



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on August 6, 2021

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## Churches Burn in Canada Based on Blood-libel Myth

“There are not over a hundred people in the United States who hate the Catholic Church,” the late, great Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen stated in 1938. “There are millions, however, who hate what they wrongly believe to be the Catholic Church.” In thus noting, perhaps Sheen was thinking of how the Crusades are cast as imperialistic campaigns when they were more like defensive actions designed to ward off Muslim aggression; or maybe how WWII-era pontiff Pius XII was portrayed as “Hitler’s Pope,” though we now know this is an illusion effected via Soviet agitprop. Or maybe the prelate was pondering 100 other things, from the historical to the theological.



Rebel News  
Rebel News

But now there’s one more, too: The mainstream-media-enabled allegation that “residential” schools in Canada — run by the Catholic Church in most cases and Protestants in some — seized American Indian children from their families, brutalized them, and then essentially authored their deaths before burying them in unmarked mass graves. “These government-funded boarding schools were part of a policy to attempt to assimilate indigenous children and destroy indigenous cultures and languages,” reported BBC News July 15. The outlet provocatively calls a now-adult former student it quotes a “residential school survivor,” knowing, perhaps, that what’s assumed is learned best.

With the above and recent talk of the “discovery” of “215 unmarked Indian mass graves” at the Kamloops Indian Residential School in Kamloops, British Columbia, it amounts to a seemingly damning story that could inspire damnable behavior, and so it has come to pass. At least 50 Canadian houses of worship — mainly churches, Catholic and otherwise — some of which serve immigrant and American Indian communities, ironically, have been vandalized or wholly burned down. Meanwhile, some public figures’ reactions have ranged from indifference to tacit approval to blatant encouragement. The head of the British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, Harsha Walia, responded to the arson on July 4 with, “Burn it all down.” NESTA Matthews, a talk-show host in St. John, New Brunswick, went further, tweeting June 30, “Burn the churches down. Arrest any former staff that were actually there & any current staff that won’t provide documentation. Sell everything they own in Canada and give it to survivors. Dismantle it completely.”

Perhaps even more shockingly, politicians have joined this phalanx. New Democratic Party member of the Ontario provincial parliament Dr. Rima Berns-McGown tweeted July 6 that she was standing “in solidarity with Harsha Walia.” On the same day, a former top Justin Trudeau advisor named Gerald Butts tweeted that burning churches wasn’t cool, but “may be understandable.” As for Prime Minister Trudeau himself, when he finally responded (after a week), he referenced the “anger” people feel



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toward the church and federal government and said at a news conference, “It’s real and it is fully understandable given the shameful history we are all become [sic] more aware of,” the Associated Press related July 2. He then continued, “I can’t help but think that burning down churches is actually depriving people who are in need of grieving and healing and mourning from places where they can grieve and reflect and look for support.” It’s all quite striking, so much so that it inspired a pause-for-thought observation from another Canadian. “I’ve been to Northern Iraq, and the vandalisms and burnings remind me of what I saw there,” Sheila Gunn Reid, chief reporter for Rebel News in Canada, told *The New American*. “Maybe ISIS did win, just not in the cradle of Christianity on the Nineveh Plain. Maybe they won here and the bigoted Left are their foot soldiers.” Maybe. Yet while facts won’t matter to the bigoted, the fact here is that the anti-church leftist agitators are ignoring history.

## A Look Back

This is a story that dates back to 1883. It was then that Canada’s first prime minister, John A. Macdonald, “passed a cabinet measure to create three residential schools in the West to be operated by the Catholic and Anglican churches,” reported the *Ottawa Citizen* July 2 in a piece critical of the endeavor. Clearly trying to demonize all involved, the *Citizen* quotes Macdonald — who’d once been a legendary Canadian figure — as having made statements such as when an Indian child attends a reservation school, he is “surrounded by savages.” Of course, historically, this was a pretty common way for advanced civilizations to refer to less developed-peoples (the ancient Romans and Chinese viewed those beyond their realms as barbarians). Yet, though it’s hard to find with Big Tech controlling information flow, there is another side here.

The Canadian West was won by men such as Macdonald and Charles Mair, a businessman, author, and officeholder cited by the blog *KiltSkate.com* in a September 4, 2017 piece titled “Sir John A.: Hero or Villain?” Mair was a poet who loved nature, and he “romanticized the original peoples, but he believed — like most Canadians of his time — that their culture was doomed to extinction,” wrote *KiltSkate*. “When Canadians then, including progressive thinkers like [educator and minister] Egerton Ryerson, called for First Nations to be educated in residential schools, it was not out of a desire to wipe out a people; instead, they thought this was the way to ensure their survival as individuals.”



**Good intentions:** John A. Macdonald, Canada’s first prime minister, was largely responsible for the establishment of the residential schools. It was his intention to help the indigenous people.



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“Macdonald had a complex relationship with first peoples,” KiltSkate later added. “As a lawyer he had represented them as clients. He counted some prominent Ottawa First Nation leaders among his personal friends. He put forward legislation to give indigenous people the vote. But like so many of his day, he considered First Nations culture to be inferior and doomed to extinction with the spread of ‘civilization.’” Macdonald was correct, too, at least in a sense. Indians today don’t live as their remote ancestors did, or have a desire to, any more than I’d embrace the lifestyle of my pre-Roman European forebears. We all benefit from modern wonders and conveniences and, as with everyone else, today’s Indians know that success requires learning to read and write (pre-European Indian cultures lacked the written word) and getting an education. Their early 19th-century culture is, at least in a great measure, extinct.

Interesting, too, is that our anti-Western wokesters complain that Canada’s Indians were subject to “forced assimilation” or even cultural genocide. Apparently, though, they don’t oppose these processes in principle. After all, they didn’t bat an eye when one of their fellows, Social Democrat politician Mona Sahlin, said in 2001 in reference to the Third World (im)migration transforming her native Sweden, “the Swedes must be integrated into the new Sweden; the old Sweden is never coming back.” Nor do they trouble over today’s China (or over getting rich off it), which currently interns more than one million Uighur Muslims in concentration camps. So it appears leftists like assimilation just fine — as long as the right people are being assimilated.

The point, however, is that the Indian school endeavor, for good or ill, was *government handiwork*. As Canada Free Press wrote June 30 in “The Blame for Residential Schools lies with the Federal Government,” we “should not lose sight of the fact that it was the federal government that created, funded, oversaw, and was responsible for the residential school system.” The site then asks, “Why is Trudeau trying to shift the blame for this tragic situation?” Well, the answer may be interesting. As the *National Post* noted June 7, “There is almost exactly a century separating the governments of Sir John A. Macdonald and Pierre E. Trudeau” — the current prime minister’s famed *father* — “but not much difference in their approach to Indigenous issues,” which the site called “unseemly.” Feeling guilty, Justin?

## **Killing Fields? Hardly!**

Yet also unseemly is the establishment “children’s cemeteries” narrative. Consider, as refutation, the 2015 report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) of Canada, which examined the residential school situation. Citing its findings, Canada Free Press wrote that, simply put, “the existence of unknown/abandoned cemeteries has been known for years.” In other words, there are abandoned and forgotten cemeteries of all kinds the world over; their existence is not an unusual phenomenon reflecting something nefarious.

“Most importantly, the TRC made six specific recommendations (Calls to Action) for the federal government to act in respect to the questions of missing children, unmarked graves, and residential school cemeteries (Calls to Action: 71 - 76),” the Press continued. “Those six Calls to Action have fallen on the deaf ears of Justin Trudeau and his government. Trudeau has had six years to move forward with the TRC’s recommended framework for addressing the abandoned cemeteries.... [Despite this, he] pretends to be surprised and shocked at the ‘discovery’ of abandoned cemeteries.”



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**Not the only mask he's wearing:** After waiting a week to address the church arson, Prime Minister Trudeau's response was practically a cavalier Jerry Seinfeld "That's a shame." But is his PC posturing just an effort to obscure his own family's "complicity" in the system he condemns? (*Photo credit: AP Images*)

Trudeau is joined in this propaganda by outlets such as the BBC, *Al Jazeera*, the *New York Times*, and the *Washington Post*, which make the cemeteries sound like Khmer Rouge killing fields in late '70s Cambodia. This inspired incredulity from *Toronto Sun* columnist Candice Malcolm: "How come so many media outlets described these as a 'mass graves'?" she tweeted June 4. "The words never appeared in the original news release from Tk'emlúps te Secwépemc [the BC Indians who examined the graves] either. The media just made it up."

In fact, they made up much. Consider Malcolm's July 12 True North piece, "Six things the media got wrong about the graves found near Residential Schools." Reporting on the "215 bodies" buried at Kamloops — once the largest such institution in Canada — she states that no claims at all have been verified. Ground-penetrating radar was used to evaluate the cemetery, yet this "doesn't actually see the bodies. It's not like an X-ray," Malcolm relates, quoting an anthropology professor. "To be clear: nothing was 'uncovered.' No 'bodies' were found," the journalist points out. "There was no excavation, nothing was unearthed, nothing was removed, no identities were confirmed."

In other words, we don't know how many bodies are present or whose they may be. This could explain, mind you, why Canada's National Center for Truth and Reconciliation has documented records for only 51 children who died at Kamloops between 1900 and 1971, not "215," a fact that has given rise to accusations of a coverup, to the notion that the "church didn't record all the child deaths because some were murdered!" After all, it "appears that not all of the graves contain children's bodies, Lerat (who is one of the [Indian investigatory] band leaders) said," wrote Malcolm, citing a *Globe and Mail* report. "He said the area was also used as a burial site by the rural municipality." "So what we have here is an abandoned community cemetery, where people of different backgrounds were buried," she sums up.

## The Residential Schools

So what's the truth about the residential schools? Greater than 130 in number, approximately 60 to 70 percent were Catholic Church-run, not surprising since Canada was once part of "New France" — the



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North American area colonized by France, a Catholic country — and since the Catholic Church is the world's largest church. It's also not surprising that, after the government established the residential school system, it recruited churches to run the institutions; Canada's government school system *wasn't even instituted till the late 1800s*. Molding the young, part of the church's mission, had always been its domain.

So the now much-maligned Kamloops school reflected the norm. Opened in 1890, it was given by government decree to the guidance of the missionary group the Oblates of Mary Immaculate in 1893. It also isn't unusual that "graves" are found there: After all, churches, especially in rural areas, often have adjoining cemeteries. Remember as well that in earlier, simpler times, it wasn't uncommon for the dead to be interred "on site"; why, sometimes the deceased would be buried in their family's own backyards.

None of this explains, however, *why* residential-institution schoolchildren passed away. As to this, a TRC "report noted 3,200 students who died while attending the schools, although the *New York Times* recently reported the number to be at least 4,100," reported LifeSite June 9. Out of more than 150,000 students who attended the schools, this is two to three percent of the total. Yet the realities of the time must be considered.

As LifeSite also reported, "Some statistics show that for infant mortality (i.e. deaths under the age of one year), the rate was 187 deaths per 1,000 births [18.7 percent] in 1900. High death rates were seen also between 1910 through 1920, coinciding with the Spanish Influenza epidemic." Note that this disease killed 675,000 people, many *young*, in the United States alone (*2,000,000-plus* adjusted for today's population).

"Meanwhile mortality rates for children under the age of five record 296.75 deaths per 1,000 births [almost 30 percent] in 1900," LifeSite continued. "That figure only dropped beneath 100 deaths per 1,000 births in 1935, with high rates of child mortality consistently seen from 1910 through 1920." Thus, any "discussion of death in childhood and the experience of children and families living with life-threatening medical problems has to be put in the context of child health as it has improved during the last century," wrote the National Center for Biotechnology Information," LifeSite further informed. Given the aforementioned, the residential schools' mortality record doesn't appear so striking, especially considering that American Indians have historically been more susceptible to diseases to which European-descent peoples developed immunity ages ago.

So in reality, many "children who died at these schools died of natural causes," writes the aforementioned Malcolm. "You can argue that these children didn't receive proper health care, or that some of their immune systems could[n]t handle living in close proximity to other children," she later stated. "But negligence resulting in accidental death is quite different from murder, which is what many in politics and the media have suggested."

Yet even insofar as there was negligence, who deserves most of the blame? Well, note here that early 1900s Medical Inspector to Canada's Department of Interior and Indian Affairs Dr. Peter H. Bryce issued a 1907 report warning that there were "prime conditions" for an "outbreak of epidemics" at residential schools. He also expressed, interestingly, that there were "excessively high rates of tuberculosis among Indigenous children and a *substantial lack of proper financial support from the state*," as LifeSite put it in a June 15 piece. (Emphasis added.) Yet the government ignored his pleas and



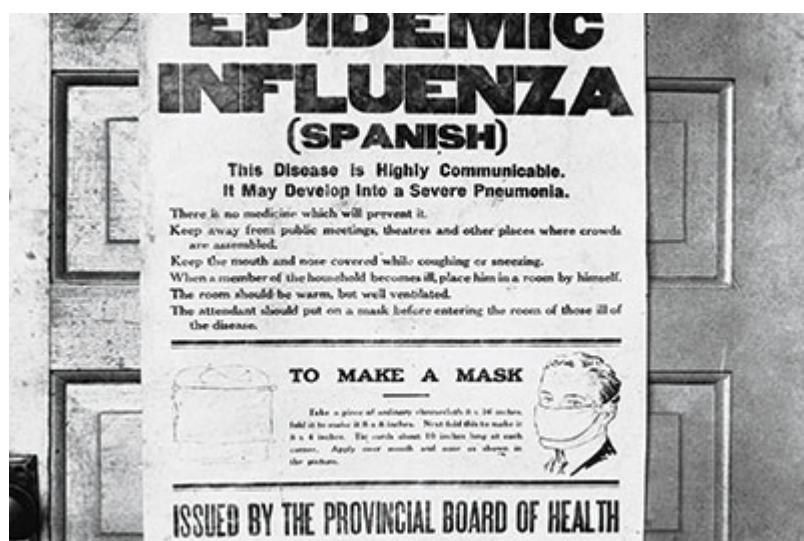
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wouldn't even publish his report. It ultimately was published in his 1922 book, *The Story of a National Crime*.

Of course, all the above largely explains why and how residential schoolchildren died, but not why their bodies weren't returned to their families. Wouldn't that have been the Christian thing to do?

Canadian author Michael O'Brien, a former residential-school pupil himself, shed light on this matter. He "noted that transportation difficulties abounded during Kamloops['] operational years," LifeSite reported in its June 9 article. "This meant that the bodies of children who died, for whatever cause, very often could not be returned to their families and were thus buried on the school premises. He was supported in this [assertion] by the *National Post*, who [sic] noted how the government's 'Department of Indian Affairs refused to ship home the bodies of children for cost reasons.'"



**Natural causes:** Many of the deaths among Canada's residential-school students can be attributed to higher mortality rates typical of the era. The Spanish Flu epidemic, for instance, caused a spike in deaths among children at the residential schools.

Yet shipping the kids to the schools after forcibly taking them from the parents was a different matter, and this did happen for a time — all perpetrated by the government. In fact, while testifying before the TRC, O'Brien pointed "to the chief underlying issue of the institutional abuse of children being removed from their families by the *state authorities*," as LifeSite put it. (Emphasis added.)

Yet what of the allegations of intra-school child abuse, of which there've been 7,000? Well, another former residential school pupil, world-renowned Cree playwright Tomson Highway, says there are 7,000 positive stories people aren't hearing — including his own. "Nobody's interested in the positive, the joy in that school," he told the now-defunct Huffington Post Canada in 2015. "Nine of the happiest years of my life[,] I spent at that school. I learned your language.... Have you learned my language? No, so who's the privileged one and who is underprivileged?"

Highway also stated that he "came from so far north and there were no schools up there," making the *same point* Macdonald, Mair, and Ryerson did more than a century ago: The residential schools offered Indians opportunities they wouldn't have had otherwise.



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## Eyewitness Accounts

Highway is hardly alone. Consider Cece Hodgson-McCauley, a woman chief and a longtime Northern News Service columnist whom LifeSite showcased in its June 28 piece “Rescued from the memory hole: Some First Nations people loved their residential schools.” “When her mother died, the future chief was six and her brother was two-and-half,” the site wrote. “Her father was a trapper, and therefore had ‘no choice’ but to send his children to the Fort Providence residential school, administered by nuns, to be cared for during the school year.”

Hodgson-McCauley, who died in 2018, spent 10 years at the school, going home for summers. “I can swear on the Bible that my time in the convent was good,” she said in her own 2012 article.

Given these realities, now-retired Canadian Senator Lynn Beyak decided to canvass her countrymen for relevant information. She published 104 testimonials on her website in 2017, many of which contain positive residential-school stories. What follows are some of them, as related by journalist Robert MacBain in 2018:

- “As retired educators ourselves, with a combined experience of 26 years in Aboriginal and Metis schools, we witnessed first-hand the positive anecdotes and experiences of those who gained from their attendance at Residential Schools. Unfortunately, current orthodoxy forces their ‘voices’ to be silenced.”
- “I worked with Chipewyan people as an employee of the Catholic Church from 1991 to 2001.... I heard many positive comments by native people who had attended residential school in Fort Resolution.”
- “My husband has worked and lived in several aboriginal communities in the north which greatly benefited from these schools and where the people speak very highly of the care and instruction they received. We are only given one side of the story.”
- “I spent over ten years living and working on reserves and northern settlements. And I remember, as a teacher, how often we had to convince the population to keep their children at home and go to the Day School, rather than to send them to a residential school. If the residential schools had been so bad[,] why were parents insisting that their children go?”
- “I attended a First Nations Art Exhibition in Fort McMurray and I met a native artist who told me how grateful she was to the nuns and priests in her community who ran the school because for her it was a place of refuge.”
- “I myself am a product of a Catholic convent school and while some people who attended that school with me will now say that the nuns were racists and treated them unfairly, that was not my experience. Yes, they were strict, but the principles of kindness and consideration for others were held in high esteem and they instilled in me values that successfully took me through more than 40 years in the business world.”
- “Having worked for and with Aboriginal people in northwestern Ontario — many who are my friends — I support what you have said. Are there not two sides to this story? Why is only one side being expressed? Shame on our government.”

## In Perspective

This said, it was acknowledged in the letters that transgressions did occur. The aforementioned author



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O'Brien himself "revealed that he had indeed witnessed abuse while at the [residential] school, although from lay employees in the schools, and not from the clergy or religious sisters," LifeSite also related. As an example of such, "a former employee of Kamloops, Gerald Moran, was convicted in 2004 of 12 counts of sexual abuse and given three years in jail," LifeSite informs.

Yet to gain perspective, and again noting that more than 150,000 children passed through the residential schools over more than a century, can we find an abuse-free major school system anywhere? Of course, every instance of child abuse is tragic, and perpetrators of such should be brought to justice. But man's sinful nature ensures there'll be no such thing as perfect people or perfect human institutions. And to paraphrase Abe Lincoln, if you look for the worst in someone — or *something* — you're sure to find it.

But the media only look where they wish. Just consider, for example, that Hofstra University professor Charol Shakeshaft found after conducting a 2004 federally funded study that the child-sex-abuse problem in American government schools was *100 times the magnitude* of the United States Catholic Church scandal, and is *still ongoing*. (This, not to mention the abusive "transgender" and other sexual devolutionary propaganda peddled to children.) Despite this, during the first half of 2002, the 61 largest newspapers in California ran nearly 2,000 stories about the church abuse, mostly concerning past allegations — and *four about the government school scandal*. Agendas, anyone?

Lastly and speaking of agendas, not every abuse allegation can be taken at face value — in the United States or Canada. In fact, the late Hodgson-McCauley "ruffled feathers by suggesting some people have lied about the residential school system for money," LifeSite also reported. But feathered friends or foes, isn't this just common sense? With \$2 billion in compensation to be had (yes, *billion*), assuming every claim is true would be just as silly as assuming every one is false.

Returning to the violent reaction to the claims, the kicker is that the Canadian churches burned often serve American-Indian congregants, according to journalist Ezra Levant. So we don't have to theorize about the media's lies, which catalyzed that reaction: They're real, they're extreme, and they're leading to the abuse of Indian Christians today.

*Selwyn Duke has written for The New American for more than a decade. He has also written for The Hill, Observer, The American Conservative, WorldNetDaily, American Thinker, and many other print and online publications.*





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