

**Your Name Here**

**Date**

**Your contact info (optional)**

To those in leadership of (*NAME OF ORGANIZATION/CHURCH*),

I am writing to you today with a plea for action rooted in justice. For centuries the Christian Church has benefited from the use of land, space, and resources that resides on the unceded territory of the Coast Salish Peoples. Land acknowledgements at our places of worship are seldom, if ever done, and this is the least those in positions of power and influence can do.

Given the recent discovery of 215 bodies of children (some as young as three years of age) on the grounds of the Kamloops Residential School, I am writing specifically to you today to ask that you as a church do *something*; something tangible, more than a few words on a Sunday. The history of Residential Schools can not be separated from faith practises, with many Catholic and Protestant churches and individuals setting up, overseeing, and running these schools until the government also began this horrific work of genocide. Even after government involvement, many “schools” were still run by people and organizations claiming to be faith-based. These children and many others were abused, traumatized, and killed at the hands of those claiming to serve God.

Now, I am aware that you reading this letter may not be personally responsible or bear any genealogical connection to those who abused power and the name of God so violently. However, you reading this are in a position of power and influence because of the cruel history of the Christian Church in this country – it is harsh to hear, I know. My aim is not to offend but to speak openly and honestly about the accountability we need to take as a faith community. You are connected to a body of people who can do much with the resources they have. To love mercy and justice and walk humbly must also mean acknowledging the tragic and shameful history of the Christian church in this country and being the hands and feet of love in action needs to directly involve reconciliation. Your faith institution is likely not directly to blame for these crimes against indigenous peoples, but it can play a role in healing. And I strongly believe it should.

Actionable steps that I believe the faith community can take to being restitution and aid in the healing of the generations of people affected are:

- raise funds and donate directly to indigenous and first nations led organizations, especially those that offer counselling, therapy, and crisis support services (the next page will have links)
- talk about this openly with your congregation and accept that it is our duty as colonizers to work towards justice
- find a way to incorporate a genuine acknowledgement of land use in your practices and services
- connect with elders in your community to talk about their needs and desires for their community
- and finally, most importantly, accept that if we say we love Jesus and yearn to live in a way that reflects the heart of God then we need to do more than this to begin to heal the wounds that our culture of religion has caused to countless children, siblings, parents, aunts, uncles, grandparents, and communities

Please feel welcome to reach out to me if you would like to continue this conversation.

With sincerity, brokenness, and awaiting your action,

(*YOUR NAME HERE*)