

Indigenous Life – January 2024

Recent additions to the collection are marked with an asterisk.

*Alook, Angie et alia – The End of the World: Climate Justice in So-called Canada

Six writers with a vision of a future based on dismantling of settler capitalism, the development of a more caring economy, and recognition of Indigenous sovereignty, in the face of climate change.

Augustine, Sarah – The Land is Not Empty: Following Jesus in Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery

Augustine traces the bad effects of the Renaissance Doctrine of Discovery through to the present global situation in which Indigenous people find themselves - a situation of cultural genocide, environmental destruction, and legal inequalities, all characteristics of the Indigenous experience in Canada. She presses the need for Christian churches to act in accordance with the teaching of Christ in working for justice and the righting of wrongs.

*Carlson- Manathara, Elizabeth and Gladys Rowe – Living in Indigenous Sovereignty

Presented are the needs and desires of Indigenous speakers as to what they are asking of non-Indigenous Canadians. These are contrasted to the experience and intentions of thirteen white settler Canadians who are attempting to live in solidarity with Indigenous peoples. This experience highlights how difficult it is to get beyond one's cultural colonial upbringing and to address land/treaty concerns in an acceptable non-colonial way.

Croteau, Denis – Saga of a Missionary Bishop

The story of a man dedicated to a lifelong service of the peoples of the North intertwined with the story of the indigenous people of the North. A detailed positive flavour of life in remote settlements from the 1960s on.

Heinrichs, Steve – Paths for Peacemaking with Host People

Practical tips for Settler Canadians to increase their understanding of Indigenous issues and their positive contacts with Indigenous people as steps towards changing the present tensions and animosities.

Johnson, Harold – Peace and Good Order: The Case for Indigenous Justice in Canada

Johnson explores the failure of the white justice system in Canada which, in violation of treaty guarantees that Indigenous people would control their own justice, fails either to reduce crime in Indigenous communities or reduce recidivism rates, but simply increases incarceration of Indigenous people.

Johnson, Harold – Two Families: Treaties and Government

In creation of the treaties between the Indigenous peoples and the White government of Canada, Johnson suggests two differing world views of the parties, that of the Indigenous being based on human equality in which the people choose to have a kin relationship of adoption and sharing, while maintaining separate ways of life, and that of the White government being based on an assumption of racial and cultural superiority and capitalist exploitation of both nature and humanity. Coming from such different bases, there is no surprise that the subsequent history of the parties has been characterized by violation of the treaties, of the rights of the Indigenous, degradation of the physical environment, and of the Indigenous parties to the treaties. Johnson urges Whites to have a revised respect for ways of life not their own and for the people having those ways.

Joseph, Bob (Robert) – 21 Things You May Not Know about the Indian Act: Helping Canadians Make Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples a Reality

Part One of the book looks at various clauses of The Indian Act, their openly avowed purpose being the disappearance of the Indigenous peoples through forced assimilation and deprivation of human rights. Part Two deals with the necessary steps to abolish completely any present traces of the Act and to create a new relationship between Canadians (particularly the federal government) and the self-governing, self-determining Indigenous peoples.

*Joseph, Robert – Namwayut: A Pathway to Reconciliation

A very hopeful book from a residential school survivor and leader in the work of reconciliation in Canada which calls us to listen to each other, to be reconciled

from the most personal level of family to the wider level of country, in listening, accepting responsibility, valuing each other and changing life for each other.

Joseph, Robert and Cynthia Joseph – Working Effectively with Aboriginal Peoples, 2nd edition

A very useful book for individuals or organizations wishing to enter into a relationship with specific First Nation peoples. It gives a clear historical background including discussion of the various pieces of legislation under which First Nations operate, possible problem areas relating to sovereignty and governance structures, and cultural factors governing negotiation. Business risks and advantages are assessed, and tips given on cultural sensitivity.

Kimmerer, Robin – Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants

A beautiful blending of the botanist's scientific knowledge and the Indigenous traditional teachings on the nature of the living world as teacher and on the interrelatedness of all being, to produce a rich ecological vision, a "moral current of reciprocity" with the earth and other beings.

Kinew, Wab – Go Show the World: A Celebration of Indigenous Heroes

A finalist for the Governor General's Literary Awards, this is a book for elementary school-aged children on various male and female Indigenous figures in North America who illustrate positive virtues and strengths to inspire children.

King, Thomas – The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America

A bitingly humorous but trenchant account of the history of Native-White relations in both the United States and Canada – all the broken treaties, the land-grabbing, the failure of the legal systems to right private or public wrongs against aboriginal groups, the attacks by central governments on sovereignty and self-determination, destruction of the natural environment – all the sad story of four hundred years of activities directed toward the elimination of the indigenous population of North America.

A Knock on the Door: The Essential History of Residential Schools from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, edited and abridged

Gives the history and nature of the residential schools in Canada, their purpose in the assimilation process and multigenerational effects, the possibility of reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in Canada, and the various actions called for by the Commission.

*Krasowski, Sheldon – No Surrender: The Land Remains Indigenous

Looking at Treaties 1-7, along with federal government memos, oral Indigenous history, witness statements and newspaper accounts, Krasowski states that there was no discussion on the matter of land holding in negotiations, that the government deliberately did not mention the cession clause, and that it was not the intent of the First Nations signers to cede their territory to the government.

*Lavoie, Sylvain – Drumming from Within: Tales of Hope and Faith from Canada's North

A positive view of the contributions of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate to Northern spiritual life, based on the experiences of Archbishop Lavoie.

*Local Resources to further Reconciliation between Indigenous and other Canadians

Contains a locally produced, selective bibliography of resources, both print and digital, created 2022 and a novena for non-Indigenous Canadians, focused on nine contemporary Indigenous issues, created for parish or individual use in 2023.

*Lowman, Emma and Adam Barker – Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada

A difficult book both in content and style looking at the identity of the Settler in Canada, the continued expression of racism and privilege involved in Settler identity. Unfortunately very vague in the short final section on how to decolonize.

*Linklater, Renee – Decolonizing Trauma Work: Indigenous Stories and Strategies

Through interviews with some Indigenous healing practitioners, some of whom are also trained in Western medical practices, Linklater suggests that practices based on traditional culture are more effective in treating Indigenous trauma resulting

from the effects of colonization. They include emphasis on achieving balance in the individual between body, mind, emotions and spirit, and balance between the individual and the community and the exterior world.

Listening to Indigenous Voices

Illustrated with Indigenous art, this is a dialogue guide on justice and right relationships for parishes and high schools to further the progress of Truth and Reconciliation in Canada.

*Lowman, Emma and Adam Barker – Settler: Identity and Colonialism in 21st Century Canada

A difficult book both in content and expression. It looks closely at the history of colonialism in Canada, how it is endemic in much that, as white Canadians, we accept as normal and desirable in what the authors define as unconscious racism and privilege. Regretably, the authors give only rather vague suggestions on how to decolonize.

*Manuel, Arthur – The Reconciliation Manifesto: Recovering the Land, Rebuilding the Economy

After an analysis of the historic and current situation of Canada's Indigenous people, noting the still current position of Canada in default of international agreement on the rights of indigenous peoples, Manuel offers a six-step programme for decolonization, which would allow for meaningful dialogue and forward movement on reconciliation. It is a programme that would make fundamental changes in Canadian society to the benefit of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians.

McDiarmid, Jessica – Highway of Tears

A moving account of women and girls who disappeared in Northern B.C., who were important to their families and communities, but whose disappearance and possible murder was treated with indifference and racist contempt by local authorities such as the RCMP.

*McMillan, Alan and Eldon Yellowhorn – First Peoples in Canada

A comprehensive catalogue of the Indigenous nations in Canada, their history, location, characteristics of their culture, and present status.

*Me Tomorrow: Indigenous Views on the Future

A series of essays from various Indigenous writers on what they expect to be The Indigenous situation in the next twenty to fifty years, informed by hope and present trends in activism, the reclamation of traditional values and knowledge, and on a growing awareness in the majority culture of past wrongs and possible redress of these.

*Milward, David – Reconciliation & Indigenous Justice: A Search for Ways Forward

Milward emphasizes the role of intergenerational trauma from the residential school system in the present situation of over-incarceration of Indigenous people, both male and female. He looks at alternatives to imprisonment, such as Indigenous justice and restorative justice.

Mixed Blessings: Indigenous Encounters with Christianity in Canada

A series of interdisciplinary essays on how and why some Indigenous peoples adopted Christianity and others did not. Also examined are cases in which a melding of Christian and native spirituality has occurred. This is an academic book which is included because it gives perhaps a more balanced view of the role of Christianity in relationship to Indigenous groups than has been prevalent in the past.

*Moore, Elder Sister Dorothy – A Journey of Love and Hope: The Inspirational Words of a Mi'kmaw Elder

Selections from speeches made by a Nova Scotia activist and Member of the Order of Canada on such topics as the connection between culture and language, racism, spirituality, and education, along with commentary from a number of Mi'kmaw writers and educators on Sister Dorothy and her work to integrate the Mi'kmaw experience into the official curriculum of Nova Scotia schools to achieve both settler respect and Indigenous self-respect.

Oster, Bailey & Marilyn Lizee – Stories of Métis Women: Tales My Kookum Told Me

Personal stories of Metis women, particularly from Alberta, told in both English and Northern Michif, on themes including history, Métis culture and identity, and present resiliency.

*Our Story: Aboriginal Voices on Canada's Past

Events from Canada's past, such as an encounter between the Dorset, Inuit and Norse peoples, fictionalized by Indigenous writers to reflect Indigenous perspectives on the events.

Raygorodetsky, Gleb – The Archipelago of Hope: Wisdom and Resilience from the Edge of Climate Change

The author looks at a variety of Indigenous groups whose engagement with their environment models various approaches of cultural and biological diversity in dealing with the growing effects of climate change. Based on the principle "Land is Life," these are possible models of resilience and creativity also for non-Indigenous society if we can develop a renewed understanding of our place in Nature, the web of relatedness that connects all Creation.

Royal Canadian Geographical Society – Canadian Geographical Indigenous Peoples Atlas of Canada. Four Volumes: Volume 1 – General, First Nations, Inuit, Métis.

Created in conjunction with a number of groups representing First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples, this is an introduction to the history and life of these people in Canada. As the preface to the volumes says, the set gives "Indigenous perspectives, much older than the nation itself, shared through maps, artwork, history and culture."

*Sacco, Joe – Paying the Land

A comic book format dealing with the effects on Northern communities and the Dene culture of the exploitation of natural resources and accompanying destruction of the land.

Sawatsky, Jarem – Healing Justice: Stories of Wisdom and Love

Believing that local community action to resolve community problems of health, justice and reconciliation is needed beyond any efforts of governmental action, Sawatsky looks at three examples of community actions to effect positive change: Thich Nhat Hanh's Plum Village, the Anishinabe community of Hollow Water, Manitoba, and the Iona Community, Scotland. In these communities, health and justice are tightly interconnected in the creation of more wholesome communities.

Simpson, Leanne – As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom Through Radical Resistance

The author believes that dialogue and reconciliation with the majority culture is not possible or desirable for Indigenous peoples as they are carried out on White terms to achieve White goals. The alternative she explores is self-definition and realization, based on a somewhat mystical interaction between the Indigenous person and the land, producing a deeper immersion in the traditional culture, and totally independent of White values or influence.

Smith, Monique – Speaking Our Truth: A Journey of Reconciliation

Written for an individual upper elementary/ middle school reader, this would be a useful tool in developing a parish programme for younger parishioners around the information and reflection questions given in the book.

*Solomon, Eva – Come Dance with Me: A Medicine Wheel Practice of Anishinaabe Catholic Interculturation of Faith

An exploration of Indigenous dance customs as parallel to the invitation of the Cosmic Christ to all creation to participate in an ongoing evolving dance of unity. The rhythms of the dance are a means of producing healing, integrity, transformation and reconciliation.

Stories of Repair: A Reparative Justice Resource toward Dismantling the Doctrine of Discovery

Produced by an American Mennonite group, this is in part a collection of stories of groups trying to address the injustices in land ownership consequent to the Renaissance Doctrine of Discovery. The second part of the book deals with the theoretical/theological side of the justice question. There are accompanying questions for reflection and discussion.

Found in a binder in the Indigenous collection.

*This Place: 150 Years Retold

A graphic novel anthology of Indigenous writers/illustrators on the last 150 years of Canadian history from an Indigenous perspective. For children.

White Benevolence: Racism and Colonial Violence in the Helping Professions

An academic read. Coming from the point of view that Canada is basically racist in its attitudes and actions, and often unconscious of this bias, this collection of essays by a number of authors looks at racism in education, the health professions, social work, and the justice system. This bias blames Indigenous people, making them unequal and prone to failure.

* Wilson- Raybould, Jody – True Reconciliation: How to be a Force for Change

Wilson-Raybould suggests three basic practices that must take place in order for reconciliation to happen between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Canadians: Learn, Understand and Act. What must happen is an understanding of our history together, and to achieve this she uses stories from both sides, past and present, to break down our silos of understanding and preconceptions.

Yunkaporta, Tyson – Sand Talk: How Indigenous Thinking Can Save the World

Based on his experience as an Australian aborigine, Yunkaporta offers a different paradigm of time and space than that generally held in the Western world. This different approach to reality offers, he believes, some antidote to the problems which develop from colonial, capitalist, individualistic activity.