

**Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada
Media Clips**



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

Tuesday, January 9, 2007 ♦ mardi, 9 janvier 2007

Table of Contents/ Table des matières

IRS RELATED COVERAGE:

Anglican Church finds just what it needs in new bishop.....p.3

January 9, 2007

Anglican Church finds just what it needs in new bishop

Vancouver Sun

It would be an understatement to say that the past few years haven't been good for the Anglican church.

Revelations of abuse at **church-run residential schools** seriously tarnished the reputation of the church, and culminated in a multimillion dollar settlement.

There were many factors that led to the abuse, but chief among them was a lack of understanding of, and insensitivity towards, aboriginals and native culture.

But to say all of that has changed is also an understatement. And a man named Mark L. MacDonald probably best exemplifies the church's new attitude toward aboriginals.

MacDonald, a 52-year-old Anglican bishop who spent most of his career ministering in Alaska and among the Navajo of the southwestern U.S., has just been named the Anglican Church of Canada's first National Indigenous Bishop. MacDonald was chosen after an international search and will provide a central leadership for aboriginal Anglicans.

In his new role, MacDonald will criss-cross the country, ministering to 225 indigenous Anglican communities. This is a tall order, but then MacDonald seems ideally suited to the task.

MacDonald, who met with the press last week, displayed a level of humility and respect toward aboriginals that was sorely missing in Canada throughout most of its history. In contrast to past missionaries, who attempted to "civilize" aboriginals -- often by stripping them of their language and culture -- MacDonald talked about how native culture and myth is a unique way of understanding Christianity.

Describing himself as a "reverse missionary," he explained how he has learned about his own faith through native congregations, rather than imposing his faith on them.

The bishop also didn't shy away from discussing the **tragedy of the residential schools**, telling Canadian Press it was a "gross tragedy of systemic evil ... the fruit of a system that treated people in a subhuman fashion."

MacDonald hopes to undo this damage by helping aboriginal Anglicans to take on a more significant role within their churches and also in the administration and celebration of their ceremonies: "We're really about being respectful of aboriginal authority," he said.

And that -- and MacDonald -- are precisely what's needed.