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Attention News Editors:

Remembering the Children

An Aboriginal and Church Leaders' tour to prepare for Truth and Reconciliation

TORONTO, Feb. 15 /CNW/ - Canada will soon mark a pivotal moment in its history.

That is why in early March the spiritual leaders of the Anglican, Presbyterian and United Churches, along with representatives of the Roman Catholic Church, and the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, will be participating in a multi-city tour to promote the work of the upcoming Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).

Once established, the Commission will be an official independent body that will oversee a process to provide former students and anyone who has been affected by the Indian Residential School legacy, with an opportunity to share their individual experiences in a safe and culturally appropriate manner through statement taking or truth-sharing.

As key participants, along with the federal government, in the operation of Indian Residential Schools, the Anglican, Presbyterian, Roman Catholic, and United Churches have committed themselves to full participation in the TRC process.

"We believe it is essential that Canadians pay close attention to this process of truth telling," explains Hon. David MacDonald, the United Church's Special Advisor on residential schools, and one of the organizers of the leaders' tour.

MacDonald adds, "This is the opportunity for all of us to hear the voices of the children who attended residential schools, to listen to their stories, and to learn, maybe for the first time, of the impact that residential schools have had on Canada's First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities."

The Remembering the Children tour is scheduled to begin in Ottawa on Sunday, March 2 and will make stops over the next week in Vancouver, Saskatoon, and Winnipeg. Participating in the tour will be:

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- Phil Fontaine, National Chief, the Assembly of First Nations
- The Rt. Rev. Dr. David Giuliano, Moderator, The United Church of Canada
- Archbishop Fred Hiltz, Primate, the Anglican Church of Canada
- The Rev. Dr. J. H. (Hans) Kouwenberg, Moderator, The Presbyterian Church in Canada
- The Rt. Rev. Mark MacDonald, National Indigenous Bishop, the Anglican Church of Canada

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At various times throughout the tour, local Roman Catholic representatives, along with regional Aboriginal leaders, and representatives of both Inuit and Métis groups, will participate in major public events that are being planned in each city by local organizing committees. Further details regarding the locations and times of these events will be available later this month.

MacDonald says that the Aboriginal and Church leaders hope the tour will raise awareness about the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and will help to educate both church members and other Canadians about the legacy of residential schools and the impacts of colonization on Aboriginal people and their communities.

"We see this tour as an opportunity to model what a new and positive

relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people might look like," says MacDonald.

Additional information about the tour will be posted and updated on a website that is currently being developed at www.rememberingthechildren.ca.

For further information: or to arrange media interviews, please contact:
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