

MATT BALCARRAS lives outside Vancouver in the traditional territory of the Tsawwassen and Musqueam. Along with his partner, Deanna, and their three children, Matt is part of the community at Cedar Park Church (Mennonite Brethren).

Winona LaDuke, *The Winona LaDuke Chronicles: Stories from the Front Lines in the Battle for Environmental Justice*, Fernwood, Winnipeg, MB, 2017. 310 pp. \$25.00. ISBN: 9781552669594.

Whenever I visit my Opa in Germany, I quickly find myself in the living room listening to him tell stories of his past. These include his experiences as a child, enlisting in the German army, fighting in the Second World War and being taken captive, and the long road of recovery after returning home. Although I have heard my Opa's stories many times, I am always amazed because I can never quite imagine what it must have been like to be him and to do what he did. I feel a similar sentiment after reading *The Winona LaDuke Chronicles*.

In this book of short vignettes, Winona LaDuke—prominent Indigenous land defender and two-time Green party vice presidential candidate—recounts many personal experiences, histories, traditions, and teachings of her Anishinaabe people as well as many other Indigenous nations around the world, weaving before us pictures of colonization, land loss, militarization, agricultural degradation, and most significantly, ecological crisis. Her stories span the United States—from North Dakota to Hawaii—to countries like Canada, South Africa, and New Zealand.

LaDuke has witnessed a lot of injustice in her time. She recounts lands being taken from Indigenous peoples by Settlers in the United States and Canada. She speaks of genocide and systematic racism that sees Indigenous communities underfunded and overrepresented in the justice system. She also writes about the many ways Indigenous communities have been coerced and forced to give up their rights and resources for government and private corporations.

But that's not the end of the story. At the core of LaDuke's chronicles is a fundamental disconnect in relationship that has boiled over into a war. There are lives at stake and sides to be taken. As we continue to strip the earth of its resources for our consumer lifestyles, we are seeing the devastating effects on our environment and the change in climate. We soon realize that all of humanity has a lot to lose in this battle.

For over forty years, LaDuke has been on the front lines of environmental justice education and advocacy. Her stories are not meant to be taken as allegory or myth. They are meant as a warning and a battle cry, rallying those who seek to protect creation and human rights from the powers of greed and oppression. And if we are to open our eyes to see, we need to change our paradigm. Through LaDuke's stories, we are invited to see the world and life in a new way. Yes, there are some

Indigenous communities who are benefiting from fossil fuel extraction, but a traditional view sees the invaluable interconnectedness between all life—human, plant, earth, water, and so on. It is our duty as humans to care for and protect the earth. And that is what LaDuke calls herself and all those on her side of the battlefield—protectors.

As with my Opa, when I listen to LaDuke’s voice, I feel an overwhelming appreciation and respect for what she has experienced. I also feel as though there’s no way for me to imagine what she has been through and the kinds of action she has taken. But the big difference between my Opa’s war and the battle for environmental justice we see today is that LaDuke’s stories are my own. They are happening right now in my backyard. The proposed Energy East pipeline carrying bitumen will run alongside Winnipeg’s aqueduct. Other major pipeline expansions run just south of me through Gretna, Manitoba. The lights in my sanctuary are powered by massive Manitoba hydro-dams that, unbeknownst to most, wreak tremendous damage on northern Indigenous communities and ecosystems.

LaDuke leaves little room for the imagination to try to visualize who the enemy might be. At the height of command are big oil companies who frack the earth, run the Alberta tar sands, and insist on building pipelines like Keystone XL without the “free, prior, and informed consent” of most on the ground communities. Their accomplices are Settler governments who seem to be more interested in accumulating wealth and power than preserving the basic human rights of Indigenous nations and Settler land owners. She does not hesitate to name names.

The difficulty with this book is that it forces you to take a side, to choose whether you are going to join in protecting the earth and human rights or sit back and do nothing, perhaps with immediate benefit but eventual long-lasting consequences.

I believe this is the point where many of my Christian sisters and brothers will decide whether to give this book to a thrift shop or keep it on their desk. A lot of questions are raised before a church that is confessionally committed to the well-being of creation: What are our missional commitments? Are we not, as prescribed for us in our creation stories, called to care for the earth? Are we not, as commanded by Jesus, called to care for the poor and disenfranchised? Are we not, as shown to us in the story of the church, called to stand up against evil even at great cost?

If we respond affirmatively to these questions, to what extent do we act? Should we rally and protest? Should we send postcards and letters to our elected officials, urging them to protect Indigenous rights? Are we supposed to divest from fossil fuels? And if that doesn’t work, are we supposed to stand in the way of trucks and pipelines? Are we to take up the tool of sabotage? Are we supposed to fight?

LaDuke provides the fan for the flame. What we do with that flame is up to us. The possibilities, as seen in her stories, are endless. But LaDuke doesn't provide us with specific guidance. Moreover, one stumbling block that readers may find is that while LaDuke uses many statistics and quotes and offers indictments over-against corporations and officials, she doesn't provide citations, leaving it to the reader to verify her claims. For those of us Settlers who are already unsure of which voices to believe, we need confidence that LaDuke's information is accurate.

Anabaptists have a lot of work to do to figure out exactly where we fit in this critical time of climate change and Indigenous human rights violations. LaDuke sets before us the depth of the problem and offers glimmers of hope. We are invited to partner and to give our voice. We are invited to stand up against an evil identified in our own society and culture. The *Winona LaDuke Chronicles* have the potential to stir a righteous anger that convicts us to act. So may we move forward in the love of Christ, trusting the Holy Spirit to show us the way.

MOSES FALCO is the pastor of Sterling Mennonite Fellowship in Winnipeg, Treaty 1 territory and the homeland of the Metis Nation.

Iain Maclean, ed., *Reconciliation, Nations and Churches in Latin America*, Routledge, NY, 2016. 296 pp. \$54.95. ISBN: 9781138264717.

Without justice there is no reconciliation. This refrain echoed a half dozen times throughout Indigenous activist Leah Gazan's keynote address on the final night of a conference titled "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls Churches to Action: Building Capacity for Restorative Solidarity." One hundred Indigenous and white Settler leaders listened in and nodded intently at this sacred Saskatoon gathering, convened in the aftermath of the bold Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), a seven-year process documenting the testimony of approximately one hundred fifty thousand Indigenous people who were taken away from their families and placed in residential schools as children.

The TRC, based on their findings and informed by the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (2007),² issued ninety-four calls to action, six of them specifically geared toward churches and faith communities. Gazan's plenary proclamation concisely summarized the questions, comments, and concerns stoked by Indigenous leaders on that pre-Indigenous Peoples Day weekend in 2016, particularly by the seven residential school survivors in attendance who served as elders, guiding participants with both historical memory and spiritual anticipation.

2 http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfi/documents/DRIPS_en.pdf.