



Let This Be The Last Inquiry

A Letter to the Church on the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

5 June 2019

Grace and peace to you to in the name of Jesus, who calls us to love each other.

On June 3, we witnessed a historic event with the completion of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the release of its Final Report.

This was a day long anticipated by survivors of violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA (two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex, and asexual) people, their friends, and their families., as well as the friends and families of those who did not survive. Our hearts are first with them; we pray that the report gives them comfort and hope.

We appreciate that the report placed the issue of violence against Indigenous women in the larger context of the human rights abuses flowing from our history of colonialism, and continuing policies that do not recognize the inherent value of First Nations, Métis, and Inuit cultures and laws. The United Church of Canada shares this commitment to the rights of Indigenous Peoples.

We recognize how racial violence significantly affects the health and well-being of Indigenous Peoples and denies them justice. We are pleased to see that the Inquiry has included in its Calls to Justice the creation of a national action plan to end violence against Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA people, and a national action plan on racism. These were key hopes that we expressed in our submission to the Inquiry.

We also support the call for a national action plan to address ongoing impacts such as the need for clean drinking water, proper and safe housing, and food security. It is distressing to hear once again that the basic needs many Canadians enjoy continue to be missing in Indigenous communities. We have heard these stories in too many inquiries. Let this be the last inquiry.

We are deeply moved by the words spoken by the Commissioners. Chief Commissioner Marion Bullard made it clear that “an absolute paradigm shift is required to dismantle colonialism in Canada,” and urged us all not just to speak out against racism, violence, and misogyny, but also to call our governments to account for fulfilling the Inquiry’s Calls to Justice.

Commissioner Qajaq Robinson was equally direct: “As a non-Indigenous person I’ve struggled to come to terms with my role in Canada’s genocide.... it’s my truth, it’s your truth... I see it, I own it. Who we will be and who we are will ultimately be defined by how we respond, now that we know.”

This is the charge to non-Indigenous peoples in Canada. Indigenous peoples have told their truth. Now is the time for non-Indigenous Canadians to hear that truth, to own it, and to act on it.

We urge non-Indigenous members and friends of the United Church to

- [read the final report of the Inquiry](#),
- advocate for the actions it demands of government, and
- explore how each of us, individually and as communities of faith, will make the changes necessary to ensure the dignity and safety of Indigenous peoples in this country.

We renew our pledge to be good relations, and we ask the whole of the church to pray.

All My Relations,

The Rt. Rev. Dr. Richard Bott
Moderator

The Rev. Maggie Dieter
National Indigenous Council

God of peace, receive our prayers

*For the beautiful Indigenous girls growing up across this country
May they always be able to enjoy times of learning, times of play, and time at home safely*

*For the beautiful Indigenous women working hard for their families and communities
May they always be able to enjoy times of relaxation and respite from their cares,
securely and free from fear*

*For the beautiful two-spirited people blessing all those with whom they come into contact
May they always be able to enjoy the cities, the towns, and the country side of this great land
in comfort and with a sense of welcome wherever they go*

God of grace, receive our prayers

*For the work of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls
For the families and all those who loved the beautiful ones who have been lost
For the justice we all hope for and long for so very much*

In the name of all our relations. Amen

(Excerpted from *For the Beauty of Those Lost, for Healing Founded on Justice*, The United Church of Canada)