

## **TAKE ACTION: Animating the 94 Calls to Action** **in your Community**

**What are the 94 Calls to Action?** <https://reconciliationthunder.org/94-calls/>

Read, mark, and inwardly digest the 94 Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission as you prepare to respond with action in your community and local context. This resource outlines actions you can take in support of Calls to Action #71-76 and #45-49.

The 94 Calls to Action in child and youth-friendly language are found [here](#).

### **Responding to Calls to Action #71-76:**

Calls to Action #71-76 speak to the painful reality of missing children and unmarked burials associated with Residential Schools. The national Anglican Church states that “between 1820 and 1969, the Anglican Church of Canada administered about three dozen residential schools and hostels for Indigenous children.”<sup>1</sup> Survivor’s testimonies at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) illuminated horrific conditions in Residential Schools. The TRC’s report “Missing Children and Unmarked Burials Project” confirmed 3,200 documented deaths of Indigenous children in Residential Schools, over half of which the cause of death was *not* recorded.<sup>2</sup> Their 2024 report **“Sites of Truth, Sites of Conscience: Unmarked Burials and Mass Graves of Missing and Disappeared Indigenous Children in Canada”** states:

“The Final Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada (TRC) provides indisputable historical evidence of genocide, crimes against humanity, and mass human rights violations in the Indian Residential School System. The supposedly benevolent goal of assimilating Indigenous Peoples into settler colonial Canadian society proclaimed by government leaders, church officials, and bureaucrats for well over a century masked a more sinister

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<sup>1</sup> The General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada, “Historical Sketch for Anglican Residential Schools,” <https://www.anglican.ca/tr/schools/>.

<sup>2</sup> Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Canada’s Residential Schools: Missing Children and Unmarked Burials*, McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2015, page 19. [https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Volume\\_4\\_Missing\\_Children\\_English\\_Web.pdf](https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Volume_4_Missing_Children_English_Web.pdf)

reality. Thousands of Indigenous children were subjected to violence, abuse, disease, and neglect in these institutions, and many of them died. Their death rates were far higher than those of non-Indigenous school-aged children. When they died, government and church officials often did not return the children to their families and communities for burial. They were buried instead in cemeteries at the institutions, often in unmarked and mass graves that were sometimes dug by other children. Many of these cemeteries and burial sites are neglected, abandoned, and unprotected. Families were provided with little information about what happened to their children.”<sup>3</sup>

Residential School cemeteries and burial sites were not protected by the federal government or churches, and many have undergone desecration. Indigenous Nations and families have often had to fundraise themselves to find their missing loved ones and recover unmarked burial sites associated with Residential Schools. The federal government is discontinuing funding for the National Advisory Committee on Residential Schools Missing Children and Unmarked Burials. This funding is crucial to continue the sacred work of honouring deceased Indigenous children. The Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Burials released 42 Sacred Obligations in October 2024 that call for continued and sustained holistic reparations, that deceased children who were not honoured in their life and death in the institutions they perished in, may finally be honoured by their families and communities.

## **Respond to Calls to Action #71-76**

### **Engage with the truth:**

- Read Calls to Action #71-76 as an individual or community
- Read the Special Interlocutor on Missing Children and Unmarked Burial reports in a study group in your parish. The Executive Summary of the final report is available at this link: <https://osi-bis.ca/osi-resources/reports/>

### **Advocate:**

- that the federal government restore funding for the Indigenous-led “identify, locate and commemorate” missing children program.

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<sup>3</sup> Office of the Independent Special Interlocutor, “Sites of Truth, Sites of Conscience: Unmarked Burials and Mass Graves of Missing and Disappeared Indigenous Children in Canada”, 2024, pages 7-8. <https://osi-bis.ca/osi-resources/reports/>

**Fundraise:**

- Take up a special collection or organize a fundraiser to support the Survivors' Secretariat ongoing search of the grounds of the Mohawk Institute (Anglican-run Residential School) <https://survivorssecretariat.ca/>

**Develop a ReconciliACTION Plan**

ReconciliACTION was a movement started in 2022 to raise awareness about the 94 Calls to Action and empower people and communities to take action. This campaign was initiated by the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, Circles for Reconciliation, and Reconciliation Thunder. [This webpage and resource outlines 6 steps people can take to develop a ReconciliACTION plan.](#) Below is an example I adapted to how your community can respond and act upon Calls #45-49.

**ReconciliACTION Plan on Calls to Action #45-49**

Calls to Action #45-47 call upon the churches to recommit to the Treaty Relationship and en flesh their repudiation of the violent Doctrine of Discovery. This resource is a sample of a learning and action plan to address Call to Action 45-47 in your community: <https://ehprnh2mwo3.exactdn.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/ReconciliACTION-Plan-45-47.pdf>

**Calls to Action #45 and #49** call for the repudiation of the Doctrine of Discovery and theologies that justify European sovereignty over Indigenous lands and peoples, and **a renewal of the Treaty relationship built on mutual respect.** The Doctrine of Discovery gave religious and legal justification for the forced enslavement of non-Christian people and the theft of their lands. This dehumanizing doctrine is the bedrock of the Residential School system, where Indigenous children were subject to forced labour.

***Learn about the Doctrine of Discovery:*** Though the Doctrine of Discovery was repudiated by General Synod 2010, it continues to be the foundation of Canadian society and the ongoing denial of Indigenous sovereignty. As a parish community commit to watching the award winning film by Anglican Video "Stolen Lands, Strong Hearts" and utilizing its powerful study guide: <https://www.anglican.ca/primate/tfc/drj/doctrineofdiscovery/>