

Suggested Books

Bazalgette, Peter, 2017 The Empathy Instinct: How to Create a More Civil Society

Empathy is the power of understanding others, imaginatively entering into their feelings. It is a fundamental human attribute, without which mutually co-operative *societies* cannot function. In a revolutionary development, we now know who has it, who lacks it and why.

Desmond, Matthew, 2018, Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City

Summary: "The author takes us into the poorest neighborhoods of Milwaukee to tell the story of eight families on the edge. Arleen is a single mother trying to raise her two sons on the 20 dollars a month she has left after paying for their **rundown** apartment.

Edelman, Peter, 2017, Not a Crime to be Poor: The Criminalization of Poverty in America,

In 43 states, people can be charged for exercising their constitutional right to a public defender. 44 states charge individuals for the costs of their own probation or parole, which can include fees for electronic bracelets, drug testing, alcohol monitoring, driving classes, home supervision, and more. Furthermore, due to the existence of Charles Dickens-era vagrancy laws in many cities, homeless people can be thrown in jail for merely sleeping on the sidewalk.

Ehrenreich, Barbara, 2001, Nickel and Dimed: On Not Getting by in America

Nickel and Dimed offers a first-hand account of low-income life in America. The author went underground to learn why a huge number of hard-working people must struggle to earn enough money to live a comfortable life, eat decent food and afford the most basic shelter. We may take them for granted, but the people earning the minimum wage are the nation's backbone, serving our food, cleaning up after us and stocking the supermarket shelves.

Greeves, Trish, Prophetic Faith, Exploring Social Justice Advocacy as a Congregation

This highly praised, seven-session study explores the relationship between Christian faith, social justice, and the public role of the church. It invites individuals and congregations to explore how and why to respond to the biblical call for social justice in ways that are faithful to our vocation as followers of Jesus Christ and yet respect the pluralistic democracy in which we live and the separation of church and state mandated by the U.S. Constitution. Topics addressed in this accessible Participant Book include the political implications of biblical faith; public and private arenas for expressing faith; individual and communal forms of religious practices; the difference between systemic change (justice) and social outreach (charity); the impact of social location and false certainties on our perspectives; resistance to addressing controversial issues in church; civil religion as the unexamined conflation of God and country; how social justice advocacy strengthens the roots and fruits of our faith; what the separation of church and state means and doesn't mean; and how to overcome paralysis when facing

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the complexity of social issues. Personal reflection questions throughout the book prepare the reader for group discussions. A leader's guide is also available.

Jacobsen, Dennis A., 2001, Doing Justice: Congregations and Community Organizing, Second Edition

Doing Justice introduces people of faith to congregation-based community organizing rooted in the day-to-day struggles and hopes of urban ministry. Drawing from the author's decades of experience in community organizing ministry and skillfully illustrated with examples, Dennis A. Jacobsen weaves theological and biblical warrants for community organizing into concrete strategies for achieving justice in the public arena and discusses fundamental organizing principles like power, self-interest, and agitation. The second, updated edition includes a new preface and forewords, new sidebars by Grant Stevensen that draw the reader into conversation, an expanded list for further reading, and updated contact information on organizing networks and relevant websites

Polakow, Valerie, 2007, Who Cares for our Children: The Child Care Crisis in the Other America

Lack of access to affordable high quality child care is frequently the tipping point that catapults a family into poverty, joblessness, and homelessness - a constant threat to the well-being of women and children. Polakow spent a year traveling around the country listening to low-income women from diverse backgrounds tell their stories of struggle, resilience, distress, and occasional success as they encountered ongoing child care crises. The resulting work is both a compelling account of the lived realities of the child care crisis, and an incisive critique of public policy that points to the United States as an outlier in the international community. Drawing on historical and international perspectives, Polakow creates a groundbreaking analysis of child care as a human right, persuasively arguing for a universal child care system.