

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



**Résolution des questions des pensionnats indiens Canada
Actualité**

Thursday, June 1, 2006 ♦ jeudi, 1er juin 2006

Table of Contents/ Table des matières

<u>'HE HAD FIRE IN HIM -- TO THE LAST DAY' GABE MENTUCK SPOKE OUT AGAINST RESIDENTIAL SCHOOLS.....</u>	<u>3</u>
<u>THE CHANGING FACE OF RELIGION.....</u>	<u>5</u>
<u>AFTERMATH OF CHILDHOOD ABUSE AKIN TO ILLNESS: EXPERT</u>	<u>7</u>

June 1, 2006
The Winnipeg Free Press
Page: A1 (Life)

'He had fire in him -- to the last day' Gabe Mentuck spoke out against residential schools

Alexandra Paul

An elderly Manitoba man who was the public face for thousands of aboriginal people abused at residential schools in Manitoba died this week. Gabe Mentuck, 77, never turned down a request to talk about the sexual abuse and indignities he endured during five years in the Pine Creek residential school run by Oblate priests in the 1940s.

In story after story -- 10 in the Free Press alone in the last five years -- Mentuck spoke out against the schools. The mere mention of them sparked his outrage.

He believed they existed to destroy aboriginal traditions. And progress toward settlements was agonizingly slow.

"The compensation? It's taking too long. The government is prolonging it... because they're waiting for us to die," he said in one Free Press report just last month.

He died Tuesday -- before he could collect on his share of a \$2-billion compensation settlement -- passed this spring by Prime Minister Stephen Harper's cabinet.

The deal calls for a flat rate of \$10,000 paid to an estimated 80,000 residential school survivors. It also calls for an additional \$3,000 for every year in school. The average settlement is expected to be about \$20,000 but it won't come until next year. Fast-track advances of \$8,000 are expected out this summer for survivors over age 65.

"He was a fighter," his youngest son, Peter Mentuck agreed during an interview yesterday to mark his father's passing at the family home in the Maples.

"My Dad, he was battling (for justice) pretty heavy. With lawyers, with reporters, he'd get roused up and it was very stressful for him because it was hard for him."

At the same time, speaking out also fuelled his spirit, keeping him alive, despite the ravages of failing health, his family said.

"His battle kept him going. He liked politics," his son said. "He had fire in him -- to the last day."

In the weeks before he died, he called a Free Press reporter repeatedly, saying he had written out his life story and he wanted to pass it on. (See sidebar.)

Mentuck never came right out and said he was dying. But the man suffered from advanced diabetes; his heart was weak and he was blind.

On his last day, he seemed to give up and 12 hours later he was gone, his daughter, Arlene Buchberger, said yesterday.

"He was a fighter but he was tired. He'll be greatly missed. He was greatly loved," Buchberger said. Mentuck leaves five adult children who survived him as well as numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He has been cremated; his family will hold a memorial service at his house. Eventually, his remains will be interred at his original home, at Tootinaowaziibeeng First Nation, 340 kilometers northwest of Winnipeg.

At Manitoba Keewatinook Ininew Okimowin, a political umbrella group that represents the northern Manitoba chiefs, one staff worker who was close to Mentuck said his death came as a shock, all the same.

Mentuck's life was a testament to the power of human outrage in the face of injustice, said Melvin Swan, himself a survivor of residential school.

Today, I am a 77-year-old Indian. Tomorrow or some other day maybe not that far down the road, I will be a dead Indian but I will still be an Indian.

Now, most Canadians wouldn't think that's such a big deal since you are what you are born.

That's reality. That's truth. But reality and truth for this 77-year-old Indian are also the sentence I served in a Manitoba residential school where for five years, nuns and priests tried to beat, torture, and shame the Indian out of me.

Gabe Mentuck wrote about his battle for residential school compensation shortly before he died. To read the rest of his moving testimonial, visit the Free Press website, winnipegfreepress.com

May 31, 2006
Hundred Mile House Free Press
Online

The changing face of religion

Kathy Michaels

People say there are two conversation topics that should be avoided at all costs – politics and religion.

However, times they are a-changing.

The blockbuster

The DaVinci Code has brought discussions of a religious nature to the forefront and changing what was once taboo to commonplace.

Two weeks ago, Andrew Hutchison, the Anglican Church's national leader, came to 100 Mile House and sat down for a few minutes to discuss the nature of faith, the status of the church and current affairs.

Part of Archbishop Hutchison's job is to touch base with each diocese and it's why he's touring the South Cariboo.

A priest since 1969, he said the nature of organized religion has changed and the church has seen membership steadily decline. "There has been a secularization of society."

As more ethnic, religious or cultural groups became present in the country, Hutchison explained the emphasis moved away from church as a community focal point.

"Canada used to be predominantly Christian and the church was the only action in town on Sunday, there was no shopping or sports, [church], I think it's unfortunate children grow up without faith, but it's one of the necessities of a pluralistic society."

Rural people, however, have traditionally had a greater religious instinct, he added.

"They have always been closer to nature and dependent on powers not under their control. In many rural centers, the church continues to be a gathering point."

The Anglican Church has been rattled by scandal and changing societal norms in the last 40 years, but it's surviving because it seems to be changing with the times.

As a result of lawsuits related to the residential schools, the diocese of the Cariboo became financially insoluble.

“It tainted the reputation of all churches and Canadian government policy,” Hutchison said. “The government asked churches to operate schools on a shoe-string budget.”

The system was “fundamentally flawed,” he added, as it took young people and separated them from their culture and families.

In the early '90s, Hutchison’s predecessor made a formal apology on behalf of the Anglican Church’s and the healing and reconciliation is continuing.

“It’s a painful process as former students come forth and discuss the abuse, but the local church is a wonderful example of commitment. It faced insolvency, but the congregations were determined to carry on and not lose hope.”

As the Anglican Church moves forward, bridging relationships has become a major theme. There’s a movement to increase interdenominational co-operation.

Hutchison recently attended the World Council of Churches where 4,000 Christians “of every conceivable stripe” and 350 churches met to discuss the new challenge of pulling together.

As for The DaVinci Code, which has stirred up all the controversy and put religion in the forefront again, Hutchison said it was little more than a good read.

“The DaVinci Code is a wonderful whodunit, I enjoyed enormously. It’s very seductive in that it’s grounded in some historical fact, but I was shocked when I realized people were taking it as gospel.”

June 1, 2006
The National Post
Page: A19 (Body & Health)

Aftermath of childhood abuse akin to illness: expert

Charlie Fidelman, CanWest News Service

MONTREAL - The aftermath of childhood trauma should be seen as a chronic, potentially lethal illness like diabetes or heart disease, a psychiatrist said yesterday.

Studies suggest abuse in childhood is a major risk factor for suicide, David Spiegel, a Stanford University psychiatrist, told an international conference about suicide, held in Montreal.

"Often, when you look back at their lives, what you wonder is, not why they killed themselves, but how they lived as long as they did, because they suffer terribly," said Dr. Spiegel, who runs the Stanford Center on Stress and Health.

"A lot of professionals have an attitude [that] you're making a big deal out of nothing," he said of abuse. "We need to be more open and understanding and less ashamed and judgmental."

Child survivors of war, depression and **sexual and physical abuse tend to remain at risk for suicide throughout their lives**, Dr. Spiegel said. Using animal models, Michael Meaney of McGill University showed that maternal contact alters the chemistry in the developing brains of rat pups.

"Experiences in early life resets the stress-response system in rats for the rest of their lives," Dr. Spiegel said of Mr. Meaney's research. "His model is different than a human abuse model but still shows that, particularly very early in life, the nature of the treatment you receive can change the way you physiologically respond to stress."

Research by Christine Heim of Emory University School of Medicine in Atlanta, Ga., suggest a similar mechanism in people.

"Heim has done in humans what Meaney did with rats," Dr. Spiegel said. "It shows that the imprint of those early-life experiences is not just psychological."

But not everyone who has been traumatized will attempt suicide, Dr. Spiegel noted. **Survivors of abuse, however, pay a big price with a lasting vulnerability that can be triggered by failed relationships, illness and drug abuse, among other stressful events, he added.**

The Montreal conference, titled Suicide and Trauma, will be looking at the topic from an individual, cultural and societal point of view, said co-ordinator Michel Tousignant, of the Association Québécoise de prévention du suicide.

The World Health Organization estimates there are one million suicides a year, while 10 times that number try to take their lives.

About a third of Canada's 4,000 suicides occur in Quebec, the highest rate in the country.