

Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action
Learning and Prayer Guide



INTERACTIVE PDF
BOOKLET NO. 1 OF 4



*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen:
to loose the chains of injustice
and untie the cords of the yoke,
to set the oppressed free
and break every yoke?
Is it not to share your food with the hungry
and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter—
when you see the naked, to clothe them,
and not to turn away from your own flesh and blood?...*

*...If you do away with the yoke of oppression,
with the pointing finger and malicious talk,
and if you spend yourselves in behalf of the hungry
and satisfy the needs of the oppressed,
then your light will rise in the darkness,
and your night will become like the noonday.
The Lord will guide you always;
he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land
and will strengthen your frame.
You will be like a well-watered garden,
like a spring whose waters never fail.
Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins
and will raise up the age-old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls,
Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.*

(Isaiah 58:6-7,10-12)

Introduction

A rich document called *Honouring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future: Summary of the Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC)* deepens our understanding of some of the heart cries of Canada's Aboriginal population. Aboriginal history is exceptionally complex and cannot be summarized in a few pages. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) has done an excellent job of contextualizing the 94 Calls to Actions in their final report, so we encourage you to visit the website link below to read the context of each call to action.¹

We are grateful to Tricia Maughan,² who wrote the original prayer guide to coincide with the TRC's 94 Calls to Action, which inspired us to expand upon her work to develop this learning resource. We also want to thank Serena Richardson, Justice and Compassion administrative assistant, for the endless hours she spent researching content and designing the layout for this resource.

We extend our deepest appreciation to Larry Wilson, former Director of the First Nations Alliance Churches of Canada, who provided insight into the language and cultural nuances of these prayers.

The pathway to healing and reconciliation will ultimately depend on faith and hope in action. It is our prayer that this guide will inform and challenge the reader to embrace humility, to identify with the suffering of others, and to be intentional in taking actions that honour the truth and reconcile the future.

By His grace,

Joanne Beach,
Director of Alliance Justice and Compassion
The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada

¹trc.ca/websites/trcinstitution/File/2015/Exec_Summary_2015_06_25_web_o.pdf

²Tricia Maughan wrote the original prayer guide while living in Nanaimo, B.C., where she worked as a teacher, volunteered at an Aboriginal Centre, and ministered with her husband at the Nanaimo Alliance Church.

Honouring the truth, reconciling the future

Before we begin to pray, we must put into perspective that there are 634 First Nations in Canada, speaking more than 50 distinct languages, each Nation having its own unique cultural traditions, political structures, and economies. It is also important to comprehend the ongoing pain endured by many Aboriginals.

For those who are not Aboriginal, it can be difficult to understand the significant impact Canada's policies have had on generation after generation of Indigenous peoples.

Chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Justice Murray Sinclair, helps to put reconciliation into perspective in the following video:



What Is Reconciliation from TRC - CVR on Vimeo.



Call to Action #48: Our Response...



STATEMENT IN RESPONSE TO CALL TO ACTION #48 FROM THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA March 29, 2016

The Evangelical Fellowship of Canada (EFC) is the national association of Evangelical Christians in Canada. We are pleased to respond to the Calls to Action issued by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in June 2015, particularly to Call to Action #48, which asks faith groups in Canada to "formally adopt and comply with the principles, norms, and standards of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples as a framework for reconciliation."

The focus of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples is primarily on the nature and dynamics of government and state relations with Indigenous peoples, and much of what it addresses is not directly relevant to churches or communities of faith. However, faith groups are being asked by the TRC to affirm and support the guiding principles and norms of the document, as well as some of its main assertions, as a framework for reconciliation. These principles include the:

- Recognition that Indigenous peoples are equal to all other peoples, while recognizing the right of all people to be different, to consider themselves different and to be respected as such
- Affirmation that all peoples contribute to the diversity and richness of civilizations and cultures, which constitute the common heritage of humankind
- Reaffirmation that Indigenous peoples should be free from discrimination of any kind
- Recognition of the historic injustices faced by Indigenous peoples as a result of colonization and the dispossession of their lands, territories and resources
- Affirmation of the right of Indigenous families and communities to retain responsibility for the upbringing, training, education and well-being of their children, consistent with the rights of the child

In effect, the Declaration reiterates the rights that are taken for granted by most people in Western societies. It has had a powerful impact in Indigenous communities in affirming and supporting their sense of identity and rights in relation to non-Indigenous societies. While they recognize that the Declaration is not a legally binding document, they appreciate that it sets international legal norms

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and expectations, and can be used as a tool to fight discrimination and marginalization.

For over 20 years the EFC has formally recognized the need for reconciliation with Indigenous people in Canada, many of whom can be found in our own constituent communities. The EFC's participation in the work of reconciliation began in 1995, when Elijah Harper called together Indigenous and non-Indigenous religious leaders for a Sacred Assembly to listen to one another and to establish the call for reconciliation.

The statement that arose out of the gathering, called the Reconciliation Proclamation, affirmed that "Creator God reigns supreme over all things," that "the starting point for healing and reconciliation lies in personal communion with Creator God," and that "reconciliation between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians must be rooted in a spiritual understanding of land as a gift from the Creator God."

By adopting the Reconciliation Proclamation in 1995, we committed to:

- Continuing the process of healing and reconciliation with Aboriginal Peoples, by providing the forums and supports needed to heal the wounds created in the past;
- Becoming stronger advocates for justice and reconciliation in current and future public affairs, and to hold our governments accountable for implementation of just policies; and
- Developing a program of education and action on issues relating to land rights, self-government, economic development and racism.

Re-energized by the work of the TRC, we are committed to a process of learning and collaboration with our affiliates and Indigenous leaders within our affiliate denominations, churches and organizations. We will be exploring what it means for us as a broad evangelical community to embrace and enact the principles outlined in the UN Declaration as a framework for reconciliation.

As was the case with our affirmation in 1995 of the Sacred Assembly Proclamation, this response to the TRC's Call to Action is part of an ongoing journey of learning and reconciliation. It will not be the conclusion. We invite all people in Canada to learn with us as we walk in humility with the Indigenous peoples in this land.

This document is available online at www.thefec.ca/TRC48
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Call To Action



“There are 3 times as many Aboriginal children in child welfare care today than were in residential schools at their peak” (Blackstock, 2003). [READ MORE>>](#)

Call to Prayer

We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to commit to reducing the number of Aboriginal children in care by:

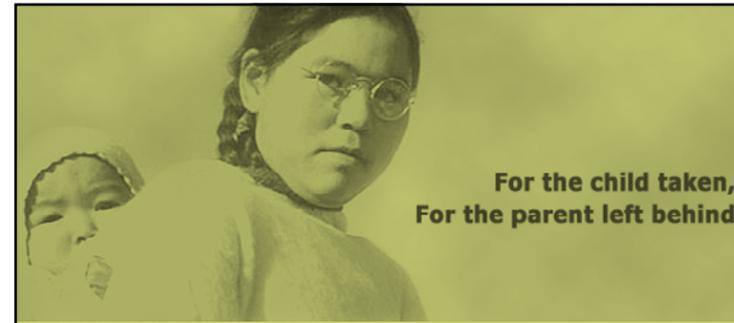
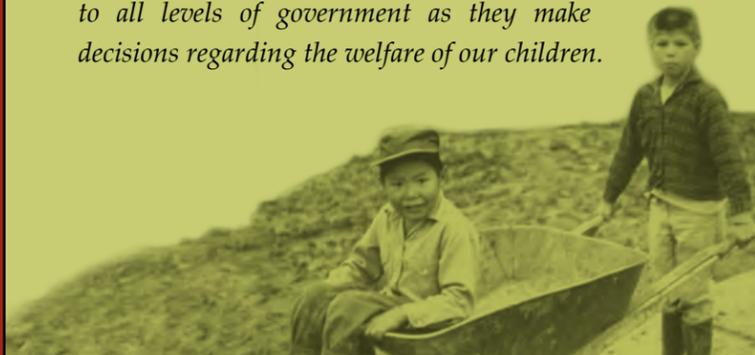
- Monitoring and assessing neglect investigations.
- Providing adequate resources to enable Aboriginal communities and child-welfare organizations to keep Aboriginal families together where it is safe to do so, and to keep children in culturally appropriate environments, regardless of where they reside.
- Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the history and impacts of residential schools.
- Ensuring that social workers and others who conduct child-welfare investigations are properly educated and trained about the potential for Aboriginal communities and families to provide more appropriate solutions to family healing.
- Requiring that all child-welfare decision makers consider the impact of the residential school experience on children and their caregivers.

We call upon You, our Father God, The Lord who loves children, and teaches us to “Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Matthew 19:14, ESV).

Children are important to You and are created in Your image, O God.

We ask that You protect children, and in particular, the vulnerable ones in our communities. Please open our eyes to the distress many are in. Open our hearts to love them the way You love them. Give us courage to do something that will make a difference in the lives of children who are powerless to protect themselves.

If we are not engaged and interacting with children in need, please show us how we can. May we as individuals, as families, and as the body of Christ intentionally love and advocate for the children. We also ask that You will give great wisdom and compassion to all levels of government as they make decisions regarding the welfare of our children.



Canadian Website Truth and Reconciliation (CC BY 2.0) by Neeta Lind

Call to Prayer

Father God, We ask, Lord, that when annual reports are published, that those who create them will have the best interest of the children at heart. We ask that they will have the integrity to be honest about what was done and what was left undone. We ask that these documents will be a useful tool to improve the welfare of Indigenous children in Canada.

May we as a nation be gracious when new initiatives are introduced by organizations who are seeking to influence changes in process which will benefit Aboriginal children. May there be unity among the many levels of government. May there be clear communication based on mutual respect and understanding.



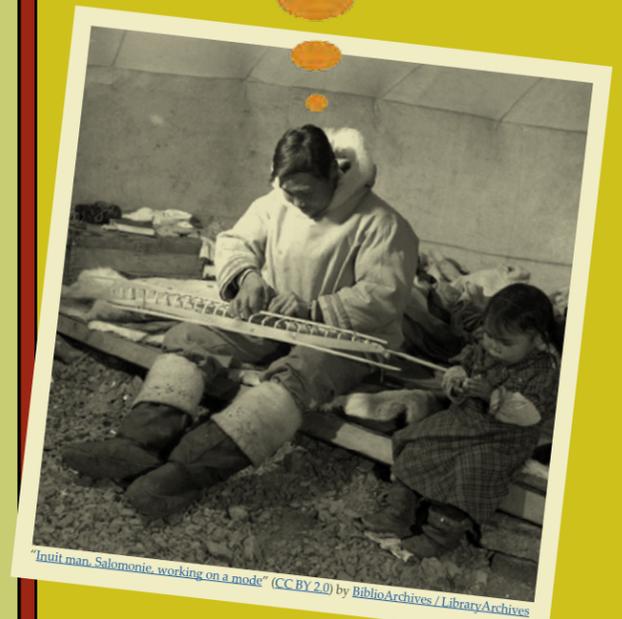
Call To Action

We call upon the federal government, in collaboration with the provinces and territories, to prepare and publish annual reports on the number of Aboriginal children (First Nations, Inuit, and Métis) who are in care, compared with non-Aboriginal children, as well as the reasons for apprehension, the total spending on preventive and care services by child-welfare agencies, and the effectiveness of various interventions.

“Better research and data are also required in order to monitor and develop strategies to reduce the overrepresentation of Aboriginal children in care.”

—Truth & Reconciliation Commission

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3 Call To Action

We call upon all levels of government to fully implement Jordan's Principle.*

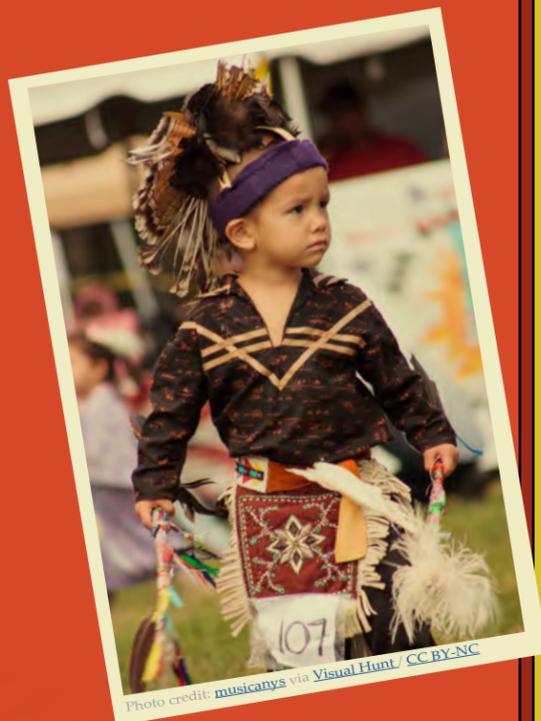


Photo credit: musicanys via Visual Hunt / CC BY-NC



*Jordan's Principle is a child-first principle that is implemented when there are jurisdictional disputes as to who should pay for government services. Because of our different levels of government, sometimes it is not clear who should be paying and delay of years can occur. With this principle in place, the first approached level of government must pay and then argue about it later.

"Jordan, a First Nations child was born with complex medical needs and spent more than two years unnecessarily in hospital while provincial and federal governments argued over who should pay for his at home care. Jordan died in hospital at the age of five years old, never having spent a day in his family home."

- First Nations Child & Family Caring Society of Canada

[READ MORE>>](#)

Call to Prayer

Father God,
We thank You that public healthcare is available in Canada. We ask that no child shall ever suffer because of confusion about healthcare funding.

We ask that all levels of government will make decisions that promote the best interest of the child. We ask that families feel supported by the community as they journey with their child through their illness. May there be compassion and may the practical needs be met through both public and private funds. When opportunity arises, we ask that the church would respond with tangible expressions of love.



Artist Kenojuak and her two children exiting a tent, Cape Dorset, Nunavut. Photo Credit: Rosemary Gilliat Eaton / Library and Archives Canada / e010835920

Call to Prayer

Father God,
You are Father to the fatherless. We ask that Aboriginal people who are struggling to care for their children will be surrounded by those who will come alongside as supporters on the journey to becoming healthy and godly parents. We pray that You will help Aboriginal parents to love and nurture their children so they do not have to be removed from their homes. When necessary, we ask that others in the Aboriginal community will step forward to care for children who are neglected—particularly those within the child's own community and nation.

In 1928, the Canadian Government created laws that forced native children to attend Residential schools.
Here they learned European Culture and religion in order to resolve their 'indian problem'.
These schools created a devastating loss to Native traditions, language and culture.
This went on until the last residential school closed in 1984.

4 Call To Action

We call upon the federal government to enact Aboriginal child-welfare legislation that establishes national standards for Aboriginal child apprehension and custody cases and includes principles that:

- Affirm the right of Aboriginal governments to establish and maintain their own child-welfare agencies.
- Require all child-welfare agencies and courts to take the residential school legacy into account in their decision making.
- Establish, as an important priority, a requirement that placements of Aboriginal children into temporary and permanent care be culturally appropriate.



5 Call To Action

We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate parenting programs for Aboriginal families.

“Every child needs someone in his life who is crazy about him...The task for the rest of society, the rest of us, is to ensure every young parent is surrounded by the support of people who love and care for them as they love and care for their children.”

(Messages From the Heart - Caring for our Children)

[WATCH VIDEO TO LEARN MORE>>](#)



“An Inuit woman and child giving each other a kunik”
Photo Credit: [Richard Harrington / Library and Archives Canada / R756-11-3-E](#)

Call to Prayer

Father God,
There are many parents in Aboriginal communities who did not have good models of parenting because they were raised in an institution, the residential school, rather than in a home with a family. The legacy of parenting that is naturally passed down from mother to daughter and father to son was often disrupted. We ask that Aboriginal families who need support will receive it in order to become effective parents.

For those in the Aboriginal community who are parenting well, encourage them to mentor other parents and young adults. May Aboriginal parents who are Christ followers look to You for wisdom as they raise their children. May those in their community see that godly parenting does exist within Aboriginal culture. For those of us who have judged, please forgive us and fill us with compassion as we interact with hurting families.



Mural: The Art of Parenting According to Old and New Wisdom by Aftab Erfan and members of the Gwa'sala-'Nakwaxda'xw First Nations



Gavel image (CC BY 2.0) by PRSA-NY

“It's sad, what has happened. We can't erase the past, but we can help fix the damage that's been done...It is going to be an emotional walk, but it will be a happy walk.”

[READ MORE>>](#)

Call to Prayer

Father God,
This particular law in the criminal code is controversial in all circles of society. Please help us know what it is like to walk in the shoes of those who suffered abuse in the residential school system. While young, they suffered physical beatings that were excused in the name of correction and in the name of God.

May we as followers of Christ never accept nor turn a blind eye to abuse.

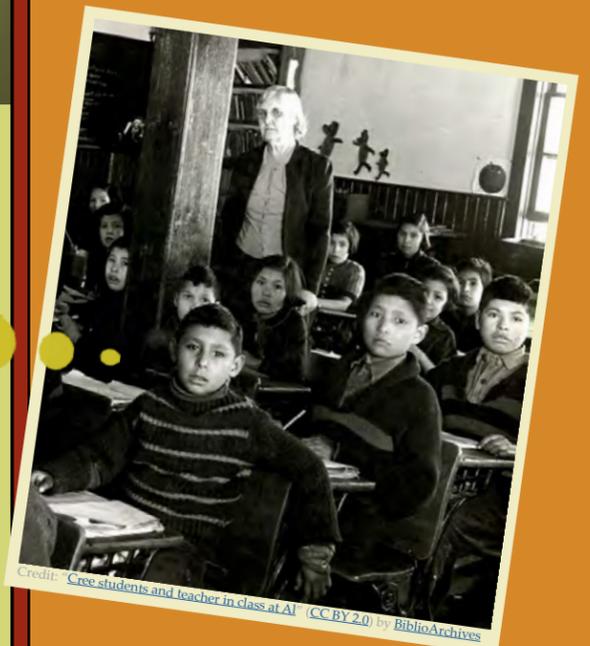
May we always demonstrate the compassion and grace that Christ demonstrated to us.

May we as individuals and as the church have a reputation of being a safe place, where children are seen as image bearers of You, O God.

Give all parents, teachers, and persons in authority the wisdom to offer correction in a healthy and God-honouring way.

6 Call To Action

We call upon the Government of Canada to repeal Section 43 of the Criminal Code of Canada.



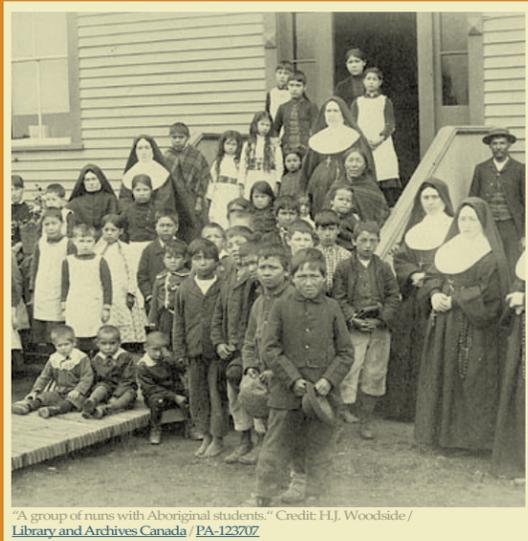
Credit: Cree students and teacher in class at AI (CC BY 2.0) by BiblioArchives

“**Section 43** currently states:
Every schoolteacher, parent, or person standing in the place of a parent is justified in using force by way of correction toward a pupil or child, as the case may be, who is under his care, if the force does not exceed what is reasonable under the circumstances.”

Call To Action



We call upon the federal government to develop with Aboriginal groups a joint strategy to eliminate educational and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.



"A group of nurses with Aboriginal students." Credit: H.J. Woodside / Library and Archives Canada / PA-123707

"Policy interventions that... not only help close the gap between Aboriginal peoples and the rest of Canadians but could also help wipe out poverty for Aboriginal peoples within our lifetime" (growing gap project)

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Aboriginal Skills Training for the Technology Sector (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by BC Gov Photos

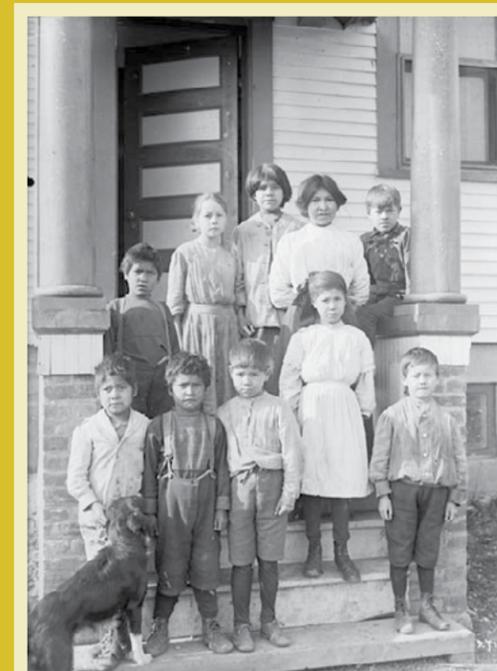


"One Aboriginal student standing in a classroom of seated students during the introductions of students Hobbema." Credit: Health and Welfare Canada / Library and Archives Canada / 4322352 (Copyright: The Crown)

Call to Prayer

Father God,
As we seek to educate our children, may we remember that they are fearfully and wonderfully made ([Psalm 139:14](#)). May we remember that You have given people from all nations skills, talents, and interests. We ask that the graduation rate among Aboriginal teens will increase and reflect a healthy percentage of those who enroll in education. May we never think that low graduation rates are acceptable and are to be expected. Help us have high expectations for all students.

We pray for expanded employment opportunities, and that employers will hire Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people without prejudice. Give companies, both big and small, the heart to hire Aboriginal people who are qualified for the job. We ask that You help our government develop strategies that close the education and employment gaps between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians.



Aboriginal students with a dog on the steps of an Indian School near Woodstock, New Brunswick (CC BY 2.0) by BiblioArchives / LibraryArchives

Call to Prayer

Father God,
It is amazing to think that You created us in Your image; that all people, regardless of their history, are Your image bearers. We acknowledge that placing high and realistic expectations on a child is only good and beneficial if the support and resources are available. We ask Lord, that First Nations children will receive the education that they are entitled to, and that we, as Canadians, will take the education of all children seriously.

We ask that You help us to raise awareness for, and promote the value of, students in First Nation communities. We ask that You would bless First Nation schools so they too will be funded the same as publicly-funded schools.

We ask that they be provided the financial means to employ excellent teachers, to provide valuable learning tools, and to include programs in which students can explore diverse learning opportunities.

Call To Action



We call upon the federal government to eliminate the discrepancy in federal education funding for First Nations children being educated on reserves and those First Nations children being educated off reserves.

Shannen's Dream

Shannen Koostachin, a youth education advocate from of the Attawapiskat First Nation in Ontario, had a dream: safe and comfy schools and culturally based education for First Nations children and youth.



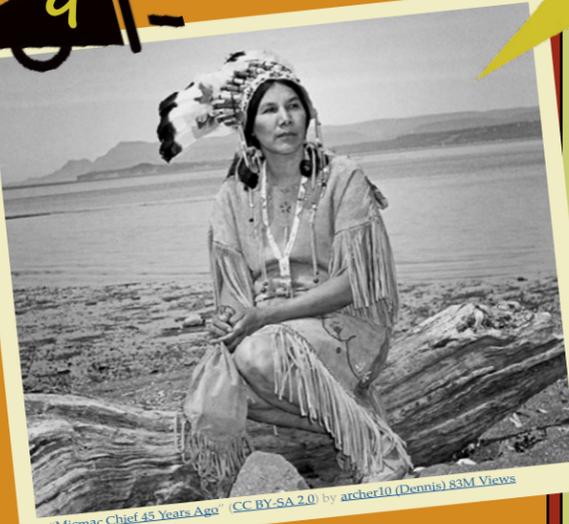
Many First Nations schools receive less funding per student than provincial and territorial schools, and zero dollars for things like libraries, computers, languages or extracurricular activities. Many also do not provide a safe and appropriate learning environment, and may pose serious health concerns, including mold contamination, high carbon dioxide levels, rodent infestations, sewage, and inadequate or lack of heating.

Shannen worked tirelessly to try to convince the federal government to give First Nations children a proper education. Unfortunately, she passed away in a car accident at the age of 15 before her dream could come true. But it did. On June 22, 2012—the day Shannen would have graduated—construction started for a new school in Attawapiskat. The new school opened in August 2014 (CBC).



[LEARN MORE >>](#)

Call To Action



"Micmac Chief 45 Years Ago" CC-BY-SA 2.0 by archer10 (Dennis) R3M Views

We call upon the federal government to prepare and publish annual reports comparing funding for the education of First Nations children on and off reserves, as well as educational and income attainments of Aboriginal peoples in Canada compared with non- Aboriginal people.

REPORT CARD



Overall Grade: **C+**

Canada's Commitments to Equal Rights		
	Aboriginal peoples in Canada	non-Aboriginal peoples in Canada
Education Attainment	45%	65%
Employment Attainment	63%	76%

Statistics reported by Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Fact Sheet - 2011 National Household Survey Aboriginal Demographics, Educational Attainment and Labour Market Outcomes <https://www.aandnc-aindc.gc.ca/img/1576326257/16/1576326233/1576326233.pdf>

Canada's Commitments to Treaty Rights		
ON Reservation Education Funding for First Nations Children	C+	
OFF Reservation Education Funding for First Nations Children	C	

[READ MORE](#)>> ABOUT FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REPORTING

[LEARN MORE](#)>> ABOUT TREATY RIGHTS

"Education is a treaty right, and we were supposed to all get [post secondary] education, but because of the Indian Act and the implementation of the funding we're under, it's not possible."

-Ivana Yellowback

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Call to Prayer

Father God,

We thank You for accountability and for grace. We ask that those who compile information and prepare reports remember that they are referencing real people and not just numbers. We ask that politics will not factor into the writing of these reports, but rather we ask that the motivating factor be based upon compassion coupled with the tenacity to see conditions improve for all people living in Canada. May we as Canadians treat one another respectfully in the same way we want our children to be treated. Help us as a society to read these documents seriously and to act upon them. Help us not to be stone throwers when we see areas of failure, but rather help us to be restorers.



"Tsuu T'ina children in traditional costume at a Stampede Parade" By Qyrd CC-BY-SA-3.0



Students of St. Anne's Indian Residential School in Fort Albany, Ontario, circa 1945 from the Metatawabin collection at the University of Algoma



Call to Prayer

Father God,

We ask that You will provide the right people to accomplish the important work of creating new education legislation. Please provide creative, collaborative, compassionate, meticulous, and devoted educators to create high quality education reform that will close the educational achievement gaps in one generation.

We ask that while creating the new legislation and developing the new curricula, all involved will have high goals and healthy expectations. Help them to communicate well with one another so that all groups of people will feel respected and useful. May excitement grow as each participant begins to recognize the significance of the task ahead of them.



Call To Action



We call on the federal government to draft new Aboriginal education legislation with the full participation and informed consent of Aboriginal peoples. The new legislation would include a commitment to sufficient funding and would incorporate the following principles:

- Providing sufficient funding to close identified educational achievement gaps within one generation.
- Improving education attainment levels and success rates.
- Developing culturally appropriate curricula.
- Protecting the right to Aboriginal languages, including the teaching of Aboriginal languages as credit courses.
- Enabling parental and community responsibility, control, and accountability, similar to what parents enjoy in public school systems.
- Enabling parents to fully participate in the education of their children.
- Respecting and honouring Treaty relationships.



"First Nations University" By Nadiatalent - Own work CC-BY-SA 3.0

11 Call To Action

We call upon the federal government to provide adequate funding to end the backlog of First Nations students seeking a post-secondary education.



"Recognizing that increased post-secondary education by Aboriginal people results in better labour market and health outcomes for individuals and better community-related outcomes will benefit all..."

[READ MORE>>](#)



Call to Prayer

*Father God,
We thank You for the gift of intellect.*

We thank You for the many post-secondary institutions Canada is fortunate to have.

There are many First Nation adults who desire to be trained in academics, professions, and the trades. We pray for justice when funding these students.

Give the government wisdom as budgets are created.

Help us as Canadians think of generous and creative avenues that will provide funding for students who need it. We ask that students will not be denied access to further education because of their ancestry.



"Aboriginal Communities PALS program in L" (CC BY-NC-ND 2.0) by BC Gov Photos

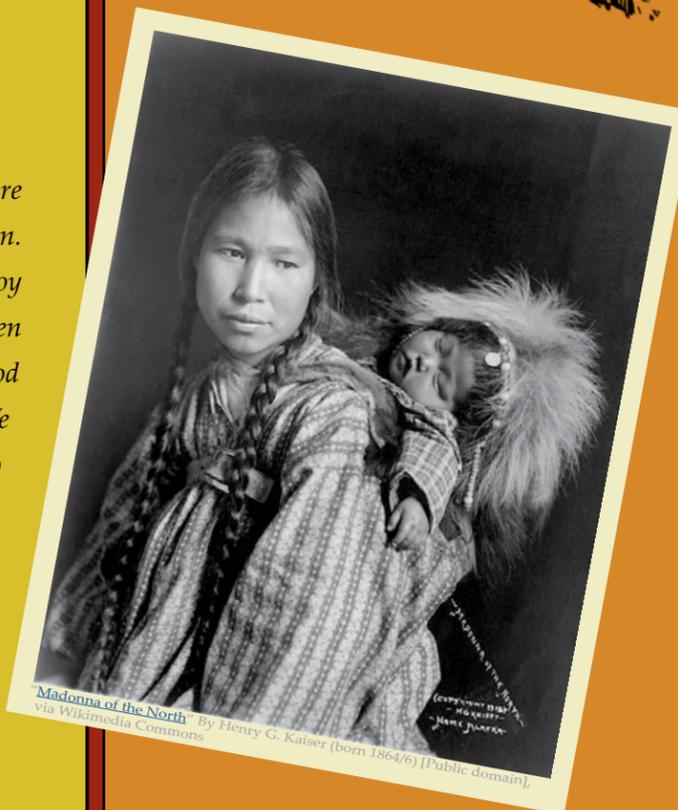


Call to Prayer

*Father God,
We thank You for the many excellent programs that are already in place for Aboriginal early childhood education. We ask that the children in these programs will enjoy learning and fully embrace the culture they have been born into. We thank You for the many early childhood educators who are often overworked and underpaid. We thank You for the love and enthusiasm they bring to the children and their families. We ask that You give these organizations, as well as the different levels of government, creative and sustainable strategies for funding. Please help these organizations and governments to collaborate and work together, rather than compete when developing culturally relevant programs for Aboriginal families.*

Call To Action 12

We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to develop culturally appropriate early childhood education programs for Aboriginal families.



"Madonna of the North" By Henry G. Kaiser (born 1864/6) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons



"Ethnomusicologist Frances Densmore recording Blackfoot chief Mountain Chief (1916)" By Harris & Ewing [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons

13 Call To Action

We call upon the federal government to acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights.

"Cultural genocide is the destruction of those structures and practices that allow the group to continue as a group... Land is seized... populations are forcibly transferred... movement is restricted. Languages are banned... families are disrupted to prevent the transmission of cultural values and identity from one generation to the next..."

(T&R Final Report)

"When John Kistabish left the Amos, Québec, school, he could no longer speak Algonquin, and his parents could not speak French, the language that he had been taught in the school. As a result, he found it almost impossible to communicate with them about the abuse he experienced at the school."

(T&R Final Report, pg 85)

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"In 1990 and 1991, the Assembly of First Nations conducted a survey on the state of First Nations languages on Canadian reservations. The results for aboriginal languages were alarming: the survey showed that out of roughly 53 languages in Canada, 50 were becoming extinct."

[READ MORE>>](#)

Call to Prayer



"Our Father in Heaven, hallowed be your name,"

Thank You for creating so many different cultures and languages. You truly are a creative God. Thank You for giving us the gift of language, through which we can express ourselves in ways that are unique to our cultures. We acknowledge that Your revealed plan for reconciliation includes:

"... a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands" (Revelation 7:9, ESV)

With this kingdom picture in mind, we pray that the government will acknowledge that Aboriginal rights include Aboriginal language rights and therefore should be respected and taught accordingly. May these acknowledgements help all Canadians recognize the many unique First Nations rights, values, and cultures.

Call to Prayer

*Father God,
We thank you for the diversity of languages in the world. We thank you for the people, particularly the elderly, who are the keepers of language. We ask that you give those who speak Aboriginal languages the ability to teach these languages to the next generation. May they have the resources needed for these languages to either become or remain viable in their communities. Please give the government and people in leadership wisdom and creativity to support the revitalization of Aboriginal languages. May we see how strengthening languages increases academic success and how academic success leads to more job opportunities. Help us see that Aboriginal languages are a valued element of not only Aboriginal culture, but also Canadian culture.*

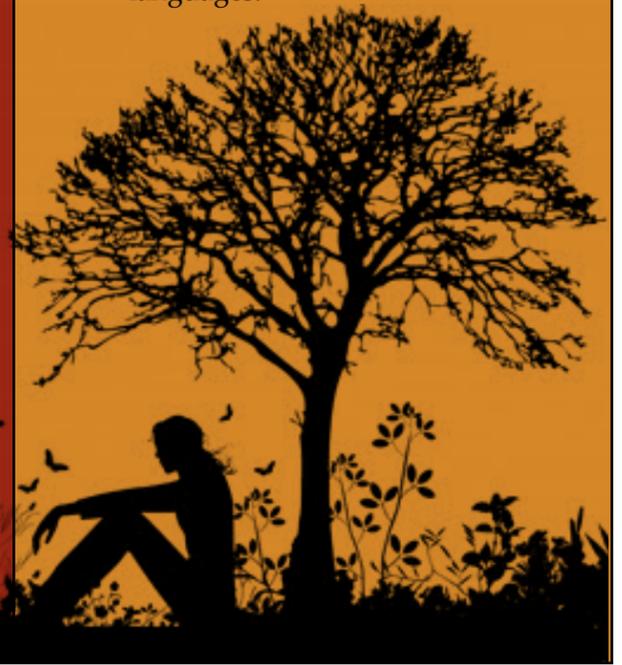
"Where as language is an integral part of culture and an essential tool of identification, cohesion, communication and creative expression... it is desirable to support aboriginal peoples and persons in Canada in preserving and revitalizing their languages as living languages" (Bill S-212)

[READ MORE>>](#)

Call To Action 14

We call upon the federal government to enact an Aboriginal Languages Act that incorporates the following principles:

- Aboriginal languages are a fundamental and valued element of Canadian culture and society, and there is an urgency to preserve them.
- Aboriginal language rights are reinforced by the Treaties.
- The federal government has a responsibility to provide sufficient funds for Aboriginal-language revitalization and preservation.
- The preservation, revitalization, and strengthening of Aboriginal languages and cultures are best managed by Aboriginal people and communities.
- Funding for Aboriginal language initiatives must reflect the diversity of Aboriginal languages.



Call To Action

We call upon the federal government to appoint, in consultation with Aboriginal groups, an Aboriginal Languages Commissioner. The commissioner should help promote Aboriginal languages and report on the adequacy of federal funding of Aboriginal-languages initiatives.



“The fragile state of Indigenous languages in Canada is a result of historical laws and policies designed to rid Canada of distinct Indigenous cultures.”

-Valerie Galley,
Nipising First Nations

[READ MORE>>](#)

“Some Survivors refused to teach their own children their Aboriginal languages and cultures because of the negative stigma that had come to be associated with them during their school years.

This has contributed significantly to the fragile state of Aboriginal languages in Canada today.”

(T&R Final Report, pg 154)

[READ MORE>>](#)



Call to Prayer

We pray that Aboriginal languages will once again become a vibrant part of every Indigenous community. We ask that the federal government and Aboriginal groups will work together in promoting these languages. May adequate funding be made available to re-established the language of every First Nation.



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Call To Action

We call upon post-secondary institutions to create university and college degree and diploma programs in Aboriginal languages.

“The Haida language is currently listed as critically endangered on [UNESCO's Atlas of the World's Languages](#). This statistic may change however since Haida elders of Haida Gwaii in BC are using current technology to keep their language alive. They have endeavored to pass on their knowledge to future generations with the help of “[FirstVoices](#)” to record and preserve their Language within the Skidegate Haida Language app.”

[READ MORE>>](#)



Call to Prayer

Father God,

As post-secondary institutions investigate the viability of offering degrees and diplomas in Aboriginal languages, we ask that You will give them wisdom to know how to make these programs available and accessible. We pray that as Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people study these languages they will see the beauty of the language and the culture it represents. May these languages become more common so that a greater understanding of cultures will occur.

Traditional Greetings

TÁNISI

(Cree)

BOOZHOO

(Ojibway)

WOTZIYE

(Dene)

AINNGAI

(Inuktitut)

KOUÉ

(Huron-Wendat)

If you are interested in reading more about Aboriginal Languages in Canada, you may find the following links helpful:

- [Statistics Canada Census 2011](#)
- [Historic Canada: Indigenous Languages in Canada](#)

Call To Action



We call upon all levels of government to enable residential school Survivors and their families to reclaim names changed by the residential school system by waiving administrative costs for a period of five years for the name-change process and the revision of official identity documents, such as birth certificates, passports, driver's licenses, health cards, status cards, and social insurance numbers.

"Sahai?a May Talbot went without a birth certificate for over a year due to the Government of the Northwest Territories being unable to register a surname that is not written entirely in the Roman alphabet."

[READ MORE>>](#)

The symbol in Sahai?a's name is the glottal stop, an important one in Chipewyan that signifies both pronunciation and meaning. If the glottal stop were replaced with a different character, Sahai?a's name would both sound and mean something completely different.



Thomas Moore, before and after his entrance into the Regina Indian Residential School in Saskatchewan in 1874. Library and Archives Canada / NL-022474



Call to Prayer

Father God,

We lament the fact that the residential school system did not respect the significance of a person's name. We see throughout Scripture that a person's name signifies their identity, worth, character, reputation, authority, will, and ownership; and we learn that names are significant to You. Please forgive the ignorance that contributed to the pain and oppression of Aboriginal peoples.

As Aboriginal people return to their original names and set out to claim their identity, may they also experience Your love and acceptance of them. Help them understand that You love them and their name. May those in Canada who are not Aboriginal take the time and effort to learn how to say the names and spell the names of those we encounter and know. Through the use of their original names, may they feel honoured.



By Ncg, No. PA 17947 (National Archives of Canada) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons



Call to Prayer

Father God,

We know Your heart for the oppressed ([Isaiah 1:17](#)), and we are deeply grieved that many First Nations health issues are a result of unjust policies thrust upon Aboriginal peoples. We are thankful that You know each person by name, and that You have intimately created each person and take delight in us on an individual level ([Psalm 139](#)).

**"Indigenous peoples have the right:
...to [equally obtain] the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
...to be actively involved in developing, determining, and administering health programs that affect them.
...to traditional medicines and to maintain their traditional health practices."**

- The United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (Articles 22, 23, 24)

[READ MORE>>](#)

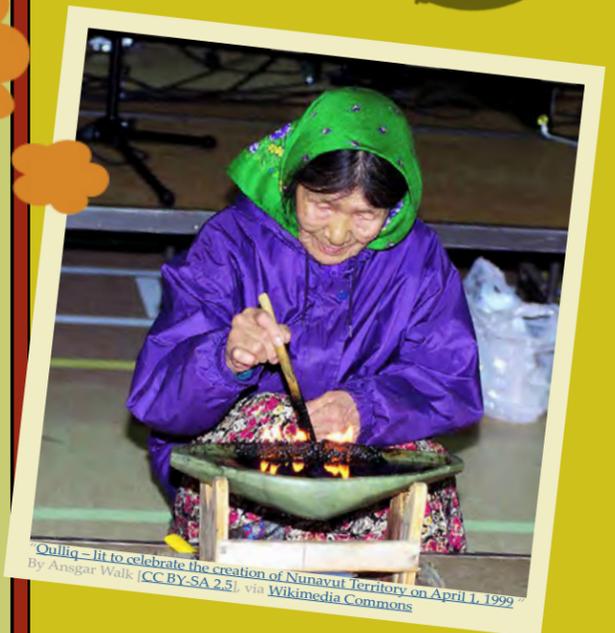
We know that You are aware of every statistic, and we sense that when You see such high levels of health issues occurring among a specific people group, and in particular suicides, it must make You weep.

We ask that those in authority will have the humility to admit the wrongs that have been done today and in the past. We ask that policymakers will not only recognize health care rights as prescribed in international law, constitutional law, and under Treaties, but also that decisions will be made with compassion and love. May Canada be known globally as a nation of people who collectively care for all those who live in this land.

Call To Action



We call upon the federal, provincial, territorial, and Aboriginal governments to acknowledge that the current state of Aboriginal health in Canada is a direct result of previous Canadian government policies, including residential schools, and to recognize and implement the health-care rights of Aboriginal people as identified in international law, constitutional law, and under the Treaties.



Quiliq - lit to celebrate the creation of Nunavut Territory on April 1, 1999 by Ansgar Walk [CC BY-SA 2.5], via Wikimedia Commons

19 Call To Action

We call upon the federal government, in consultation with Aboriginal peoples, to establish measurable goals to identify and close the gaps in health outcomes between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal communities, and to publish annual progress reports and assess long-term trends. Such efforts would focus on indicators such as: infant mortality, maternal health, suicide, mental health, addictions, life expectancy, birth rates, infant and child health issues, chronic diseases, illness and injury incidence, and the availability of appropriate health services.

“Life expectancy for both Aboriginal men and women is approximately 5-10 years lower than general population.”
 - Ann C. Macaulay, CM MD FCFP (College of Family Physicians Journal Article)

[READ MORE>>](#)



By Kazadams (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0] via Wikimedia Commons

Call to Prayer

Father God,
 We are disheartened that many Aboriginal people in Canada are living in deplorable conditions. Please forgive us for taking pride in our high rank of “most livable” place to live, while ignoring the situation of many Aboriginal people. We ask that this health gap will disappear. We ask that those in health leadership will develop measurable goals, so we will know where success is happening and where more work is needed. We ask that the underlying issues that are causing these significant health issues will be addressed.

For those in Your Church who are in the medical field, we pray that they will model the compassion of Jesus towards those who need healing, and that perseverance to help all of their patients will follow. May trust build between the Aboriginal community and the medical community. May there be a healthy and mutual respect for best practices of both traditional and Western medicine.

*“For Aboriginal populations:
 Heart disease is 1.5 times higher
 Type 2 Diabetes is 3- 5 times higher
 Tuberculosis is 8-10 times higher”*

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Call To Action 20

In order to address the jurisdictional disputes concerning Aboriginal people who do not reside on reserves, we call upon the federal government to recognize, respect, and address the distinct health needs of the Metis, Inuit, and off-reserve Aboriginal peoples.



“Inuit women at Nain, Newfoundland and Labrador” by Ansgar Waik [CC BY 2.5]

Call to Prayer

Father God,
 We desire that all people living in Canada will receive healthcare in an equitable way. We pray that no one will suffer due to disputes over whose responsibility it is to pay the bill. May all levels of government have the patients’ needs as a priority. Please give wisdom to the policymakers, as they have not only a fiscal responsibility but also a moral responsibility to meet the health needs of all living in Canada.

“HC employees must come from a sincere place in order to be in a position of assisting communities... to understand what they’ve gone through and why many come from a place of hopelessness”

(First Nations and Inuit Health Strategic Plan)

[READ MORE>>](#)



This ends the **first** of four parts to the
Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action
Learning and Prayer Guide

Parts 2, 3 and 4 are
available online at

cmacan.org/tr-prayerguide



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