



MODERATOR OF THE 146TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY
The Rev. Daniel D. Scott, B.A., M.C.S, M.Div., D. Min.

December 17, 2021

The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, PC, MP
Prime Minister of Canada
justin.trudeau@parl.gc.ca

Dear Prime Minister:

Greetings from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. I write as Moderator of the General Assembly, which is the governance structure with authority to speak and act for this denomination.

At its online meeting June 6-9, 2021, the General Assembly considered and adopted a report on the findings of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. The church accepted the findings of the National Inquiry as expressed in its final report, *Reclaiming Power and Place*, including the finding that the forms of violence outlined in the Final Report constitute race-based genocide. Acknowledging the systemic injustices that have enabled violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people, and the part the church played through our role in partnership with the government in running Indian Residential Schools and breaking up Indigenous families, the church agreed further to encourage its communities and individuals to study and respond to the National Inquiry's final report:

- by learning more about the effects of colonialism and how to decolonize
- by becoming familiar with the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, particularly those aimed at all Canadians (Calls 15.1 – 15.8) and those aimed at occupations and industries in which they are employed, and by responding accordingly
- by creating groups that explore and plan opportunities for relationship building between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people

The church appreciates these priorities outlined in several Government statements and reports:

- acceptance of the findings of the National Inquiry on Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people
- bringing together families and survivors, First Nations, Inuit, and Métis, Indigenous organizations, and various governments (federal, provincial, territorial, Indigenous, municipal) to develop a National Action Plan to address the issues identified in the National Inquiry's final report
- developing the federal government's contribution to the National Action Plan (*Federal Pathway*) and ensuring that it addresses themes identified in the National Inquiry's final report (culture, health and wellness, human safety and security, justice)
- committing to co-develop the implementation of the Federal Pathway with Indigenous partners

The General Assembly report noted that the federal government accepted the findings of the National Inquiry and committed to developing and implementing a National Action Plan to address violence against Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people. This is a necessary step and I encourage the Government, as a matter of urgency, to work for implementation of all of the National Inquiry's Calls for Justice, in accordance with the principles of the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

The Government's August 12, 2021 announcement of a \$180 million investment in support of parts of the Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people is encouraging, as are the investments announced in Budget 2021 toward systemic issues that have contributed to violence toward Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+, including housing insecurity, barriers to education and health care and

Clerks of Assembly: The Rev. Stephen Kendall and The Rev. Donald Muir

employment, and poverty. The church agrees with the Government's acknowledgement in its August 12 that intergenerational trauma that has been part of colonial and patriarchal policies in Canada. These influences must be eliminated from Canadian policies. Implement the UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples provides an essential framework for this imperative work.

In its press release on June 3, 2021, the Government of Canada promised "to monitor and provide a public report annually on the implementation of initiatives included in its Federal Pathway." If the goal is to provide accountability for the results of the Federal Pathway, how will the Government of Canada work with Indigenous peoples and organizations to ensure that implementation of the Federal Pathway centres the expertise and guidance of Indigenous women, girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ people?

Transforming social structures requires long-term commitment and integrity rooted in human rights. Trusting relationships must be built upon foundations of free, prior, and informed consent. Canadians—and Presbyterians among them—are relying on the Government of Canada to provide leadership that meets this high standard.

The church will look forward to reading the progress reports about the *Federal Pathway to Address Missing and Murdered Women, Girls and 2SLGBTQQIA+ People*.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Daniel D. Scott". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

The Rev. Dr. Daniel D. Scott
Moderator
The Presbyterian Church in Canada