

Points for writing your MP during National Indigenous History Month. I encourage folks to write their own letter to their MPs. Use as much as you need or want of what I have here. But form letters and petitions are not having the desired effect. Write from your heart. Help our governments to hear that Reconciliation with indigenous peoples is a priority for all Canadian citizens. I will be handwriting this letter and sending it in one of my hand painted watercolour cards.

June 2, 2021

Dear Ron McKinnon,

I am Rev David Cathcart, a minister with the United Church of Canada, serving Trinity United Church in Port Coquitlam. I live and serve on the unceded traditional territory of the Coast Salish Peoples, the Kwikwetlem First Nations

I am writing you during National Indigenous History Month, following my participation in the Walk in the Spirit of Reconciliation (May 28-30, 2021), and the announcement last week of the remains of 215 children found in unmarked, undocumented graves on the site of the former residential school in Kamloops.

The federal government needs to stop fighting survivors of residential schools and pay restitutions.

The federal government needs to take responsibility to get clean water to all indigenous communities.

The federal government needs to fund proper searches of all sites of former residential schools for remains. We know last week's discovery was not an isolated incident.

The federal government needs to acknowledge Indigenous forms of government (and ownership) of unceded land (this includes all territories designated "Crown Lands." Technically, "Crown Lands" were to be held in trust by the queen until *just* settlements could be agreed on. Starving people into submission does not constitute just settlement.

The federal government needs to make it illegal for social services in any province to take indigenous infants away from their mothers.

The federal government and its representatives need to stop referring to "a dark chapter in Canadian history." These atrocities are not just a chapter, nor are they history. Every day indigenous women go missing. In Port Coquitlam, we should be particularly sensitive to the plight of missing and murdered indigenous women and girls given so many were murdered and buried in our own back yard. It should be a priority for us that the marginalization making indigenous women so vulnerable stop.

Reconciliation is a path, not a goal. It means we need to make different decisions, motivated by different priorities. I demand that the federal government make Reconciliation a priority. I no longer want to live in a country governed by institutional racism and colonialism. We can do better.

Sincerely,

Rev David Cathcart.