



A Better Place on Earth: The Search for Fairness in Super Unequal British Columbia

Andrew MacLeod

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In British Columbia, like most of the world, the wealth of the richest one percent has grown exponentially in recent decades, while the majority have found their incomes stagnant or even declining. The top 10 percent in BC now hold 56.2 percent of the wealth, a greater share than anywhere else in Canada. Our richest have wealth counted in the billions while the poorest sleep in downtown doorways, or have to choose between medicine and food. Those in the middle report working harder without getting ahead and many British Columbians owe more than they own.

To illustrate the wide-ranging ramifications of inequality, MacLeod interviews economists, politicians, policy-makers and activists, as well as those living on the edge: a single parent whose child support payments are clawed back by the government; a 25-year-old struggling to live on disability payments who won't share his identity for fear of repercussions from the system; a security guard who wasn't given bathroom breaks, didn't drink water at work and eventually had to have a kidney removed as a result of severe dehydration.

Some assume that such disparity is inevitable even in BC, a wealthy province lauded by the government as "The Best Place on Earth." However, MacLeod deftly argues that British Columbians are living with the consequences of short-sighted public policies, and adjusting those policies can achieve a different set of results.

Informative, well-researched, cautionary and hopeful, *A Better Place on Earth* provides an in-depth look at inequality and suggests what British Columbians can do to make sure everyone's basic needs are met, pull back stratospheric incomes and create a fairer society.

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