

# INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS IN CANADA

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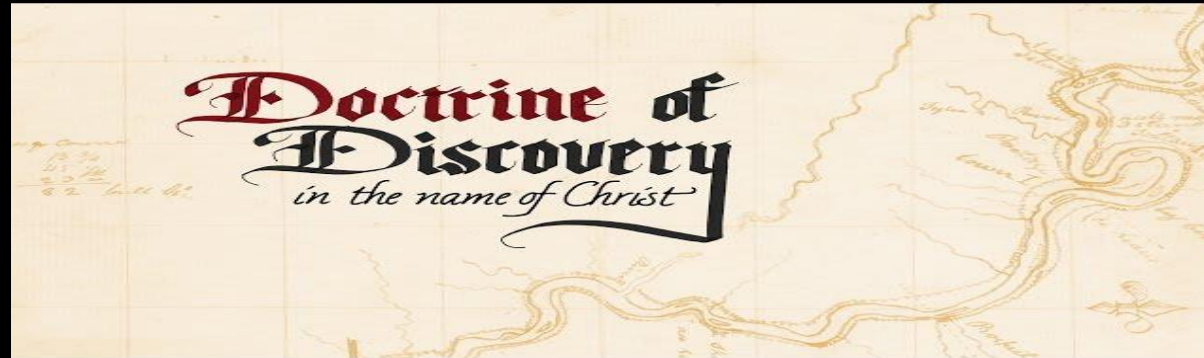




“To say that the indigenous housing crisis is a modern problem is incorrect; Indigenous Peoples have had a housing crisis for 530 years..”

“Displacement and forced relocation, the construction of reserve systems, and genocide are but a brief list of strategies that have displaced Indigenous Peoples from traditional territories, stolen land... ”

(Gabriel, 2023, p.90)



We [therefore] weighing all and singular the premises with due meditation, and noting that since we had formerly by other letters of ours granted among other things free and ample faculty to the aforesaid King Alfonso—to invade, search out, capture, vanquish, and subdue all Saracens and pagans whatsoever, and other enemies of Christ wheresoever placed, and the kingdoms, dukedoms, principalities, dominions, possessions, and all movable and immovable goods whatsoever held and possessed by them and to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery, and to apply and appropriate to himself and his successors the kingdoms, dukedoms, counties, principalities, dominions, possessions, and goods, and to convert them to his and their use and profit...

from *The Bull Romanus Pontifex* issued by Pope Nicholas V  
January 8, 1455



## HISTORICAL FACTORS

### DOCTRINE OF DISCOVERY



#### Original Eviction & Homelessness

- Imperial Power
- Subjugation of Indigenous Peoples so colonizers could take over lands
- Form of Structural violence
- Eviction from homelands & cultural ways of living
- Disconnection from ancestral homelands & disruption of communities, families & home



**Doctrine of Discovery created fundamental basis of Indigenous homelessness**



### INDIAN ACT 1876

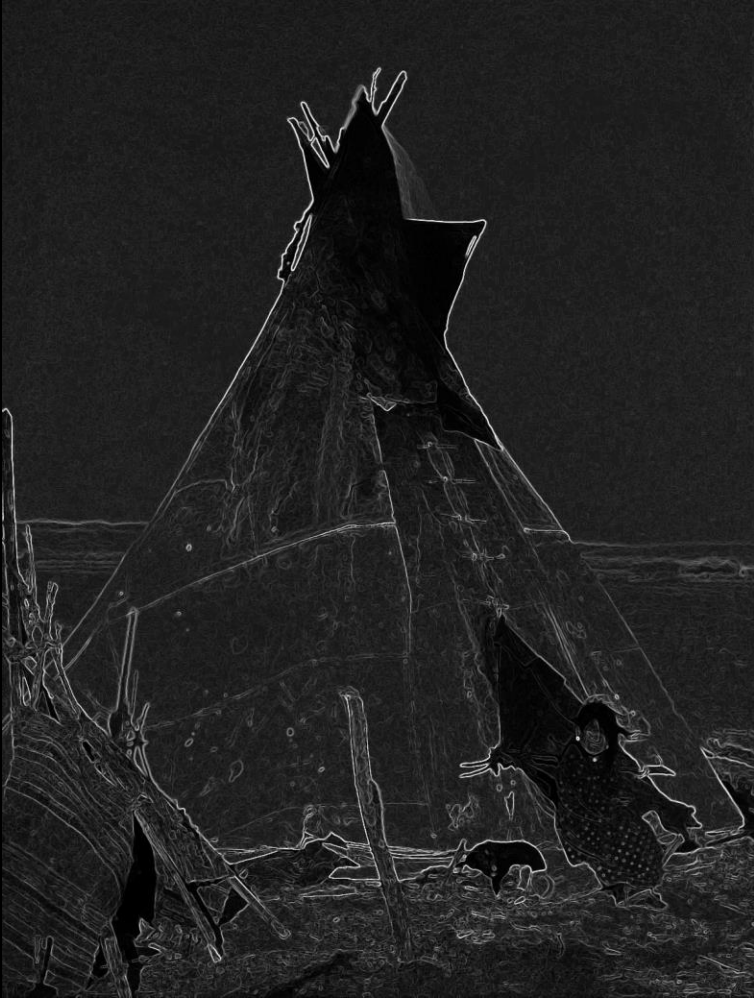
- Enfranchisement: Many Indigenous Peoples lost their Indigenous identity & connections to community
- Forced & confined First Nations Peoples onto smaller and smaller pieces of land on reserves
- Continues to govern status First Nations Peoples in Canada
- Contributes to homelessness on ancestral homelands
- Contributes to inequities & poverty
- Reserves often on contaminated land



#### Reserves a form of government prescribed housing/shelter system with conditions

- First Nations lost status & housing if joined army or went to university
- Band members can only sell housing to other band members





“...in the pre-contact era ...no Cree person was ever homeless. All members of the community had a home...traditional society was egalitarian ...everything was shared...**because of what has happened with colonization, we, as a race of people, have become homeless.** This is mainly because our traditional homelands have all been taken away from us. **We don’t even have legal access to any of our traditional homelands.** So, a race of people, on a macro level, has been left homeless.” (Faries, 2012, p. 44)

# Defining Indigenous Homelessness

Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means or ability to acquire such housing...

Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews...

# All My Relations

Traditionally, Canadian homelessness is focused on a loss of physical habitation. For Indigenous communities, the concept of home is much more than a place to live. Indigenous homelessness is characterized as being without relationships to human kinship networks, including earth, land, stories, animals and plants, all of which are known as "home" in Indigenous worldviews.

"Homelessness from a Canadian definition has looked at homelessness as being without a structure of habitation. Indigenous homelessness is really about being without all my relations."

Jesse Thistle, COH



**EARTH**



**LAND**



**STORIES**



**PLANTS**



**ANIMALS**

Relationships to the earth, land, rivers and territories, all encompass an Indigenous worldview.

Connections to stories, languages, songs, ancestors and names, are known as "home" in Indigenous societies.

Animals and the environment, including plants and the elements, are a part of Indigenous relationships.

# The 12 dimensions of Indigenous Homelessness as articulated by Indigenous Peoples across Canada:



**Historic Displacement Homelessness**

**Overcrowding Homelessness**



**Contemporary Geographic Separation Homelessness**



**Going Home Homelessness**



**Mental Disruption & Imbalance Homelessness**

**Nowhere to Go Homelessness**



**Spiritual Disconnection Homelessness**



**Escaping or Evading Harm Homelessness**

**Cultural Disintegration & Loss Homelessness**



**Emergency Crisis Homelessness**



**Relocation & Mobility Homelessness**



**Climatic Refugee Homelessness**





# No Home in a Homeland

Indigenous Peoples and Homelessness in the Canadian North



Julia Christensen

STORIES BY  
JOSEPH KAFKA



LU'MA NATIVE HOUSING  
PRESENTS

## WHERE ARE ALL MY RELATIONS?

STORIES OF INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS IN B.C.

- Relational and extending beyond physical spaces
- Relationships
- Sense of belonging & rootedness
- Spiritual, physical, emotional and mental connections

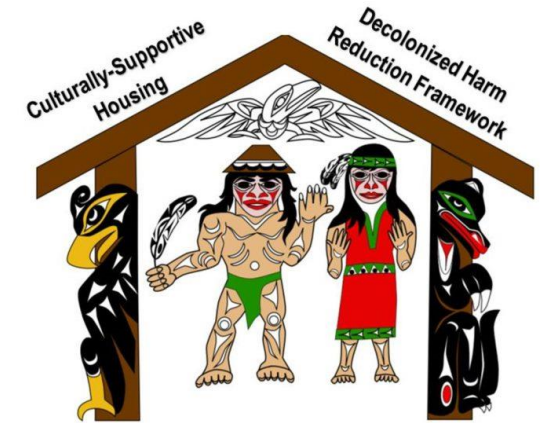




Giwetashkad is an Anishnaabemowin (Ojibwe language) word and concept that can roughly be translated to “circle.”



## Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness



### Dual Model of Housing Care

Land-based Culture/Language/Healing

