able to engage with CPJ members, the public and guests, and get them excited about the work that we were doing.

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**"I remember Stephen as a devoted advocate, a proud family man, and an accomplished academic."**

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Over the course of his two years at Citizens for Public Justice, Stephen was able to build relationships with coalition members, government officials and fellow advocates that had and will continue to have a lasting impact within refugee rights advocacy. Stephen often recognized that there was not enough being done to support refugees and more generally, newcomers in Canada. However, he believed that we hold the capacity as a country, through governments, and for those of us with the privilege of citizenship, to be able to do more!

From creating care structures and support systems centred on lived experiences, speeding up processing times, to reducing financial burdens and overall, providing a more fulsome welcome to those fleeing persecution, upholding refugee rights can and should be more than just the bare minimum of what Canada can offer.

Stephen highlighted this in his work by furthering the findings of CPJ's 2017 report *A Half Welcome* in its 2020 progress

...continued on page 4



Stephen speaking with Ahmed Hussen, the then Minister of Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada at the Humanizing Migration: Rights, refuge and responsibilities Trebek Forum in Ottawa on June 20, 2019 (World Refugee Day).

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report, Continuing Welcome. A Half Welcome looked at concerns raised by sponsorship agreement holders and the issues they were running into while supporting the resettlement of refugees during a time when Canada was increasing refugee entries into the country. This new report allowed for further analysis of these concerns and the inequalities that exist within the immigration system by looking at whether or not things had changed in a meaningful manner.

Continuing Welcome reiterated that there is still so much more work to be done to create accessible, supportive, and efficient processes for sponsors, refugees and refugee claimants. Some of these recommendations included highlighting, again, the need for further elimination of backlogs, continuing the call for the full elimination of travel loan repayment for refugees, developing more accessible processes for sponsorship agreement holders, and calling for further analysis of current processes and their shortfalls. Additionally, he pointed to how the implementation of various new processes would better serve these communities by improving refugee integration.

Additional work that Stephen took on included coalition building to release reports like Slamming the Door with STAND Canada and STAND USA. This report focused on the Safe Third Country Agreement, contained a pressing recommendation for Canada to declare the United States a threat to refugee claimants and an unsafe country for them to be in. It also highlighted that changes needed to be made to prevent the continued use of discrimina-



Stephen with former CPJ Interns Andrea Rodriguez, Serisha Iyar, and David Menendez (left to right) at the Humanizing Migration: Rights, refuge and responsibilities Trebek Forum in Ottawa on World Refugee Day.

tory language against refugee claimants, alongside changes to inhumane operations based on this policy.

These inequities that Stephen saw and brought to light in CPJ's work continue through the COVID-19 pandemic, with the closure of the land border between Canada and the US and the full restriction of refugee claimants; their travel deemed "non-essential," despite the fact that many others have been given exemptions to cross the border.

Stephen also saw opportunities to draw attention to the overlap between CPJ's two other key policy areas by examining how refugees are impacted disproportionately by both poverty and climate change. In doing so, he recognized that Canada plays a significant role in creating the circumstances that lead to climate-based

migration and thus, the creation of displaced peoples and refugees. Moreover, that refugees face both logistical barriers to economic prosperity but also systemic discrimination, preventing them from receiving safe and stable employment opportunities and continuing to exacerbate situations of precarity that result in poverty.

Stephen's legacy as an advocate incorporates a commitment to addressing inequities alongside his passion and dedication to upholding refugee rights in what is currently Canada, Uganda and beyond. His work serves as a reminder and an example that we should continue to strive for the protection of refugee rights. His work shows us that we should do all that we can in our power to advocate for positive changes in policy from our governments, in order to accomplish this goal. I remain grateful for the short time that I was able to spend learning from and working with Stephen. As CPJ looks to the future of its refugee rights work, the foundation Stephen built as the first policy analyst will set the bar for the advocacy to come. CPJ will, undoubtedly, continue to honour his legacy in shaping the way we approach refugee rights advocacy and policymaking.

*We invite CPJ members to contribute to The Stephen Kaduuli Memorial Refugee Rights Fund to support CPJ's refugee rights work moving forward: <https://cpj.ca/stephen-refugee-rights-fund>*

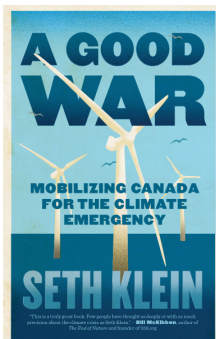
Serisha Iyar is a former Public Justice Intern at CPJ and the current Executive Director of Leading in Colour, she also sits on the Board of The Solidarity Library.



Stephen Kaduuli, Natalie Appleyard, and Brad Wassink at the old CPJ office in Ottawa.

# Book Reviews

Summer book suggestions from Citizens for Public Justice



## **A Good War: Mobilizing Canada for the Climate Emergency**

By Seth Klein  
ECW Press, 2020

*Reviewed by Karri Munn-Venn*

Seth Klein's *A Good War*, is a book about solutions. Big, broad, whole-of-society, our-house-is-on-fire-and-we-must-act-like-it pathways to a better future. He asks, "If climate change is truly an emergency (and it is), how must we respond?" and "What lessons can be drawn from the ways that Canada has responded to emergencies in the past?" Ironically, *A Good War* was released just a short time before the onset of the global COVID-19 pandemic. And you know what? Some of Klein's war-inspired recommendations played out—demonstrating that as a country, we do have what it takes to rise to the challenge.

In a word, this book is genius. It is supremely well researched and wonderfully readable. The stories shared are compelling and engaging. They are political and they are personal. They are rooted in historical experience and steeped in science. They are also deeply practical. And in their practicality offer hope for the future of our shared planet. It is no longer a question of what to do in the face of climate catastrophe, but how do we create the "emergency mindset" necessary to take sufficient action.

What I most appreciated about *A Good War* were the "20 key takeaways" presented in the book's closing pages (pp. 366-368). Here are some of the highlights:

1. Treat the climate crisis as the emergency that it is.
2. Recognize that voluntary measures aren't enough.
3. Spend what is necessary to win.
4. Create the necessary economic institutions and crown corporations.

The approach presented in *A Good War* is a holistic one that will serve to address long-standing societal inequities. Some takeaways speak directly to CPJ's work as they call on the federal government to:

5. Invest in climate and social infrastructure.
6. Develop a rigorous just transition plan.
7. Embed the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples into law.
8. Be ready to welcome tens of thousands of climate-displaced people annually.

*A Good War* is a unique and inspiring call to action. I am excited to be a part of the movement that will ultimately bring this vision to fruition.

Karri Munn-Venn is CPJ's senior policy analyst.



## **Refuge Reimagined: Biblical Kinship in Global Politics**

By Mark R. Glanville and Luke Glanville  
IVP Press, 2021

*Reviewed by Ian Van Haren*

How should the church respond to the large number of refugees around the world? In *Refuge Reimagined*, Mark and Luke Glanville show how a Biblical understanding of kinship calls Christians to welcome refugees in their communities and advocate for refugee rights nationally and internationally.

The book opens with a rich discussion of kinship in the Old Testament and Gospels. The authors reflect on how foreigners are treated and do not shy away from challenging Biblical passages. Of course, relations between community members and "outsiders" were different at that time: our modern world has defined nation-states, demarcated borders, passport control, migrant detention, and refugee camps. However, the authors argue the ethic of welcoming displaced persons as in the Bible should influence actions and politics today.

In later sections of the book, the authors explore how Christian theology should inform our response to refugees. They contrast the Biblical principle of inclusive kinship with the actions of politicians who exclude refugees.

The authors call churches and nations to embrace a calling to public justice that celebrates diversity and is not afraid of refugees and migrants but rather welcomes, as kin, individuals who seek safety in a new land.

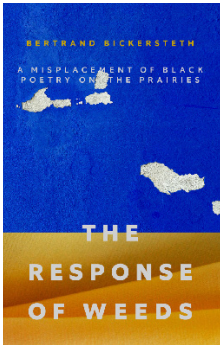
The book contains frequent examples that bring the scholarly analysis to life. This includes a focus on Kinbrace, a Vancouver organization that houses and supports refugee claimants as well as other examples of refugee advocacy in North America and Australia.

Overall, the book is a deeply researched account of how the Bible calls us to respond hospitably to individuals seeking a better, more secure, future. I highly recommend it to anyone interested in thinking Biblically about refugee issues.

Ian Van Haren is a PhD student in sociology at McGill University and a new member of CPJ's board of directors.

# Book Reviews

Summer book suggestions from Citizens for Public Justice



## The Response of Weeds: A Misplacement of Black Poetry on the Prairies

By Bertrand Bickersteth  
NeWest Press, 2020

Reviewed by Deborah Mebude

*The Response of Weeds: A Misplacement of Black Poetry on the Prairies* is both striking and evocative. While a brief read, Bertrand Bickersteth paints a concise and poetic picture of the experience of being Black on the Prairies. Raised in Alberta, Bickersteth effortlessly relays the experience of feeling like a foreigner even in a place that one is intimately acquainted with; the sideways glances, the assumption that one is an outsider, the questions of “where are you really from,” will all resonate with readers of colour.

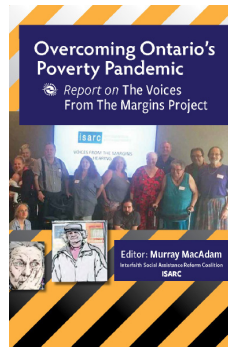
With themes of invisibility and erasure, the book explores how Black Albertans, and by extension, many non-white settlers in Canada, can feel othered—at once overlooked and simultaneously conspicuous in places and settings that are not always as welcome as they claim to be.

Bickersteth remarks on Canada’s discomfort with confronting historical issues of race, with not-so-subtle mentions of settlers looting Indigenous lands and jabs at those who insist upon “colourblindness.” Indeed, a sense of Indigenous solidarity is woven throughout the book, which names the failed treaty promises and overall mistreatment of several Indigenous Nations on the prairies, including the Cree, Piikani, and Sarcee.

Notions of belonging and questions of how to define “home” when one has been displaced are present throughout the book. Ideas of a fragile sense of social cohesion are also unearthed, with the author remarking on how Canadians may espouse peace and harmony while failing to respond to cries for racial and social justice.

Some historical context is needed for readers, as Bickersteth weaves in the experiences of prominent and lesser-known Black Albertans, including John Ware and Henry Mills. Overall, this is an excellent book for those curious about the perspectives of the “outsider within” or simply anyone wondering what it’s like to be Black in Canada.

Deborah Mebude is CPJ’s interim communications coordinator.



## Overcoming Ontario’s Poverty Pandemic

Edited by Murray MacAdam  
Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC), 2021

Reviewed by Allyson Carr

The Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Coalition (ISARC) recently engaged in a project of community hearings on poverty, meant to produce a report on the state of poverty in Ontario and a tool to help the public understand the multi-faceted complexity of the problem—and potential solutions.

I spent around a decade of my life living with poverty or just on the edge of it. Over the years since, I’ve read many different reports on poverty. At best most of those reports proposed only vague solutions and didn’t involve the people most likely to have the best handle on what is actually needed: people living with poverty.

That is why *Overcoming Ontario’s Poverty Pandemic* stands out. The report is rooted—in tangible ways—in the experiences of people currently living with poverty. The authors held community meanings where they asked concrete questions about access to food, housing, healthcare, transportation, and overall quality of life.

The introduction opens with the wisdom of Mahatma Gandhi that poverty is the worst form of violence. Naming poverty as a form of violence is necessary for any honest look at its impact; without placing the violence of living through poverty at the very heart of the report, it would fall short of what is needed.

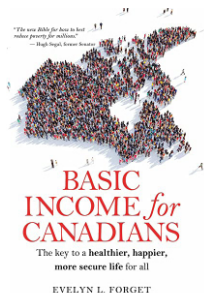
Importantly, the end of the report acknowledges that centering the voices of people with lived experience of poverty is not in itself a solution to the problem. It offers multi-prong solutions, which include specific increases to social assistance rates and minimum wage, concrete numbers of affordable or supportive housing units that must be built, support for anti-poverty organizations, and the necessity of a Guaranteed Basic Income.

As with any report, there are weaknesses. The report would have been stronger had it included questions to reflect the reality of systemic racism and social ills such as homophobia and transphobia. More meetings, across a wider spread of communities and regions, also would have improved the report’s quality, however, the pandemic made that impossible.

*Overcoming Ontario’s Poverty Pandemic* is a good starting point for readers to understand the violence of poverty in its complexity, and to engage in education and advocacy.

Dr. Allyson Carr has been interested in the intersections of justice and faith since she was a child. She enjoys gardening in her free time.

# Book Reviews



**Basic Income for Canadians: From the COVID-19 Emergency to Financial Security for All**  
By Evelyn L. Forget  
Lorimer, 2020

Reviewed by Mitchell Beer

One of the surest paths to success on a complex issue is to find common ground with allies in adjacent areas. That makes Evelyn Forget's *Basic Income for Canadians* a fantastic reference for anyone concerned with the economic shifts resulting from an effective response to the climate emergency.

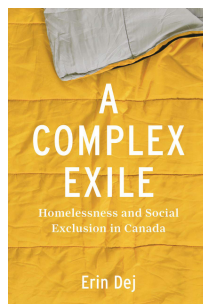
Rapid decarbonization done right is about opportunity and gain, not loss and pain—an all-in response to the climate crisis would create tens of millions of jobs and trillions in economic activity this decade.

But the shift away from carbon means change and disruption for workers and communities whose livelihoods depend on fossil fuels. That reality has prompted much of the climate community and the trade union movement to focus on a just transition to steady, well-paid jobs as the fossil era winds down. Too often, though, the idea of a transition produces deep anxiety for people who quite reasonably wonder whether they'll make as good a living in their next job, and what safety net they'll be able to count on in the meantime.

A basic income helps answer those questions, and Forget's guidebook helps connect the dots. She presents a lucid explanation of the concept, filled with practical, real-life examples of how a basic income delivers the autonomy, respect, and dignity that must be a bottom-line entitlement for everyone.

For decades, climate advocates have been fighting for a transition that is just and equitable for all. *Basic Income for Canadians* is an essential tool in the toolbox to make it happen.

Mitchell Beer is publisher of *The Energy Mix*, a thrice-weekly e-digest on climate change, energy, and the transition off carbon.



**A Complex Exile: Homelessness and Social Exclusion in Canada**  
By Erin Dej  
UBC Press, 2020

Reviewed by Natalie Appleyard

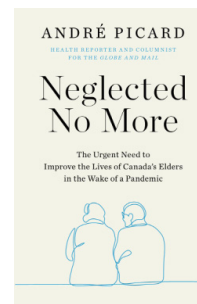
This book provokes questions about how (and why) we settle for failure: the failure of our society to ensure people's rights and dignity are honoured, the failure of our current "solutions" to homelessness to bring about real social inclusion, and even the presumed "failure" of people who are marginalized by our social structures and systems. Thankfully, it is also a book that offers an alternative way forward.

Dej combines hours of observations, interviews, and focus groups with an extensive review of related studies and philosophical theories to develop and defend her thesis (and it does read like a PhD thesis) that current approaches to homelessness actually entrench individuals' social exclusion, rather than bring about social inclusion, even if they acquire housing.

Dej uses the concept of "redeemable but never redeemed" to illustrate how people who are homeless act as consumers of programs, services, and largely, psychotropic medication, that provide them with a sense of empowerment and hope that if they work hard enough and follow the rules, they can "fix" themselves and achieve social inclusion. Participating in these programs also gives them access to certain privileges. The *Catch-22*, Dej contends, is that these very programs actually cement social exclusion by placing the blame and responsibility on the individual while simultaneously undermining their autonomy. In doing so, there is no recognition or dismantling of the external structures that cause and perpetuate homelessness and social exclusion in the first place.

Dej recommends rights-based approaches to programs and legislation paired with peer-led and peer-run services to both prevent and end homelessness and social exclusion in Canada.

Natalie Appleyard is CPJ's socio-economic policy analyst.



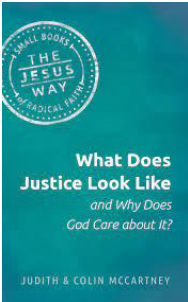
**Neglected No More**  
By André Picard  
Random House, 2021

Reviewed by Tiffany Talen

The pandemic has revealed significant issues related to the ways that many seniors are cared for in our society. Much has been exposed regarding overworked and underpaid staff and the undignified conditions that are experienced in many institutionalized care settings across our country. André Picard in his book *Neglected No More* provides in-depth research on these longstanding yet urgent issues and explores how the intersections of ageism, sexism and racism leave many at an increased risk of being unable to access quality, dignified care that they need. Picard not only lays out the problem, but he also points us toward many possible solutions for improving access to quality care options that are required to meet the diverse needs of our current and future elders.

As a community social worker, I have seen many struggles that older adults face in their day-to-day lives as they strive to 'age in place' within their communities for as long as they're able. What I appreciated most about this book are the many examples of policies around the world that encourage elder-friendly communities and promote quality, dignified care for seniors regardless of their socio-economic status. From increasing the time given for cross-walk signals, to increasing support for caregivers, Picard highlights many structural level changes that can help people live in their communities longer and reduce dependency on and time spent in institutionalized care. Included among these examples is the need for strengthening home care coordination, improving access to community supports, and increasing affordable, supportive housing options. I recommend this book to everyone as it highlights how we all have a role to play in improving the lives of Canada's elders.

Tiffany Talen is a registered social worker and member of CPJ's Board of Directors.



## What Does Justice Look Like and Why Does God Care about It?

By Judith and Colin McCartney  
Herald Press, 2020

Reviewed by Willard Metzger

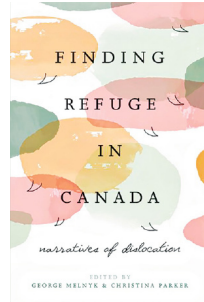
*What Does Justice Look Like and Why Does God Care about It?* is part of the *Small Books of Radical Faith* series published by Herald Press. Judith McCartney is pastor at Soul House, a congregation in Toronto focusing on those disenfranchised from the church. Judith and Colin are also co-founders of Connect City, an inner-city community outreach ministry.

Their rich experience provides the backdrop for this persuasive and passionate read, compelling people to live out the call of Jesus for seeking justice. Using examples from both the Old and New Testaments, the McCartney's help readers to develop a biblical understanding of justice and explain why seeking justice is so important to God.

The book does a good job of revealing how our culture encourages individuals to focus on themselves and disregard others and the environment in which we all share. They suggest that the church has been influenced by Greek Gnosticism resulting in a view of God that is primarily concerned about matters of spiritual health while largely disinterested in physical well-being. McCartney's offer a description of God's shalom that includes a vision for spiritual, physical, intellectual, and mental health. This vision of God's shalom is the driver for followers of Jesus to engage fully in seeking justice.

The book is written in a way that is easy to understand and intended for small group processing and discussions. For those interested in clearly intersecting their faith with social justice, this is a very encouraging read.

Willard Metzger is CPJ's executive director.



## Finding Refuge in Canada: Narratives of Dislocation

Edited by George Melnyk and Christina Parker  
UBC Press, 2021

Reviewed by Jacqueline Romero

*Finding Refuge in Canada: Narratives of Dislocation* is a collection of stories that provide insightful perspectives from refugees, settlement workers, and refugee advocates. This book provides technical language and historical and political underpinnings that contextualize Canada's evolving immigration policies. In so doing, these narratives emphasize the human toll that refugees endure, covering topics about arriving in Canada, how Canada responds to refugees, and the struggle for inclusion. The balance of information and narratives makes this book both informative and compelling.

Through each narrative, it becomes evident that Canada's current refugee system is flawed, fragmented, and unable to manage the current backlog and continued influx of refugees. This collection dispels myths about refugees and invites readers to question and challenge Canada's policy responses toward refugees. This collection is a call to action for those in positions of privilege and power to learn and understand the nuances and complexities involved in a process that has life and death consequences.

I would recommend this book to settlement workers, private sponsors, advocacy groups, students, and those interested in learning more about Canada's refugee determination system and Canada's varied responses to refugees throughout recent history. While this book makes a strong case for refugees and policy reform, it did not include the voices of those who could not communicate in English, and so misses out on their contributions.

Jacqueline Romero is a latinx woman who has worked with refugees in a resettlement context and focuses on women's empowerment.



## Border and Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism

By Harsha Walia  
Fernwood Publishing, 2021

Reviewed by Jenn Jeffreys

Harsha Walia's *Border & Rule: Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism*, offers a timely categorical takedown of the artificial and increasingly indefensible notion of the settler nation-state. Contemporary forces like the climate crisis and the coronavirus pandemic have irreversibly disrupted the free-market economy and socio-political status quo. Walia speaks to these phenomena and provides alternative ways to imagine our lives beyond the existing state of affairs.

Every reader will have their assumptions questioned and perspectives stretched upon engaging with this book. This book will infuriate liberal centrists. It will be discarded and laughed at by conservatives, the alt-right, and libertarians. The argument Walia delivers will be dismissed as socialist fantasy, and as overly utopian in practice.

Yet, these are the dismissals that have upheld generations of nationalist protectionism and stifled structural change—the same dismissals that have aggressively reduced global migration and ensured the suffering and deaths of countless racialized bodies fleeing undemocratic regimes, settler occupied regions, and unlivable environments facing ecological collapse. Appropriately, Walia asks us to consider a more harmonious way to live.

Walia reimagines a new global community, free from the suffocating clutches of capitalism and imperialism, and far beyond the violent anti-migrant protectionism forced upon past generations. Simply put, this deeply researched book offers us a blueprint for a better world.

Jenn Jeffreys is a Canadian freelance journalist. Her work has appeared in Maclean's, VICE, The Hill Times, iPolitics, Broadview and more.





# Lessons from First Nations Communities in Seeking Justice

By Melina Laboucan-Massimo and Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm

*The following is an excerpt from a keynote conversation at CPJ's Seeking Justice Together Conference in May 2021.*

**Melina Laboucan-Massimo:** Our Indigenous worldviews are holistic, circular, and reciprocal. We don't see a pyramid where man sits on top with dominion over the world.

One of the most beautiful stories I remember learning from my aunts, uncles and dad was about my mosôm (grandfather). If they were walking through the trees and kids were pulling at branches, my mosôm would say: "Kaya - stop. What did that relative ever do to you to pull and to damage something else?"

This is a foundational teaching taught to young children. I think it still resonates for the ways humanity needs to see our relationship with Mother Earth and one another. When we are in relationship, we have responsibility. That's reciprocity. When people protect their homelands, they're protecting their sacred relationship and relations with the forests, and all beings in those forests. When we're in ceremony, we say "All my relations" to honour those relations. That gives us the responsibility to protect our relations who don't have a voice to speak, but still stand and give us breath every day.

**Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm:** I live in a remote village, Old Crow, 80 miles north of the Arctic Circle in the Yukon Territory, 60 miles east of the Alaska border. It's the most north-west community in Canada.

I took my four-year-old niece outside and brought her to the tree-line, and said, "Okay baby, show uncle where to go." I want to raise her as a leader, not just to follow me. She brought me through meandering willows, and came to a break in the canopy where the sun shone onto a thorn bush. She stopped and said, "Wow Uncle, look at that flower." As I got to my feet, I

saw a thorn bush with one pink flower soaking in the sunlight.

I looked at her and she was taking in the moment. I picked her up, and brought her to that flower: "Look baby, I want to introduce you to your grandmother."

"No, Uncle, it's not."

I brought her very close to this flower: "can you see the veins in the petal?" You could see darker pink veins across the leaves like a road map.

"Yeah, I can see them."

"Now look at your hand, can you see the veins?"

"Yeah, I can see them."

"Baby, your grandmother has been working a very long time and very hard to meet you. Look around. All this forest are your grandfathers and your grandmothers."

A big gust of wind came, and all the trees started dancing in a symphony of rustling leaves. You could see the moment of reverence on her face.

I think this is one of the greatest teachings we can take from Indigenous ways of knowing and being. All things are understood to be interconnected.

**Melina:** When settlers came to Turtle Island, it was no coincidence that it was in a pristine condition. A balanced ecological system was intact because we had a reciprocal relationship with Mother Earth.

Another vital part of our teachings is that you don't take more than you need. This is a very important teaching lacking in the economic system. Indigenous peoples have 25,000+ years of deep scientific knowledge on living intimately and intricately with this land. We belong to the Earth, the Earth doesn't belong to us.

There's a huge discrepancy in Turtle Island. In the community I come from, at least 14 billion dollars have been taken from our traditional territory in oil, gas, fracking and logging since I was born.

When I came to the city for the first time, it was very politicizing: I remember thinking, "We're a 5 hour drive away, and yet my community still has no running water." These startling inequalities have no justification. This is a part of why many Indigenous peoples continue to advocate for Indigenous rights and the responsibilities of all people to our natural environment.

The way you see your church is the way that we see the land and our ceremony and being in communion with all our generations. When they stole children out of our communities and took them to residential schools it was a knife in the heart. There's a lot of grieving happening from the toxic legacy of residential schools. And there's also immense grieving that's happening when Indigenous peoples can no longer access their homelands to reconnect and be in communion and ceremony with the Creator, with God.

**Chief Dana:** When we talk about climate change it actually has nothing to do with the climate. It has everything to do with our unbalanced worldview. If we don't connect our minds with our hearts, we will always have intellectual excuses to continue to debase ourselves or each other for temporary gains. That elicits the need for faith. Right now, more than ever, the world needs what's in our hearts more than it does what's in our minds.

Melina Laboucan-Massimo is Lubicon Cree from Northern Alberta. She 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.



Chief Dana Tizya-Tramm was elected Chief of Vuntut Gwitchin First Nation in Old Crow, Yukon in 2018.



Photo credit (Melina Laboucan-Massimo): Black Rhino Collective.



# A Canada-wide system of Early Learning and Child Care

By Laurel Rothman and Sophia Mohamed

The Federal government's 2021 \$30 billion budgetary commitment to build a Canada-wide system of early learning and child care services begins a hopeful chapter in the decades-long struggle for high-quality child care.

The COVID-19 pandemic has called attention to the child care crisis that families across the country have faced for years. In short, there is not enough high quality, reliable, regulated child care for families, with spaces for less than three out of 10 children under six (26.9 per cent). The lack of services most impacts the 78 per cent of mothers with children aged three to five who are in the labour force, as the Child-care Resource and Research Unit's ECEC in Canada 2019 reports. For the one in five children under the age of six living in poverty, the lack of access to child care is a major barrier to parents' economic independence, according to Campaign 2000's 2020 Report Card on Child Poverty in Canada. Most child care is not affordable, with fees in excess of more than a year of university tuition, as the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives demonstrates. Moreover, the child care workforce, the heart of the caring, learning environment who support parents and ensure quality, is under-valued and under-paid.

## What is the federal plan for early learning and child care?

The 2021 federal budget addresses the dual crisis of affordability and availability/accessibility in the short and long term. By 2022, the commitment is to reduce average fees for all regulated child care services by 50 per cent (outside of Quebec) and by 2025-26 to provide an average parent fee of \$10 per day. In addition, expansion of high quality services—in centres and in home-based care—will be predominantly in the non-profit sector. A key component is working with Indigenous communities and partners, using the Indigenous Early

Learning and Child Care Framework as a foundation. The federal allocation proposes an additional \$2.5 billion over the next five years with increased annual program funding beginning in 2027-28.

Unlike previous child care initiatives, the government will table legislation in Fall 2021 to secure its on-going ELCC commitment as the budget outlines. By embedding the principles of a Canada-wide system of child care into law, the government will formalize this “transformative project on a scale with the work of previous generation of Canadians who built a public school system and public health care.”

## Building a Canada-wide system of ELCC services makes more sense than tax measures

Public responses to the federal government's plan for early learning and child care showcased widespread support from families, academics, economists, researchers, business leaders, editorial writers and early years educators. Advocates, parents groups and women's groups viewed the sizeable financial commitment as a game-changer that will produce a system of affordable services while supporting women's equality and labour force participation. In contrast, Conservative Opposition Leader Erin O'Toole favours “putting parents in the driver's seat” and giving options to parents, Premier Jason Kenney dismissed the plan as “one-size-fits-all” and Cardus, a faith-based research organization, repeated its preference for individual payments to parents.

It's important to remember that Canada has robust mechanisms to transfer money to parents. Since its first iteration in 1998, the Canada Child Benefit has been a non-taxable, geared-to-income monthly payment (maximum of \$563 for children under six) that assists about 90 per cent of families with the cost of raising children. Since 1972 the Child Care Expense Deduc-

tion (CCED) has been available to eligible parents who take on child care expenses (up to \$8,000 per year for children under seven) in order to work or study. Neither of these policies has led to an adequate level of child care services.

## What does building a system of ELCC services mean?

Building a system is no easy task, but one that is essential to meet the needs of families and the economy. Currently, child care in Canada is market-driven, characterized by low levels of demand-side public funding (ie. vouchers, tax measures, individual parent fee subsidies), heavy reliance on parent fees, and limited public management and planning. Child care is treated as a commodity not an entitlement for children, is not systematically planned or treated as a public good, nor is it part of the social infrastructure, as schools and libraries are.

Building a system requires direct funding to defined child care services. Planners and decision-makers, in concert with parents and local communities in small and large urban and rural areas, will now have the resources to create and sustain reliable, high-quality child care options for parents to choose from—in centres, homes and workplaces—at an affordable rate. This emerging system will also support the economy whose workers need child care from coast to coast to coast.

Sophia Mohamed, a Registered Early Childhood Educator (RECE) is a researcher at the Childcare Resource and Research Unit and faculty member at George Brown College.



Laurel Rothman, MSW, recently retired as National Coordinator of Campaign 2000: End Child Poverty in Canada.



Photo credit: Aaron Burden



# The True Cost of Wool

By Anna Hunter

Photo credit: Anastasia Zhenina

*“Your clothes are an agricultural act—by purchasing and wearing you are voting for the agriculture you do or don’t want to see in the world, and depending on how your clothes break down, you’re either feeding microbes, or you’re leaving a world of plastic pollution.” – Rebecca Burgess (Founder of Fi-bershed)*

We have become so disconnected from the source of our textiles and the steps in their processing that we seldom consider the true cost of these items. The last 15 months in Canada has exposed the fragility of many of our supply chains, including that of our clothes and textiles. By moving textile manufacturing offshore we have become dependent on wasteful, destructive practices over which we have little control. The global textile industry is responsible for significant greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, water pollution and thousands of tonnes of textiles in landfills every year. We have become so disconnected from the source of our textiles that we seldom consider the true cost of these items.

Canada does not grow cotton, but we have a strong sheep industry and historically have grown and manufactured wool for clothing and other textiles. Wool is an incredible resource that is both renewable and biodegradable. Wool is hygroscopic (temperature regulating), fire retardant and odour resistant. Wool can help fight against climate change and be a temporary carbon sink. Pasture grasses take CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and sequester it in the soil, roots and grass. Sheep that are fed on pasture utilize that carbon to grow wool. Organic carbon makes up 50 per cent of the weight of wool—and when that wool is returned to the soil it returns those nutrients back to the soil.

While we raise just over 3 million sheep, and they produce 1 million pounds of wool annually, only 10 per cent of this

wool is processed domestically with small mills and farmers. The remaining 90 per cent is sold on the international wool market and shipped to China, India, and the Czech Republic—countries with less stringent environmental and labour policies—for processing. However, it hasn’t always been this way. In the first two decades of the 20th century, we imported about 9 per cent of our textiles, meaning we had the capacity to produce most of what we consumed. 100 years later we now produce less than 2 per cent of our textiles. Canada has lost most of our infrastructure to manufacture wool into textiles.

In fact, most of our clothing and wool is produced in China, Bangladesh, Taiwan, Mexico, and other countries that do not have rigorous environment and labour laws. This means our textiles are manufactured at a much lower cost to us as consumers but does not account for the true environmental and social costs of producing those items.

Would we think differently about purchasing clothing if labels listed some of the true costs? For example:

- The wool for this sweater travelled over 13,000 miles from a Canadian sheep farm to China and then back again. (We know that the transport of goods globally accounts for about 14 per cent of GHG emissions).
- The dye run-off from these jeans was dumped into the Chilai River in Bangladesh.
- The factory worker who made this sweater was paid \$4 per hour.

We as consumers of commercial wool and textiles do not pay the true cost of manufacturing. What is the cost of biologically dead rivers and waterways from the waste effluent of the process of super-washing

our wools? What is the cost for poor communities (most often racialized communities) working under intolerable labour conditions for the newest fashions?

Would we think twice about our choices if our textiles had a more transparent and traceable label that informed us of what the true costs of production were?

It is possible to abandon the exploitative models of production of the past 50 years and look to build regenerative systems of wool and textile production that include a commitment to racial and environmental justice. We can prioritize the needs of communities at every level rather than the dividends of shareholders.

Building resilient regional models of textile production is one solution. If we view our textiles through a soil-to-soil lens we can become connected to the source of our clothing. We can then learn about who is growing our fibre and how they steward land. We can explore the small and medium sized manufacturers in our communities and purchase products from them. We can begin to make, mend or recycle our clothes to extend their life and connect us to the labour involved. Finally, we can ask the question of whether our textiles can be composted and returned to the soil to break down and deliver nutrients back to the biosphere, or if they will simply stay in landfills.

*To support your own local textile system or learn more check out the fibreshed movement: [www.fibershed.com](http://www.fibershed.com)*

Anna Hunter is a shepherdess and wool mill owner, stewarding land and animals on Treaty One Territory in Manitoba.



## Finding Belonging in the Margins

By Jasmine Duckworth

As a small child, I attended a church where members greeted each other as family. I had many “aunts” and “uncles” who I sat with during services while my mom would provide ASL interpretation. One perspective would be that this group of Deaf members, sitting at the front right edge of the church, was on the margins of the congregation, but from my perspective, I was surrounded by community. I was both on the margins and in the centre.

As an adult I worked for Christian Horizons, serving people with developmental disabilities, for about a decade before becoming disabled myself. After my initial diagnosis, I felt pushed to the margins of my life. I couldn't work, I couldn't volunteer at church, and my social life evaporated. In this time of crisis and solitude, I turned to spaces where disabled people congregated. I found a vast and vibrant community. As I moved to the margins, I realized that the margins had shifted. Once again, I was in the centre surrounded by community.

This shifting of the margins isn't unique to disability, and it isn't unique to humans.

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**"As I moved to the margins, I realized that the margins had shifted."**

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John Swinton states that the Church often looks at the example of Jesus and mistakenly believes that “the task of the church is to reach out to those on the margins and bring them into its loving heart.” Swinton points out that while “It is certainly the case that Jesus sat with the marginalized and [...] in sitting with such people, Jesus, who was and is God, actually shifted the margins.”

There are three principles we can learn from Jesus' example if we want to participate in shifting the margins around

us, to surround those struggling to belong.

First, Jesus sat with people exactly as they were. He did not require people to change themselves. Swinton writes that “Jesus offered no ‘technique’ or ‘expertise.’ He simply gifted time, presence, space, patience and friendship.” He simply sits with people where they are and how they are. He brings the centre to them.

Second, Jesus sees all as gift. Swinton summarizes what he has learned from theologian Stanley Hauerwas: “We are all creatures wholly dependent on God and on one another; all that we have is gift.” All we have is gifted to us from God, and all we are is offered as gift to one another. Judith Snow states that “all gifts add to the mosaic of the potential available community.” She says that all people have at least two gifts that they bring to any situation; presence and difference. Each person enters a context as their own unique self, offering one half of a meaningful interaction. Throughout scripture, we see Jesus recognize a person's unique presence and then partner with them to be the other half of a meaningful interaction.

Third, “sometimes Jesus was a guest in people's houses; sometimes he was a host. The constant movement from guesting to hosting is a primary mark of the hospitable work of the Incarnation.” If we position ourselves to always be in the role of host, what does that say about our opinion of those we are sitting with? Swinton says “when we take time and allow ourselves to move from host to guest, we gain the opportunity to learn some beautiful and important things.”

As a child, it was easy to live out these principles Jesus embodied. I was fully aware of my dependence and was grateful for the gifts of presence and difference in the adults around me. “Guest” was a familiar and comfortable role for me as a four-year-old child.

Life has a way of tarnishing that child-like vulnerability and openness. We forget the lessons that Jesus taught. Thankfully, entering into disability spaces has reilluminated the importance of shifting the margins of community to nurture spaces of belonging with all people.

When the province closed down due to COVID-19, part of my role at work was to connect with the people who use Christian Horizons services through Zoom as part of fulfilling our vision to nurture communities of belonging. As the months progressed, these video calls have become a lifeline for many, including myself. Although I started out in the role of host, more and more I am finding myself in the role of guest. What a sacred position it is to be blessed by the deep welcome extended to me.

During this pandemic, my health vulnerabilities again place me on the margins of society. As I step away from the spaces I normally inhabit, I find myself in the centre of a thriving community of people who welcome me as I am, recognize and value the gifts each of us brings to the group, and shift seamlessly from acting as both guest and host. May I remember to do the same.

*\*A longer version of this piece originally appeared in the Canadian Journal of Theology, Mental Health, and Disability Spring 2021 issue.*

Jasmine Duckworth integrates her personal perspective as a disabled person with her professional experience serving at Christian Horizons where she works to nurture communities of belonging for people with disabilities. She writes at [disabilityandfaith.org](http://disabilityandfaith.org). You can reach her at [jduckworth@christianhorizons.org](mailto:jduckworth@christianhorizons.org).

