

THE WORK OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS  
IN A DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

by

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### ABSTRACT

Aid is supposed to reduce poverty. However, a reduction in poverty is not the 'natural' outcome of aid-giving. Large government aid organizations generally are considered to be contributing to the problems of disadvantaged peoples in Low-Income Countries. On the other hand, smaller non-governmental organizations (NGOs) generally are seen as respecting cultures, administering to the 'poorest of the poor,' and working in cooperation with the 'grassroots.' Aboriginal peoples in Canada have much in common with the majority of so-called 'Third World' people. According to all social and economic indicators, First Nations people are the most disadvantaged peoples in Canada. This thesis examines the efforts of one NGO, the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), among the Holat'in (pseudonym) aboriginal people living in the Barano (pseudonym) area in British Columbia.

The 16 working hypotheses that evolved from the review of the outsiders' role in aboriginal communities and the work of NGOs overseas directed the fieldwork in 1986–87. Many of the statements focus on the character of the MCC volunteers, for program success has been linked to personality. As this is a humanistic inquiry, I have attempted to convey accurately the perspective of those under study. Participant observation, depth interviews, and time diaries were the qualitative methods used, and numerous unpublished documents became sources of additional information and also served to corroborate data collected through interviews and observation.

From initial contact in 1974, 14 full-time volunteers had completed their terms of service with MCC in Barano by 1986. Positions included that of welfare aide, teachers at both the Band preschool and elementary school, and 'parents' at the receiving, foster, and

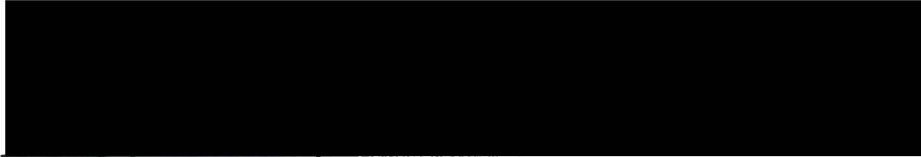
group homes. Only the group home assignment did not pertain exclusively to the La'malis people.

In January 1987, approximately at the mid-point in the fieldwork period, ten MCC volunteers were active in Barano. Four volunteers were group home parents, two were teachers, one was the education coordinator, another was the boat and house manager, and two volunteers were unassigned (spouses with children). The Band's preschool position was filled by a volunteer both for a fourth time and an eighth consecutive year.

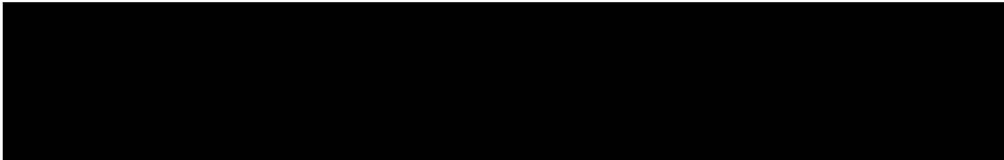
Despite the large contingent of volunteers active in 1987 and the near continuous volunteer presence since 1974, most villagers did not realize these people were in fact volunteers connected with an aid organization. Most of the volunteers filled existing or newly created positions. However, apart from the boat and house manager position, training components were not incorporated into the assignments so that La'malis residents could eventually take over positions. Moreover, volunteers' experiences reveal that MCC staff had not planned most of the assignments adequately.

While MCC's involvement in La'malis from 1974 to 1987 did not generate a dramatic turn around in the development of the community, the volunteers who were active in the village were accepted by La'malis residents. Perhaps the most significant contribution was provided by the teachers, who created a warm atmosphere where children found acceptance and could learn about their Holat'in language and traditions. An attitude of respect, as well as a genuine concern for the well-being of the people, stand out as volunteer traits. Most importantly, the volunteers were able to establish friendships with La'malis people. Such bonds only can serve to promote true human development among both privileged and disadvantaged peoples.

Examiners:



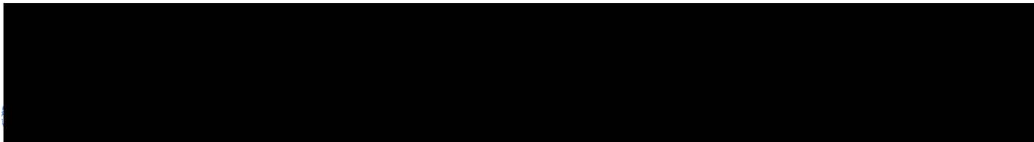
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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

## ABBREVIATION/ACRONYM:

CASNP	Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native People
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CTBS	Canadian Test of Basic Skills
CUSO	Canadian University Service Overseas
HBC	Hudson's Bay Company
HIC	High-Income Country
IEAC	Indian Education Advisory Committee
Indian Affairs	Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
LIC	Low-Income Country
MCC	Mennonite Central Committee
MCCer	Mennonite Central Committee worker (paid or voluntary)
MCC B.C.	Mennonite Central Committee British Columbia
MCC U.S.	Mennonite Central Committee United States
MCCC	Mennonite Central Committee Canada
MDS	Mennonite Disaster Service
MEDA	Mennonite Economic Development Associates
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
RCMP	Royal Canadian Mounted Police
Social Services	Provincial Ministry responsible for social services
STEPteen	Systematic Training for Effective Parenting for parents of teenagers
UBC	University of British Columbia
UIC	Unemployment Insurance Claim

## ABBREVIATION/ACRONYM:

UN	United Nations
VS	Voluntary Service
VSer	Voluntary Service worker

## LIST OF PSEUDONYMS

## PSEUDONYM:

Aaron	La'malis elder
Arlene	group home child
Art	La'malis Councillor
Barano	Non-aboriginal community near La'malis
Bert	group home child
Betty	MCC volunteer, teacher
Buwahlie people	First Nation that amalgamated with the Samaltan people and live in La'malis
Burl	Mennonite teacher at the Band School, Darlaine's husband
Cathy	La'malis Band home school coordinator
Chief Les	La'malis Chief Councillor
Chris	MCC volunteer, receiving and foster home parent; Lois' husband
Clarence	MDS volunteer in Walith
Darlaine	Mennonite nurse; Burl's wife
Deanne	La'malis social worker; non-aboriginal
Denise	MCC volunteer, teacher
Donna	MCC volunteer, group home parent and unassigned spouse; Neil's wife
Ed	MCC volunteer, foster home parent and teacher; Karen's husband
Erica	La'malis Band health care worker
Gail	MCC volunteer, group home parent; Ron's wife
Grant	MCC volunteer, house and boat manager; Louise's husband
Holat'in	Larger grouping of First Nations that includes the La'malis, Naskitlo, Paukumaht, Walith and other peoples or Bands

## PSEUDONYM:

Ingrid	MCC volunteer, receiving home parent; John's wife
Jacob	Neil and Donna's son
James	Social Services' social worker in Barano
Jean	MCC volunteer, unassigned spouse; Martin's wife
Jo	Maria's daughter
John	MCC volunteer, receiving home parent; Ingrid's husband
Judy	MCC volunteer, group home parent
Karen	MCC volunteer, foster home parent; Ed's wife
Kim	Maria's daughter
La'malis	Holat'in people and village near Barano
Lois	MCC volunteer, receiving and foster home parent; Chris' wife
Louise	MCC volunteer, unassigned spouse; Grant's wife
Lucy	Walith elder
Lynn	MCC volunteer, group home parent; Russ' wife
Marg	MCC volunteer, group home parent
Maria	MCC volunteer, teacher
Martin	MCC volunteer, welfare aide; Jean's husband
Marvin	group home child
Meredith	Social Services' supervisor
Naskitlo	Holat'in people and village
Neil	MCC volunteer, group home parent and education coordinator; Donna's husband
Nelson	La'malis Band Councillor
Paukumaht	Holat'in people and village
Rachel	Walith Native; Sam's wife

## PSEUDONYM:

Rick	MCC volunteer, receiving home parent; Val's husband
Ron	MCC volunteer, group home parent; Gail's husband
Rose	group home child
Russ	MCC volunteer, group home parent; Lynn's husband
Rusty	La'malis leader
Ruth	MCC volunteer, teacher; Lynn's sister
Sam	Former non-Holat'in Chief; Rachel's husband
Samaltan people	First Nation that amalgamated with the Buwahlie people and live in La'malis
Samantha	La'malis assistant Band manager
Sherry	La'malis Band School teacher
Val	MCC volunteer, receiving home parent; Rick's wife
Walith	Holat'in people and village
Wayne	La'malis Band manager

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## Chapter One

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

On December 9, 1992, the United States Marines landed at a beach in Somalia to begin a United Nations backed mission called Operation Restore Hope. This dramatic, heavily televised invasion was the UN's response to the plight of millions of starving Somalians, who had been unable to receive tonnes of food aid shipped into the country by Western relief and development organizations. The painful pictures of death broadcast into our homes are not so distant reminders of a similar disaster in Ethiopia, which grabbed the West's attention through such efforts as Band Aid, spearheaded by pop star Bob Geldof in the mid 1980s. Indeed, for many people in the West, the image associated with the term 'aid' is that of relief workers feeding starving Black children in Africa.

Aid,<sup>1</sup> however, takes on many different forms apart from disaster relief. Thousands of so-called 'development' agencies are involved in projects and programs throughout the world in such fields as education, health and child care. While efforts are focused on Low-Income Countries (LICs), aid organizations also are active in North America. The focus of this thesis is the work of one such aid agency among an aboriginal people in British Columbia.

At this point in the discussion, there is a basic, two-part question that begs a response: Why is this issue important, and does it need to be researched? With respect to its importance, this thesis ties in to the critical debate regarding the modernization process (cf. Banuri 1990a).

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<sup>1</sup> The term 'aid' has a positive connotation that may not be warranted. In this thesis, it simply refers to the transfer of non-military resources or information, which may or may not be promoting healthy change.

Hardly a book or journal on development issues comes out which does not express disappointment, disillusionment, or dissatisfaction with the ability of what Ashis Nandy has called a 'secular theory of salvation' to live up to its promise to expand human freedoms. Many factors have contributed to this emerging crisis. The most obvious one is the extremely uneven record of development: of the persistence of poverty amid increasing affluence, of the increase in unemployment despite expanding production, and, in general, of the failure to ameliorate the condition of people in the poorest countries of Africa and Asia (Banuri 1990a:30).

For the most part, government aid has been an extricable element of the modernization or Westernization of traditional cultures. Non-governmental organizations<sup>2</sup> (NGOs), however, generally have been commended for providing assistance in a manner that respects other cultures and their non-Western values, and seeks to empower 'grassroots' people. But there is a paucity of information regarding the field activities of NGOs, both overseas and, particularly, in North America. Hence, this study makes a significant contribution to an important subject area that is not well documented.

What follows continues the discussion concerning development, aid and aboriginal peoples.

## 1.2 DEVELOPMENT

The central problem of the encounter [between the dominant knowledge system of the West, *episteme*, with traditional knowledge systems] is the imperialistic pretension to universality made on behalf of Western *episteme* and the total inability of its adherents to regard competing systems with anything but contempt, the inability indeed even to contemplate the existence of competing systems. Other systems of knowledge, particularly when they are embedded in myth and ritual, become superstition, the very antithesis of knowledge. The encounter is often fatal for indigenous systems because the supreme confidence of Westerners or Westernized elites in their knowledge is coupled to the superior means of political and economic force at their disposal (Marglin 1990:25).

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<sup>2</sup> The term originated at the United Nations and "remains the most widely understood means of referring to voluntary agencies in the field of international development" (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:x). 'Private voluntary organizations,' most commonly used in the United States, and 'private development agencies,' are also popular terms.

For me, the concept of development provokes a number of fundamental questions about values, choices and what constitutes the ‘good life.’ Each value system generates a different interpretation of what development should be, and so it is important to define the concept. In the broadest sense, development should be a process that frees humans to realize their potential in harmony with themselves and nature. More specifically, development, as an all encompassing process, should promote social and economic justice, advance spiritual values, respect cultural diversity and allow for the effective participation of all peoples in decision-making (Lissner 1977:20). Development should enable indigenous cultures to transform themselves on their own terms, rather than according to one model the West considers intrinsically superior (Marglin 1990:16). Indeed, Marglin (1990:16) suggests that “cultural diversity may be the key to the survival of the human species.”

Unfortunately, for the most part, development has not been what it should be. As Banuri (1990a; 1990b) and Marglin (1990) have observed, for the last 500 years development has been Westernization, which expresses Western values as universals, thereby promoting cultural hegemony. Industrialization, urbanization, the centralization of political authority, the growth of science, secularization based on literacy, and the rise of achievement for personal advancement (Marglin 1990:2), are key elements of the Western model of development. Yet, it is clear, whether in the West or in LICs, Westernization “has yet to produce an acceptable model for relationships between people or with nature” (Marglin 1990:16).

### 1.3 CONTEXT OF DEVELOPMENT

To study countries, above all perhaps to study developing societies, in a world system [capitalism] without studying the classes that are dominant and dominated in them is to fall into error. This is typified by talk of one **country** exploiting another, as if nations were homogeneous and state policies were pursued in the interests of the whole population. What the world system holds together, then, is not countries or even states but economic activities and more specifically economic classes (emphasis in original) (Barratt Brown 1982:166).

Griffin and Rahman Khan (1982:248) correctly note that it is difficult to understand development related problems “until it is more widely accepted that there are classes in society and that the interests of the various classes are often in conflict.” In LICs, poverty is associated with such classes or groups as landless agricultural labourers and plantation workers. In Canada, it can be argued that most aboriginal peoples are part of a class that is also associated with poverty largely due to the imposition of a reserve system that has rendered them essentially landless.<sup>3</sup> With this understanding, poverty becomes the product of a social system and it “reflects differences in access of various groups to sources of economic and political power” (Griffin & Rahman Khan 1982:250).

Clearly then, the reduction of poverty requires far more than simple charity or a transfer of resources, for they do not remove the underlying causes of poverty. Poverty does not exist because of overpopulation, scarce resources or lack of modern technology, but because capital and political power are controlled by a small class, the elite (cf. Lappe *et al.* 1980:10). A development project, therefore, ultimately should seek to redistribute wealth or economic power, as well as enable disadvantaged peoples to exercise greater political power. Such development work, however, “when it involves the poor,

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<sup>3</sup> Reserve lands remain in the name of the federal Crown. Only with recent land claim settlements in the Yukon and Northwest Territories, have aboriginal peoples acquired control over a significant land base.

unorganized and powerless, is slow, unsteady and risky” (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:150).

#### 1.4 AID

True human development the world over requires changing economic and social systems to allow for more equitable sharing of global resources in a spirit of stewardship and social justice (Roche 1979:12).

... [A] transfer of power over the earth’s resources from dominant to dominated groups and classes, via aid schemes and positive discrimination in trade, could not be made in more that a very few especially well-placed countries. To generalize such a transfer would imply nothing short of worldwide revolution. The aim of such programs prepared by leading politicians in developed countries is precisely to head off revolution by buying off certain leading groups in revolutionary movements (Barratt Brown 1982:169).

Aid is supposed to reduce poverty. The rhetoric of all aid agencies implies that a humanitarian ethic lies at the heart of aid-giving. However, a reduction in poverty or the advancement of indigenous economic, political, social and spiritual values, are not the ‘natural’ outcome of aid-giving. The gap between rich and poor<sup>4</sup> is widening, and “in both relative and absolute numbers, there are more hungry people in the world today ... than there were before ‘aid’ was ever invented” (Linear 1985:16). Indeed, some aid critics refer to large aid organizations, such as the Canadian International Development Agency, as underdevelopment agencies. The label is not normally applied to the smaller NGOs, yet critics have argued NGO aid can be as destructive as the worst forms of government assistance (e.g., Carty & Smith 1981).

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<sup>4</sup> Couture (1982:20) notes that Cree Indian people do not use ‘poor’ in the economic or material sense. ‘Poor,’ in Cree, refers to a lack of personality. Bowd (1978:6) suggests it “implies intellectual as well as material deprivation.” However, whenever I use the term, its meaning is restricted to the economic realm.

## 1.5 ABORIGINAL PEOPLES

One of the most severe problems the Native person is faced with today is that he is defined outside himself (LaRoque 1975:8)

The process of labeling other human beings ... is fraught with difficulty; both writers and readers have a social responsibility to question the labels they use, to understand the layers of meaning attendant to them as much as possible (Wall 1985:44).

Rarely does the term 'Third World development' refer to the struggles of the original inhabitants of North America. Yet, observers have noted that the conditions in the South African Black township of Soweto, for example, resemble those found on many First Nation reserves in Canada. According to all social and economic indicators, aboriginal peoples are the most disadvantaged peoples in Canada (Wolfe 1986:1).

In Canada, aboriginal groups include Indian, Inuit and Métis peoples.<sup>5</sup> Since European contact, "noble red man," "savage," "nature-lover" and "dirty Indian" have been some of the labels placed on the 'Indian'<sup>6</sup> (LaRoque 1975:32). Until recently, Hollywood has portrayed an aboriginal person either as a beautiful, scantily clad 'squaw,' a feathered, whooping, tomahawk carrying warrior on horseback, or as the faithful and stoic companion "Tonto," possessing a vocabulary limited to "ughs" and "me-gettums" (Stedman 1982:242). The mass media, in general, have long fostered the notion that

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<sup>5</sup> 'Inuit,' meaning 'the people,' has replaced 'Eskimo' as the identifier of these northern aboriginal people (not to be confused with the 'Innu' of Quebec/Labrador, who were formerly called the Naskapi Montagnais Indians). 'Métis,' usually of French and Native Indian ancestry, have been defined as those persons with no less than one-quarter Indian 'blood' (Kimelman 1985:135). Population estimates of aboriginal peoples vary between 600,000 and 1,500,000, the higher figures being aboriginal estimations.

<sup>6</sup> In the literature, 'Indian' terminology has undergone numerous changes in the past twenty years. Variations include 'Indians,' 'Natives,' 'Native Indians,' 'aboriginals,' 'aboriginal peoples,' 'indigenous peoples,' 'First Nations,' 'First Nations peoples' and 'Native peoples.' Each version has received criticism (e.g., 'aboriginal' conveys the stereotypical image of the 'half-naked, spear-throwing' aborigines of Australia), but currently 'aboriginal peoples,' 'Native peoples,' and 'First Nations' are the terms that seem least controversial, and so they are the identifiers used in the thesis.

Native peoples have one ethnic, national and linguistic identity, and hence, that they all look, dress and act alike. The portrayal reflects a basic ignorance of aboriginal peoples, for they are numerous and diverse (there are some 600 Bands or First Nations<sup>7</sup> in Canada, and nearly 200 of them reside in British Columbia alone).

Federal legislation also mirrors a stereotypical view of aboriginal peoples. The *Indian Act*, which does not apply to Inuit or Métis peoples, defines aboriginal persons as those who are registered or entitled to be registered as Indians.<sup>8</sup> The registry created two classes of aboriginal people: registered or status, and non-status, who had been stripped of their rights, primarily through marriage and enfranchisement (Kimelman 1985:134). Aboriginal women who married non-aboriginal men lost their status. However, non-aboriginal women who married aboriginal men gained status, which remained even after a divorce (Desjarlais 1985:6). Hence, “many persons legally classified as Indians have blue eyes and blond hair; many persons not legally classified as Indians have the physical traits commonly accepted as Indian” (Hendry 1969:3). Only in this past decade have aboriginal peoples been given permission to define themselves.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> A ‘Band’ is a group of aboriginal people who share reserve lands that have been set aside for them by the federal government.

<sup>8</sup> The definition uses ‘Indian’ approximately 30 times (Bezeau 1984:40). The Indian Act is the piece of legislation passed by Parliament which gives it the exclusive right to enact laws concerning “Indians and lands reserved for Indians” (Desjarlais 1985:5).

<sup>9</sup> Bill C-31, passed in 1985, prevents the gain or loss of status by marriage, reinstates Native women who lost their status and gave Bands until July 1987 to establish their own rules for membership (Desjarlais 1985:7). Prior to Bill C-31, Native persons also lost their status if they joined the Armed Forces, attended university, entered the clergy or obtained and maintained a job.

## 1.6 THESIS STATEMENT

It is not difficult to make a link between disadvantaged peoples living in LICs and aboriginal peoples living in Canada. Furthermore, the concepts of development and aid have been examined by numerous researchers. But rarely, if at all, is the topic of aid discussed in relation to Native peoples. As noted above, aid is viewed as flowing from Canada and other High-Income Countries (HICs) to LICs. However, several NGOs provide aid to various First Nations in Canada.

This study examines the work of the Mennonite Central Committee (MCC), the non-profit, voluntary service organization representing most Mennonite and Brethren in Christ churches in North America,<sup>10</sup> among the Holat'in aboriginal people of La'malis, British Columbia.<sup>11</sup> More specifically, the multiple and interrelated foci are to:

- (1) describe MCC's operation in La'malis and Barano through the accounts of its volunteers;
- (2) document the volunteers' self-assessments, and their comments regarding MCC in general;
- (3) document the comments of La'malis residents and interested outsiders concerning the volunteers and MCC's operations;
- (4) compare MCC's operational statements with its activities in La'malis and Barano; and
- (5) assess MCC's impact on the La'malis people.

The study primarily employs qualitative methods, grounded in the phenomenological paradigm.

This inquiry extends into largely 'uncharted waters,' not only in the geographical realm, but also with respect to other social sciences. A handful of researchers have

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<sup>10</sup> The churches represented by MCC have their own missionary boards, and so MCC is not referred to as an evangelistic organization by its constituents.

<sup>11</sup> 'Holat'in' and 'La'malis' are pseudonyms. Holat'in refers to a larger grouping, and La'malis describes the First Nation or Band and the village or reserve. Pseudonyms are used throughout the thesis for people and places directly connected to the aboriginal community.

examined the overseas activities of NGOs (e.g., Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988), but documentation on their domestic work is virtually non-existent. In general, the aid debate reached a peak among academics between 1968 and 1972, but it has since interested few researchers. The most active participants over the past decade have been journalists (e.g., Linear 1985) and members of private organizations (e.g., Adams & Solomon 1985). For the most part, geographers have ignored the issue. Evidence suggests that Canadian geographers are increasingly ignoring foreign-area research (Porteous & Dyck 1986; Johnston 1984). Indeed, geographers contribute to the growing indifference to the 'outside' world among all academics.

Much of the same comments apply to research concerning First Nations in Canada. The focus on Native peoples also crested in the late 1960s and early 1970s as 'Red Power' gained strength and captured the media's attention. Canadian geographers, until recently, have almost entirely avoided Native peoples and their struggles.

Clearly, an examination of an aid agency's work in a Native community lies at the fringe of current geographical inquiry. But I do not view that as particularly troublesome, for I agree with Banuri (1990b:97) when he states

that the traditional division of social science into separate disciplines is not a useful way of approaching issues. It would be more productive to divide up the area of knowledge into geographical or cultural subdivisions.

Nevertheless, as a foray into unexplored geographical 'territory,' both metaphorically and physically, this thesis is linked to the once rich tradition of exploration in geography (e.g., the Royal Geographic Society of London sponsoring exploratory expeditions in the nineteenth century). Moreover, as a phenomenological study, it adds to the humanistic works produced by an increasing number of geographers (e.g., Porteous 1989).

## 1.7 REVIEW OF CONTENTS

A literature review of non-governmental aid and a discussion of the working hypotheses used to guide the field research are presented in Chapter Two. The research design and method are outlined in Chapter Three, and Chapters Four and Five provide necessary background information concerning the aid recipient and donor respectively. The discussion of the La'malis people is placed within the national context of First Nation issues, and the description of MCC's *raison d'être* and operational structure in Chapter Five sets the backdrop for the presentation of the field data in Chapters Six through Eight.

Chapter Six describes the experiences of the volunteers who preceded those who were active in Barano during the fieldwork period (1986-87), and Chapter Seven deals with the experiences of the latter group of volunteers. General data that do not pertain directly to any one volunteer are organized in Chapter Eight. Finally, Chapter Nine concludes the thesis by examining the nature of MCC's impact on the La'malis people from the organization's initial contact to 1987.

## Chapter Two

### NON-GOVERNMENTAL AID: AIDING DEVELOPMENT?

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

Confusion and controversy abound over the purpose and accomplishments of multi-billion dollar aid programs. Those few researchers who are interested in the topic can be placed into two camps (Carty & Smith 1981). On the one side, reformers argue for modifications to existing practices, largely with reference to the amount of aid disbursed. Reformers at one end of this spectrum claim most aid is wasted and so it should be reduced and concentrated on actual or potential allies, such as those countries open to foreign investment. Others want the volume of aid increased because the problems are seen as immense and the response as inadequate.

On the other side, radicals call for the replacement of current aid practices, because they are seen as part of a structure that perpetuates poverty by reinforcing the power of the elite. Unless both donor and recipient governments are committed to equitable distribution and popular political participation, radicals view bilateral (i.e., government to government) and multilateral (e.g., United Nations sponsored) aid as underdevelopment assistance. Unfortunately, for disadvantaged peoples, evidence suggests that the radicals are correct.

#### 2.2 BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS

Government aid officials who are convinced their organizations are contributing to positive development generally hold the view that poor people exist because they have been 'left out' of modernization (Lappe *et al.* 1980:11). Often, the underlying assumption is that modernization or Westernization leads to desirable change, and that an infusion of capital will eliminate poverty (Hartmann & Boyce 1983:265). Hence, when capital is introduced

and poverty persists, there is a tendency to explain the failure by characterizing the recipients as incompetent, apathetic and incapable of exercising self-control. The interdependence and transnational nature of development is obscured as problems are isolated to LICs. But many aid efforts 'out there' fail because they do not address the root causes of poverty, which may stem from outside the LIC.

Canada's official aid organization is the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Although considered much more progressive than its American counterpart, the Agency for International Development, CIDA has not escaped criticism. Mismanagement and waste, although repulsive, could be excused if it were clear CIDA had been guided by a humanitarian ethic. But aid is the chief instrument of Canada's foreign policy<sup>1</sup> (Carty & Smith 1981:26), the primary purpose of which is to promote Canadian goods and services. Indeed, CIDA funds are another form of government subsidization for Canadian industry (Roche 1979:161).

Viewed as viable alternatives to the partisan nature of bilateral organizations, multilateral agencies include many LICs on their membership lists. Their global appearance is a facade, however, for they serve the interests of the elite in HICs, particularly those that contribute most to their budgets. The Food and Agriculture Organization's "glamorous agribusiness schemes," for example, benefit only the West and LIC elite (Linear 1985:30). In Bangladesh, the World Bank financed the installation of large tubewells and pumps in villages (Hartmann & Boyce 1983:256-259). In one village, the tubewell became the personal property of one man and his subsequent rise in income left him in a better position

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<sup>1</sup> Other bilateral organizations also have been criticized for playing politics. In the 1970s, for example, the West German aid agency flew its planes into Mali, not Guinea, during a relief operation. As a result, "it might not have mattered if the relief planes had flown out over the Atlantic and dumped the grain into the sea" (Marnham 1980:98), for much of the food failed to reach the starving people in Mali. More significantly, nomadic pastoralism was destroyed in the area in which relief operations did take place.

to buy out smaller farmers. The project is a prime example of underdevelopment assistance, but its harmful impact may be negligible, for it is also one based on inappropriate technology. The tubewells are plagued by frequent breakdowns and there are few spare parts. Moreover, many tubewells have been sabotaged by angry villagers.

Disadvantaged peoples in LICs would be better off if the the World Bank ceased to exist (Adams & Solomon 1985:155). In general, multilateral agencies are “instruments of domestication,” for they seek to tame the masses in LICs (Goulet & Hudson 1971:25). Their aid, as well as that from bilateral organizations, flows through the hands of the elite, further entrenching them in power and increasing the destitution of the disfranchised classes.

### 2.3 NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

It seems that in an overseas setting one tends to depend upon one's own native culture. Yet we would prefer to die in our poverty than to live like Americans. Take your agriculturalist who knows agriculture and the Bible and who feels it is his God-given duty to teach others to be like him. But who wants to be like the U.S., with your breakdown of the family system, with your missionaries who teach brotherhood, yet do not act like brothers – indeed, who tell the local children playing with their children to go home at lunchtime so that they themselves can eat, rather than, as is our custom, sharing their food with whomever is there at the time? Then, too, the American concepts of organization, evaluation, and time itself are all different from ours. An American understands time by the clock, but we understand it by establishing personal relationships which are not time-bound; the American, to begin with, comes to us, with his aid, on a seventeen-day excursion ticket! But then, since no project lasts more than three years, we can afford to humour our donors (the director of an indigenous NGO, in Sommer 1977:27).

While the dollar value of non-governmental aid only amounts to a fraction of that which is dispensed by bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs far out number the official aid organizations. The world-wide NGO total exceeds 2,000, with well over 200 Canadian groups active overseas. Virtually all of today's NGOs are creations of the twentieth

century, and since the early 1960s, their activities have expanded dramatically (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:x).

Exploitation is not generally considered to be part of the work of NGOs. On the contrary, often NGOs are regarded as pioneers in good development work (Roche 1976:108). Yet, “some Canadian and international NGOs are as paternalistic supporters of the political status quo as the worst forms of government aid giving,” argue others (Carty & Smith 1981:177). Divergent opinions on the effectiveness of NGOs are not only due to their variety, but also because of the fragmentary data available on their activities. Information regarding NGOs is lacking both in quantity and quality (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:x).

### 2.3.1 Research on NGOs

Several studies on aid that have not focused on NGOs have called for in-depth investigations of their efforts (e.g., Ehrhardt 1983; Lappe *et al.* 1980). Roche (1979:164), after viewing CIDA’s work in the Far East, concluded that governments should channel more funds through NGOs. While admitting NGOs “do useful things,” Hayter and Watson (1985:253) state the agencies are no substitute for government ones. Lappe *et al.* (1980:148) argue

that even the best voluntary aid efforts have the danger of absorbing all of our attention and of diluting our sense of responsibility for the role that both government and corporations based in our economy play in maintaining unjust economic structures.

Minimizing contact with government is shortsighted, claims English (1983:158), for it must play a major role in self-sustained development. He adds that some NGOs in Haiti take “very temporary ad hoc measures which occasionally border on the naive,” and “they also suffer from weaknesses which hamper even the most insightful of initiatives” (p.79).

Lissner (1977:206-211), in a study devoted solely to NGOs, outlines six roles an NGO can take in its relationship with government:

- 1) subservient – the NGO strictly adheres to government policy and regulations;
- 2) partnership – the NGO project complements or supplements government programs;
- 3) compensatory – people bypassed by government are assisted by the NGO;
- 4) corrective – the NGO pressures government to change harmful practices and becomes ‘the voice of the voiceless;’
- 5) disobedient – NGO values take precedent over and against government laws and desires; and
- 6) subversive – the NGO participates actively in the overthrow of an oppressive regime.

They may take on more than one of these roles, but most NGOs are not interested in ‘politics,’ preferring to hold to a mistaken notion of neutrality (Lissner 1977:224).

Guided by faith in the potential of NGOs, Brodhead and Herbert-Copley (1988) examined over 200 Canadian agencies active overseas. Noting that in recent years NGOs have sought and received increased government funding, while adamantly claiming to remain independent, the North-South Institute researchers try to explain the paradox.

It is perhaps well to remember that NGOs also have institutional interests to protect, conflicting internal views to reconcile, and a difficult task of striving for organizational coherence while remaining responsive to a multitude of needs and pressures. Their freedom to function implies that NGOs can do what governments cannot, ought not, or will not do – supporting human rights for example, or working in politically ‘difficult’ areas like Eritrea, or asking questions about the impact of large-scale projects on the environment, and so on. But the **will** to do so derives not from some formalistic assertion of autonomy, nor even from independence from government money, but from a vision of development rooted in values and choices. ... Autonomy is not so much a virtue to be guarded as a challenge to be met, and a principle to be exercised (emphasis in original) (p.70).

Brodhead and Herbert-Copley believe the essential difference between NGOs and government agencies is that the former view people as more than simply producers and consumers. Hence, aid should integrate justice, self-determination and dignity. Masoni (1985:41) agrees, adding that NGOs have made valuable contributions to a ‘humanistic

model of development.’ Governments, on the other hand, find it difficult to handle such abstract human values as dignity (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:46).

Brodhead and Herbert-Copley (1988:32-33) also note that NGO goals, unlike those of government, are altruistic. NGOs are created from a sense of mission, such as the provision of food to victims of a disaster. As the agencies evolve, they realize the inadequacies of the welfare approach and move toward long-term development programs. In the beginning, NGOs are underfunded, understaffed and very vulnerable. Over time, their administrations solidify and the prior urgency wanes. Sometimes an agency becomes bureaucratic, where forms, procedures and paperwork take precedence and an elite makes all decisions (Smith & Freedman 1972:70). Ponderous, protective and rigid, the agency becomes reluctant to take risks.

Lissner (1977:291-292) has derived four criteria for evaluating NGO performance.

Each NGO should do the following:

- 1) provide various social services directly to victims of poverty and disaster;
- 2) sensitize people through education to influence their attitudes and behaviour regarding socio-political matters;
- 3) challenge political authority to remove specific causes of suffering; and
- 4) contribute to spiritual and mental growth by encouraging a new sense of purpose in life.

Lissner insists that none of these four functions ought to be neglected.

Brodhead and Herbert-Copley (1988:149-153) maintain that NGOs are faced with four key challenges:

- 1) information – provide themselves and the public with better information;
- 2) autonomy – maintain the adherence to a distinctive set of values, and a unique knowledge of authentic needs;
- 3) coordination – balance independence and isolationism with greater cooperation; and
- 4) management – replace the “organizational culture of crisis management” with a more strategic approach.

According to NGO staff, the greatest weakness is a lack of inter-agency cooperation.

By persisting in seeing their interventions as 'small,' NGOs excuse themselves from the responsibility that comes from being taken seriously; they may choose to remain marginal partly out of a justifiable suspicion of power and of those who wield it; but partly – for some – it is out of a desire to remain unsullied by the real-life compromises and conflicts which are inevitable when dealing with the use of allocation of resources (p.152).

Brodhead and Herbert-Copley found that altruism is one of the five enduring principles, as perceived by Canadian NGO staff, of non-governmental aid. The four other principles are autonomy, participation (providing channels for the public to participate in overseas assistance), cooperation (establishing unique relationships with beneficiaries) and efficiency. The researchers claim altruism is both a strength and a weakness:

a strength because it draws upon the tremendous energy inherent in the noblest of human urges for justice, compassion, and service; a weakness because it seems somehow to place such organizations above critical assessment of their own motivation and operations (p.31).

Linden (1976:7) sensed that weakness when he began his critique of CARE.

When I first visited CARE headquarters in New York and began to ask questions, I felt like something of a killjoy, as if merely asking questions were to impugn something sacred.

He soon felt that if his assessment was “anything but fervid praise,” CARE supporters would accuse him of “driving the public deeper into cynicism and literally taking food from the mouths of the hungry” (p.7). And his conclusions were anything but praiseworthy.

Ask a knowledgeable person to characterize an organization that endures twenty years beyond its original mandate and whose employees are attracted as much by personal considerations as they are by interest in the organization's mission, and that person is likely to say that you have just described a bureaucracy. CARE has followed a classic bureaucratic evolution (p.259).

Other studies have also focused on individual agencies. Lapajne (1983:41) concludes that CUSO “has a very definite, if not shocking shade of pink in its ideological orientation.” The 25th anniversary of the Mennonite Economic Development Associates (MEDA) sparked a study of the organization by Fretz (1978). He claims that because the agency is not a public one, “it would thus be difficult to justify criticism of MEDA motives

even if the end results of the experiment had not turned out to be successful, as most of MEDA's efforts have." And in a personal view of Oxfam's (U.K.) first 40 years, Whitaker (1983:202) characterizes its personnel as "highly idiosyncratic and motivated individualists."

Although there is agreement that project evaluations are necessary, they rank low on NGO priority lists. Brodhead and Herbert-Copley (1988:112) argue that NGOs are weak in the area of evaluation, particularly when the projects have been successful. Mathies and Shute (1983:36) note that, in a perverse way, NGOs may benefit from not scrutinizing their projects, thereby avoiding potential embarrassment.

Building on a previous study of 36 rural projects of primarily bilateral and multilateral agencies in Africa and Latin America, Development Alternatives Inc., a private consulting firm, evaluated 17 NGO projects in Kenya and Niger (Barclay *et al.* 1979). Project impacts were broken down into direct benefits, benefit continuation and benefit growth. 'High,' 'moderate' and 'marginal' levels of impact were derived from an aggregate of the three 'benefit' variables. The study revealed a high level of impact had been generated by the project strategies that focused on either small groups or the concept of self-help. Another study examined an American Friends Service Committee's village program in India (1952-1962) almost ten years after it had been terminated. Platt (1973), one of the participants in the program, observed that while it had helped villagers become self-sufficient, the program had failed to bring about all necessary changes, such as different sanitary practices. Furthermore, many individual projects had not been maintained by the villagers.

Mathies and Shute (1983) approached examining the effectiveness of MCC's programs in Botswana, Swaziland and Zambia by concentrating on the concerns identified

by the volunteers.<sup>2</sup> Questionnaire responses indicated the volunteers had been very pleased with most aspects of their assignments. "Suitability of placement, assignment satisfaction, significance to country development, opportunities for using skills and abilities, and ... meeting the needs of those served," were criteria that ranked highly<sup>3</sup> (pp.44-45). Growth in cultural awareness had also been 'considerable' or higher, and grass-roots rural development assistance had been the part of the program that gave them the most satisfaction. With respect to personal relationships, the greatest satisfactions arose

from the experience of reciprocity and mutuality between the volunteers and the community. Building relationships, being accepted, learning about others and communicating in a cross-cultural context were mentioned most frequently as examples of this two-way process (p.46).

Curle (1969:85) found that close contact between volunteers and the people in Ghana helped generate the highest performance ratings. And Lindholm (1974:40) noted that those Swedish workers in Africa, both government and volunteer, who were motivated by idealistic considerations, had fellowship less frequently with Europeans than those with more egoistic motives. Not that contact with fellow workers is unimportant, for the importance of "mutual support" was rated highly by the MCC volunteers in Africa (Mathies & Shute 1983:44; cf. Lindholm 1974:77).

The MCC volunteers, however, rated very poorly their fluency in the local languages and the adequacy of language instruction. Language appears to have been the key as to why "there were more mentions of hindrances to community contact than of the satisfactions produced by such contact" (Mathies & Shute 1983:45). Lindholm (1974:70) perceived "a frustrated desire for contact" among the Swedish workers. A physical

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<sup>2</sup> The impetus for the study arose from returned MCC volunteers who voiced concern the administration had not been responsive to their criticisms and suggestions.

<sup>3</sup> In contrast, Morris (1973:9) contends volunteers frequently do not consider that they have made much of a contribution.

expatriate ghetto, often reinforced by a social one, was difficult to avoid, particularly for new workers.

Both the Swedish and Mennonite studies found that workers were least satisfied with their assignments in the second year. New workers entered assignments with great enthusiasm and then began to encounter problems and frustrations. After a period, they usually worked through their difficulties and once again began to feel good about their situation. A major frustration for CUSO personnel in India (Woollcombe 1965:67) and the Peace Corps in Peru (Dobyno *et al.* 1964:506) had been the lack of well-defined assignments.

Almost one-third of the MCC volunteers indicated that their assignments provided “little or no professional, vocational or intellectual growth” (Mathies & Shute 1983:45). Although they received relatively low wages, financial support had not been raised as an issue. But the volunteers did express some dissatisfaction with the support they received from their country directors. “Greater personal interest, support in the assignment and administrative efficiency” were needed. Ironically, the more contact the Swedish workers had with their home administration, the less satisfied they became, mainly because of the delays in obtaining answers to requests (Lindholm 1974:55). Trail (1968:51) claims the workers’ families are crucial to the success of assignments, and “the failure of the family to understand the many problems encountered and then make the necessary adjustments has probably induced as many failures as any other single factor.” Wives, in particular, often face significant trials helping the children adjust.<sup>4</sup> One of Mathies and Shute’s (1983:46) recommendations to MCC was that it be more sensitive to spouses’ needs. Other recommendations included “enhancing involvement with the host community, sharpening

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<sup>4</sup> The unassigned spouses in Mathies and Shute’s (1983:46) study ranked at or near the bottom in their personal growth and understanding of the assignments and programs.

pre-departure orientation, raising morale and initiating program assessment on a continuing basis” (p.46).

### 2.3.2 Strengths and Limitations

Since NGOs are a diverse group, generalizations about their nature are, at best, tenuous. Nevertheless, that reality has not prevented researchers from commenting on the strengths and limitations of NGOs. In comparison to bilateral and multilateral agencies, NGOs supposedly possess the several advantages. However, contrary opinions are also expressed. Indeed, each strength cited (column one) has been disputed, and the counter-arguments are summarized in column two, as follows:

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| <p>1) NGOs adhere to the ‘small is beautiful’ approach, where no project request is too small (Wilson 1981:17). Because of the small-scale approach, NGO workers are able to work hand-in-hand with the poor.</p> | <p>Small may be beautiful, but the extent of world-wide poverty demands a scale of operations that extends beyond the capabilities of NGOs (OECD 1981:7). The public’s image of volunteers working hand-in-hand with aid recipients “represents only a small part of NGO work overseas” (Brodhead &amp; Herbert-Copley 1988:15). Even if NGOs effectively reach the poor, their projects are little more than “islands of success in a sea of poverty” (Kozlowski 1982:13). The work of NGOs, therefore, is inadequate to sustain the necessary transformation of a nation. Furthermore, some NGOs are large enough to qualify as institutionalized bureaucracies.</p> |
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- 2) NGO projects are highly cost-effective for they do not have to reflect corporate interests. The scores of committed and motivated volunteers further reduce costs. Because they are willing to endure with considerable hardships, volunteers are much less expensive to support in the field than professional consultants.

NGOs keep costs to a minimum because they are consistently short of resources. The 'limited-funds syndrome' forces them to spend too much energy on fund-raising efforts. This has created a competitiveness that encourages dramatization (e.g., advertisements depicting starving children), and sends the public the message that the solution to development problems is simply more money. Scarce resources also result in staff shortages and an inability to attract people with the management skills needed to run an efficient organization. They have good intentions, but NGOs are amateurs in a work that requires professionals.
- 3) NGOs are innovators, risk-takers, and flexible enough to quickly respond to identified needs (Kozlowski 1982:13). The popular practices of community participation, non-formal education and primary health care are based on NGO efforts. NGOs also encourage the development of appropriate technology through their emphasis on the use of local resources.

NGOs may not be as innovative as they claim (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:111) and they often fail to implement their stated aim of promoting self-reliance. Voluntarism "has become fixated on the concept of provision to the neglect of advocacy that deals with the root cause which creates the demand for service" (Jordan in Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:46).

- 4) NGO projects cultivate leadership and self-reliance through the participation of many local people. Local initiatives and institutions are also supported, which has led to the formation of indigenous NGOs (Morris 1973:273).
- The grass-roots approach has been adopted by many NGOs, “not necessarily because of any immunity from the supposed paternalism or assumption of cultural and technological superiority often attributed to aid givers, but because of practical limitations imposed by small budgets and staff, and uncertain funding” (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:6). Moreover, “it is not always appropriate to work only at the grass-roots – especially if there are elephants trampling the ground” (p.147). While NGOs may encourage the formation of cooperatives, the act is seen largely as an end in itself (Sommer 1977:63). The new cooperative can easily be coopted by the powers it meant to counteract. NGOs oversimplify problems through the narrow scope of their field activities (Kurien 1981:28).
- 5) NGOs remain in an area for extended periods of time and therefore become experts on local conditions. Their experience and knowledge is also vast in particular aspects of development work, such as in agricultural extension and family planning. NGO workers possess firsthand knowledge of regions, local languages and cultural values and generate much of the “concern for more socially responsible, ecologically sound, and less materialistic life-styles” in the United States (Sommer 1977:137). In general, ex-NGO workers continue their commitments to social justice once back in their own home communities.
- Although NGOs may have a long history of involvement in an area, the period a worker spends in the field is too short to be effective. The valuable knowledge gained by workers is wasted for rarely is it passed on to their replacements. “Typically, Canadian agencies have short or non-existent institutional memories: information rests largely with individuals (and thus disappears with staff turnover)” (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:112).

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| 6) NGO activities in politically sensitive areas influence government policy. For example, because of the work of NGOs, CIDA funds can now be directed toward to South Africa, which had been designated as 'off-limits' (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:113). | Dependence on government funding is increasing among NGOs, and so they are becoming more reluctant to enter into politically sensitive areas. Moreover, collaborative efforts with government-sponsored programs of questionable worth also can be found among NGOs.   |
| 7) The role of women is being advanced by NGOs (Amey 1979:46). Projects cater to the specific needs of disadvantaged women in LICs, and many NGOs have women in prominent leadership positions.  | Barriers still hinder the participation of women in NGO projects despite considerable progress in recent years (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:128).   |
| 8) Through extensive education programs among their own constituents, NGOs are helping bridge the gap of ignorance that separates the West from disadvantaged peoples in LICs.   | NGOs are reluctant to engage in advocacy since it may alienate individual donors (Brodhead & Herbert-Copley 1988:52). Furthermore, inter-agency communication and cooperation is minimal because NGOs are more interested in solidifying their own reputations (p.115). The duplication of efforts and an unhealthy competition for local projects occur because of the poor informational flow. |

References to the strengths listed above usually dominate any discussion on the general characteristics of NGOs. Critics claim, however, that NGO projects are either like the few drops of rain a desert might receive (brilliant flowers may blossom, but just as quickly, they wither away), or, when initiated by religious NGOs, are viewed with skepticism because they are perceived to be linked to proselytism.

#### 2.4 ABORIGINAL PEOPLES AND NGOS

The hardest goddamned people [Natives] on earth to help (Arne Saunders, Indian Affairs' Superintendent, in Fry 1970:58).

George Manuel, a Shuswap Native, concluded from his international experience that First Nations in Canada are in direct competition with LICs for government funding (Ponting & Gibbins 1980:204). Indeed, Shkilnyk (1985:162-163) has observed that

the only reasonable conclusion one can reach from the evidence is that the real beneficiaries of 'development' practiced on Indian reserves are the companies and individuals who profit from the increased demand of the Indians for the goods and services they have to offer. In this sense, Indian development policy is remarkably similar to Canada's aid policy to the Third World, whereby people of a different culture have to be educated to want the goods and services that the Canadian society has to sell.

Only, instead of CIDA being involved, it is the federal Department of Indian Affairs that dispenses 'aid' to reserves.

As with aid to LICs, often the assumption is that an infusion of resources will solve the reserve's problems. Gibson (1972:145) notes that

it all looked simple on paper. Thesis: Social workers, church workers, men from the Company of Young Canadians, Indian Affairs staff, school counsellors, nurses. Antithesis: Native Indians. Synthesis: Social progress. Unfortunately, it was never like that.

Fry (1970:146), voicing his opinion through the character Arne Saunders, an Indian Affairs' Superintendent, a position he himself held, argues that

the guts of what grinds at Indians from day to day isn't something peculiar to Indians. It's poverty, plain, simple and intractable. Oh, there are many who care about aboriginal rights and the land question and broken treaties, and these are specifically Indian issues. ... But what is called the Indian problem is not more Indian than tuberculosis is Indian.

He adds that poverty is more than economic hardship or unemployment, for then money would be the cure. Poverty, he suggests, is failure. It is a way of life rooted in ineffectiveness that persists because "we don't know how to give effectiveness to people who don't have it" (p.153).

Regardless of whether Fry is right or not, non-aboriginal people are attempting to promote 'effectiveness' among Native peoples. First Nations peoples living in Canada

have long been outlets for European society's charitable impulses (McCullum & McCullum 1975:174). Some observers suggest that, because people with European roots are motivated to be their 'brothers' keepers,' it is very difficult for them not to enter into Native peoples' affairs. Wax and Thomas (1961:135) contend that "to tell most white people that they can get a long with Indians fairly well if they do not interfere is almost like telling them to give up breathing." Others add that "most White people who have a tolerably good relationship with Indians unconsciously [sic] subscribe to the notion that White men ought to keep their noses out of Indian matters" (in Bowles *et al.* 1972:173).

Cardinal (1969) refers to those non-aboriginal people who are genuinely concerned with the welfare of Native peoples as "do-gooders." They are romantics and idealists who are disenchanted with the North American way of life. Several non-aboriginal "experts" on aboriginal affairs told Robertson (1970:6) that her planned visits to reserves would be a waste of time for only "do-gooders and social workers went" there. Despite their genuine concern, Cardinal seriously questions whether non-aboriginal groups can be effective in Native communities. He has singled out one group, in particular, for its efforts.

These young, instant experts on things Indian were, like community development officers, supposed to motivate the people to use their own initiative. Instead, bumbling and stumbling through community after community with little or no sensitivity to the feelings of the people they were going to help if it killed them, these dedicated amateurs discouraged and weakened Indian organizations (Cardinal 1969:105).

The one certain way non-aboriginal groups can help, offers Cardinal, is to send aboriginal leaders money with no strings attached.

Cardinal does not completely dismiss the potential contribution of outsiders on reserves. They can assist those communities that do not have the expertise required to cope with non-aboriginal bureaucracies. However, if they become decision-makers or speak on behalf of the Native people, they only encourage Native passivity. Even if they respect and promote local leadership, "years are required before non-Indians can build a relationship of

trust and confidence between themselves and the local Indian communities”<sup>5</sup> (p.93). A Japanese photojournalist who lived on a reserve for four years believes outsiders are always suspect, “and once the trust of the people is lost, it takes an extraordinary effort to recover it” (in Shkilnyk 1985:98). Friesen (1984:13) adds that many teachers’ attempts “to gain community friendships are rebuffed because they are seen as outsiders who will reside temporarily in the community and then vanish.”

For Wolfe (1986:31), “professionals with patience and humility (is this an impossible combination?) who will lead, train, and not take over,” and who are open to operating differently, are needed on reserves. And those “outsiders who are willing to **listen** instead of making noise will find contacts with band operating people to be cordial and informative” (emphasis in original) (King 1978:15). Dumais, a Métis leader, thinks neighbourliness, such as having Native people over for coffee, is very important (in Dueck 1986:20). One of Hendry’s (1969:x) two main recommendations on native affairs to the Anglican Church of Canada urges it to increase person-to-person humanitarian assistance. The other recommendation centres on the Church organizing public pressure that will force

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<sup>5</sup> With regard to Christian workers, Hendry (1969:56) claims they must assume the role of servants, expect to make mistakes and consider the work a lifetime vocation. He contends workers also should study the people’s history and language, as well as love them as they are. In Craven’s (1967:5) popular novel, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, the Bishop tells the priest:

‘Don’t be sorry for yourself because you are going to so a remote a parish. Be sorry for the Indians. You know nothing and they must teach you.’

The Bishop also points out to the priest that he must suffer with the village people in order to identify with and be accepted by them. Milner II’s (1982) examination of the Quakers’ work as Indian agents among Nebraska Native peoples in the 1870s, reveals a record of frustration and failure.

The presence of honest Quaker agents did not transform these Indians into ‘civilized’ Christians. Indeed, the Quakers often misinterpreted or ignored the problems which plagued these Nebraska Natives (p.xii).

The actions of these Quakers precipitated, rather than prevented, the decimation of the Indians’ land base. The good intentions of the Friends had not been good enough (p.199).

the removal of policies and practices that perpetuate aboriginal poverty. Much in the same vein, Hawthorn (1966:15) recommends that efforts be directed as much at non-aboriginal people as at Native peoples, in light of the barriers erected by the former. Cardinal (1969:94) sees that as a key role of do-gooders. They are to educate other non-Native people on how Native leaders view the problems facing them.

## 2.5 WORKING HYPOTHESES

The foregoing review of the research on both NGO cross-cultural work and the role of 'do-gooders' in native communities generated several working hypotheses that guided the examination of MCC's activities in Barano. The first five statements pertain directly to the MCC volunteers and are based on the premise that La'malis residents' support of the volunteers' work is inextricably linked to the villagers accepting the workers on a personal level.

- 1) The volunteers' personalities have a significant bearing on their effectiveness among the La'malis people. If the workers are patient, unpretentious, and listen and incorporate people's ideas, they will earn the community's trust. That trust will have a direct and positive impact on the success of any project.
- 2) The more volunteers use their leisure time to interact with La'malis people, the more likely villagers will come to accept and befriend them.
- 3) Volunteers' attempts to learn the Holat'in language and cultural traditions will be deeply appreciated by the La'malis people.
- 4) Villagers will reject workers if conversion to the Mennonite faith is preached.
- 5) As volunteers, MCC workers will not be seen by villagers as people who are there to make a 'fast buck.'

The next two working hypotheses centre on the volunteers' home life and support network.

- 6) Rapid and smooth adjustments by workers' families, particularly spouses, to their new homes in Barano will lessen stress and help workers focus on their assignments and building relationships with villagers.
- 7) Regular interaction with fellow volunteers and MCC staff will provide a much needed support network for workers to better face the trials of their positions.

There are also five working hypotheses that relate to the nature of the assignments.

- 8) If the villagers have provided the impetus for the projects, they will continue on with the work after MCC's involvement ends.
- 9) Projects that are small-scale and geared toward self-determination will generate the most favourable responses from the people.
- 10) If La'malis people are active participants in all aspects of the projects, including the decision-making processes, positive social change will result.
- 11) Reliance on local skills, ingenuity, labour and/or materials will be greeted with enthusiasm by the people.
- 12) Well-defined assignments will produce less worker frustration and improve project delivery.

In addition, two statements pertain to MCC's flexibility and cooperativeness.

- 13) MCC's flexibility, innovativeness and ability to take risks will ensure projects adapt to the changing needs of the La'malis people.
- 14) Joining forces with similar organizations in the Barano area will spread the projects' benefits to more villagers.

And the final two statements incorporate the notion that MCC's activities outside of Barano also have a bearing on its work in La'malis.

- 15) MCC's lobbying of governments so that they change systems in order to foster greater self-determination, will increase the benefits derived from projects to more villagers over time.
- 16) Constituency education concerning the barriers faced by La'malis people in their struggles for self-determination will rally Mennonite support. That increased support will encourage MCC to be more aggressive in its pressure on bureaucracies to alter their obstructive policies and practices.

These working hypotheses lack the high degree of specificity needed for hypothesis-testing. This is by design, for their purpose was to lend a general direction to the study. Indeed, "the design of a naturalistic inquiry (whether research, evaluation, or policy analysis) **cannot** be given in advance; it must emerge, develop, unfold (emphasis in original) (Lincoln & Guba 1985:225). Development is concerned with human beings, and is therefore a unique and unpredictable process. The naturalistic paradigm, which encourages the researcher to understand feelings, motives and values at the individual level, has guided this review of MCC's work among the Holat'in.

## 2.6 SUMMARY

With very few exceptions, researchers are dissatisfied with the aid dispensed to disadvantaged peoples in LICs. Analyses focus both on the volume of aid, deemed as either insufficient or excessive, and on the programs through which aid is funnelled. Discussions generally centre on bilateral and multilateral agencies because they disburse the largest amounts of aid. Frequently, these government agencies are criticized for failing to reach those people most in need.

Where the official agencies fail, often NGOs are credited with success. Scattered among the praise, however, are voices of dissent. Hence, both strengths and limitations are attributed to NGOs when compared to the bilateral and multilateral agencies. On one side, NGOs are characterized as being innovative, flexible and able to cultivate local leadership through work at the grass-roots. On the other side, the critics claim NGOs oversimplify problems, devote too much time on fund-raising and are too small to make a significant contribution to development. Unlike those of the government agencies, though, most NGO motives are not disparaged, for they are considered to be altruistic.

Although evaluative work on NGOs occurs, most observers feel much more needs to be done. Some researchers contend that so few evaluations are undertaken because NGOs believe their altruistic motives raise them above scrutiny. One examination of MCC's programs in southern Africa revealed that the volunteers gained the greatest personal satisfaction from grass-roots endeavours and interaction with local people on a personal level. But other program components, such as MCC's administrative support, were not rated highly.

The attempt to 'modernize' aboriginal peoples living on reserves in Canada has been compared to that of aid being dispensed to LICs. Similar to the village setting overseas, the on-reserve effectiveness of NGO personnel, outsiders or 'do-gooders,' has been seriously

questioned. They can provide the expertise needed for operating under non-aboriginal bureaucracies, but gaining the acceptance of the Native peoples remains difficult. Perhaps more importantly, note observers, is that these workers can educate their own constituencies on the views of First Nation leaders.

Working hypotheses for the analysis of MCC's efforts among the Holat'in evolved from the survey of the outsiders' role in aboriginal communities and the work of NGOs overseas. Many of the statements focus on the volunteer's character, for program success has been linked to personality. Although not designed for statistical manipulation, these 'hypotheses' provided the fieldwork with a direction within flexible boundaries.

## Chapter Three

### RESEARCH PARADIGM AND METHOD

#### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

Perhaps whites, through over emphasis on science and reason, have suffered some loss in being and becoming fully human (Wangler 1973:2).

Research is conducted within paradigms. These paradigms or worldviews are ways of breaking down the complexity of life (Reichardt & Cook 1979:9). The scientific or positivistic paradigm is based on the assumption that social phenomena can be objectively measured. The researcher operating with this worldview seeks facts on the “causes of social phenomena apart from the subjective states of individuals” (Bogdan & Taylor 1984:1). The supposition is “that the social world is a world of objective fact which can be studied at a distance and talked about as one talks of objects that are stable, discrete, and permanent, and which exist independent of context” (Heyman 1984:12). The positivist’s goal is to establish laws that will predict human behaviour. But such generalizations are concerned with the statistically generated ‘average person,’ who is a mythical being.

#### 3.2 HUMANISTIC RESEARCH

An individual experience, we feel, is worth a thousand statistics (Hamalian & Karl 1976:18).

The humanistic researcher, on the other hand, does not believe subjectivity can be isolated and removed from the investigation. Inquiry cannot be value-free, for ‘facts’ cannot be separated from values (Lincoln & Guba 1985:162). The notion that an investigation can be impersonal and machine-like is false (Jones 1985:48). One cannot get at some ‘objective truth’ even if the effects of interpersonal interaction could be removed. Indeed, the denial of the importance of subjectivity in the process of world transformation

is naive<sup>1</sup> (Freire 1982:35). The theoretical base of this paradigm is that humans construct the meaning and significance of their realities (Lincoln & Guba 1985:84; Jones 1985:45).

The elemental objective of humanistic inquiry is the understanding (*verstehen*) of social phenomena from the perspective of those under study. The main task of the researcher, therefore, is to give “voice” to the people (Plummer 1983:1). Context or the natural setting is crucial.

We suggest that inquiry must be carried out in a ‘natural’ setting because phenomena of study, whatever they may be - physical, chemical, biological, social, psychological - *take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves*. ... No phenomenon can be understood out of relationship to the time and context that spawned, harbored, and supported it (emphasis in original) (Lincoln & Guba 1985:189).

The context for this study is the aboriginal village of La'malis and the neighbouring town of Barano, British Columbia.<sup>2</sup>

Humanistic research has an interdisciplinary tradition and is characterized by a sense of exploration (Smith 1987). Since it muddies the waters for those who separate ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’ modes of knowing (Buttimer 1976), humanistic research has also come under considerable criticism. ‘Merely subjective,’ ‘lacking rigour’ and ‘sloppy’ are terms frequently applied to it. Even if it is well-done, the research is labeled as simply ‘exploratory’ or ‘hypothesis generating’ (Agar 1980:35), and therefore, prefatory to positivistic research (Walker 1985a:10). Furthermore, it is argued that generalizations cannot be deduced from the studies, nor do the inquiries contribute to problem definition and resolution and to theory development (Smith 1987). Critics clearly characterize humanistic endeavours as second class research.

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<sup>1</sup> Plummer (1983:7) states that “to side with the uniquely subjective is to dismantle the model of social science – and to favour the model of the humanities.”

<sup>2</sup> To promote anonymity, no more precise location is provided.

These supposed faults are easily countered. While there is no denying that examples of 'sloppy' humanistic research exist, scientific studies are not immune to the charge. Methodology is no guarantor of worthy research, and those who intimate that it is ritualize the process of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba 1985:173). When the terms 'merely subjective' and 'lacking rigour' are used it reflects a basic misunderstanding of the differences between positivistic and humanistic worldviews. Table 3.1 summarizes a common positivistic perception of the two paradigms.<sup>3</sup>

Critics mistakenly "apply the analytic research criteria of positivism to the interpretive mode of humanistic research" (Smith 1987:31). Humanistic research is primarily an inductive process that requires a flexible research design (Bogdan & Taylor 1984:5). People and settings are not reduced to variables, and all perspectives are seen as valuable. Furthermore, since meanings are rarely private but shared or consensual, generalizations can emerge from the process of intersubjective corroboration (e.g., does the description ring true with my own and others' experience?) (Pocock 1983:356).

More substantive criticism claims the focus of humanistic research is too narrow and that it disregards the social, economic and environmental context (Smith 1987). Humanistic geography has been criticized for its preoccupation with the unique, and hence, it has been tagged as irrelevant to contemporary social and environmental issues (Pocock 1983:355). Moreover, the trustworthiness of all humanistic research is considered overly dependent on the researcher alone (Jackson & Smith 1984). Relph (1984) admits his method is subjective, idiosyncratic, possibly egocentric and impressionistic, and standing or falling on the quality of his description alone. The argument is that, as the main research

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<sup>3</sup> Halfpenny (1979) uses the terms 'qualitative' and 'quantitative' to differentiate between the two methodologies. To use these terms in this manner, however, suggests a false dichotomy where humanistic research is anti-quantitative and qualitative data have no place in positivistic analyses.

Table 3.1 – Humanistic versus Positivistic Research

Humanistic Research	Positivistic Research
soft .....	hard
flexible .....	fixed
grounded .....	abstract
descriptive/exploratory .....	explanatory
pre-scientific .....	scientific
subjective .....	objective
inductive .....	deductive
political .....	value-free
non-rigorous .....	rigorous
case study .....	survey
speculative/illustrative .....	hypothesis testing
idiographic .....	nomothetic

Source: Halfpenny 1979:799.

instrument, the investigator generates work, often with an unrevealed methodology (Smith 1987), that is difficult to replicate (Riemer 1977:475). Attracted to the “loudest bangs” and “brightest lights” (Lincoln & Guba 1985:289), the researcher produces a study that is skewed, and therefore, one that is untrustworthy.

Because the objective is to describe individual experience, humanistic research, by its nature, is small-scale. The case study, which has a long and credible role in humanistic geography (Pocock 1983:355), becomes unwieldy if the focus is too broad. However, there is a danger the narrow emphasis can lead to the researcher overlooking the importance of the milieu. This potential problem is addressed in this study through the discussion, in Chapters Two, Four and Five, of the social, economic, political and historical context of NGO aid and the development of aboriginal peoples in Canada.

There is also the possibility that a study’s reliance on few informants will make it parochial and non-representative. An awareness of this potential fault preceded the undertaking of this inquiry, and so a deliberate attempt was made to obtain a cross-section

of informants. Informant statements have been substantiated through the use of a variety of documents (e.g., application forms, letters, reports).

The charge that humanistic geography is irrelevant to contemporary problems needs only a response insofar as this study is concerned. Aboriginal development and the contribution of outside organizations to that process, particularly in British Columbia, is not easily dismissed as inconsequential. The future of this province is inextricably linked to aboriginal self-determination.<sup>4</sup> But what is the role of an outside organization in that process? An even more fundamental question is: can non-aboriginal outsiders be active in aboriginal communities and promote self-determination, or is their presence a hindrance? These questions provided the impetus for this study.

There is no denying that the burden for the trustworthiness of humanistic research lies with the researcher. The humanistic researcher cannot fall back on the clearly defined rules and procedures of a statistical test.<sup>5</sup> The strength of humanistic studies is that the researcher is the research instrument (Smith 1987:34). Trustworthiness becomes a conscious goal for the researcher. Lincoln & Guba (1985:193-194) claim the “human-as-instrument” can:

- (1) respond to personal and environmental cues, and thereby interact more effectively;
- (2) collect information from a variety of sources at a variety of levels;
- (3) provide a holistic emphasis;
- (4) generate hypotheses on the spot and test them in their context;
- (5) summarize data on the spot and ask the respondent for clarification, correction and amplification; and
- (6) explore atypical or idiosyncratic responses which would otherwise be discarded because they are not easily coded.

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<sup>4</sup> In 1986, federally registered First Nations land claims covered over 70 percent of British Columbia’s surface area (Hume 1986).

<sup>5</sup> Although some social scientists argue their research is credible and trustworthy because it relies on ‘proven’ methods (i.e., accepted statistical tests), they are overlooking, often denying, the importance of the person to the studies’ credibility.

Agar (1980:35) adds that “by surrendering the emphasis on scientific control,” the investigator greatly increases the chance of new information appearing. And with time in the field, the inquirer learns how to ask “the right people the right questions in the right way.”

Lithman (1978:27) claims that a formal research role would have been fatal to his study. He believes the Native people would not have accepted him if he had taken formal questionnaires door-to-door. Adams (1975:156) adds that it is very difficult to ask aboriginal peoples formal questions and receive honest opinions. Reflecting on his ethnographic exploration of a Kwakiutl village, Rohner (1967:158) notes:

I came up here with the idea that formal systematic data collection was the ‘correct’ form for field work. I tried this and found myself thinking that while I sit here interviewing and collecting very nice, neat data, people are ‘out there’ just plain living in their not so nice, neat or systematic way. ... I learned that a casual, informal and friendly relationship with villagers was most productive for eliciting the type of information I needed.

### **Research Instrument: Heinz Dyck**

They [social science researchers] often ignore or treat as ancillary their own unique biographies, life experiences, and situational familiarity when these could opportunistically serve as important sources for research ideas and data (Riemer 1977:467).

Any writer has a point of view from which he/she starts whether that point of view is consciously expressed or not. These basic assumptions, values if you like, influence both the questions investigated and the impression the reader has of the subjects of the study (Wall 1985:44).

If the researcher is so central to the humanistic approach, then is it important the reader understands his/her experience as it relates to the study. At the outset of her book on the Grassy Narrows Native community, Shkilnyk (1985:3) states that her developed sense of perception, ways of knowing and value system guided her observations. Hence, she informs the reader of her background, experience, role and relationship to the community, for they influenced the book. Similarly, Smith (1987:59-60) outlines his personal island

experiences in his study regarding ‘The Imaginative and Experiential Significance of the Island.’

When I began this research, my experience with aboriginal peoples had been negligible. Indeed, a study involving aboriginal people living in Canada had not been my first choice. My initial plan involved the analysis of a specific MCC project, but in an overseas setting. Arrangements for such an undertaking never materialized and I shifted my attention to MCC’s work in North America. Since my desire to do research overseas stemmed from my interest in cross-cultural development work, I focused on First Nations peoples. But I was somewhat reluctant to pursue the matter because of my misconceptions about aboriginal peoples. My thoughts mirrored those of Robertson (1970:5-6):

I identified with the poor and oppressed, but nevertheless, I was prejudiced. ... I was afraid of Indians, afraid of physical assault, of being insulted or put down, of being made a fool of, of misunderstanding. My inhibition was mainly the result of recent mythologies about Indians, reports that Indians beat up white people on impulse, that they are a silent, uncommunicative race, that they are intrinsically different.

My fear was not so much of physical but verbal assault; that they would use angry, hate-filled words to say to me, ‘You and your people are the reasons why we live in such poverty today. We want nothing to do with you!’ In essence, I felt they would hate me for the colour of my skin. Moreover, I had a sense of despair regarding the development of aboriginal peoples. I believed their poverty to be so great and their misery so profound, that I viewed their situation as practically hopeless. But, for precisely the reason they are Canada’s most marginalized population, I realized the importance of undertaking a study concerned with their development. The support and enthusiasm of Menno Wiebe, the director of MCC Canada’s Native Concerns program, made this study possible.

While this study’s central theme is aboriginal development, specifically that of La’malis residents, the primary focus is on MCC and its influence, either positive, negative or benign, on that process. As a Mennonite, both ethnically and by religion, I have had an

awareness of MCC since childhood. Although I have not been on voluntary service with the organization, I have acquaintances who have done so. Most notably, very close friends were in the second year of their MCC assignment in Labrador working with Inuit people when I began my field research. Their experiences provided me with valuable insights into MCC operations.

My academic interest in LIC development issues was sparked by the study of liberation theology. At that time, I became serious about participating in overseas work and viewed MCC as the best vehicle for me to do that. With time, I realized overseas workers are now expected to possess higher skills and education, and so I decided to pursue a Master's degree. I also became aware of the difficulties outsiders face in such work, and I was able to pursue a study of MCC's international efforts for my B.A. (Honours) thesis (Dyck 1985). Hence, my interest in development issues is genuine.<sup>6</sup>

Several personal developments that involve MCC are relevant to the thesis research. I have acted as my church's MCC representative, which has included attending MCC B.C. annual meetings, and informing the congregation regarding the organization's activities and how one can become involved. In addition, I contribute financially to the organization and volunteer at local fund-raising sales.

My participation in MCC's work is based on both an acceptance of the organization's philosophy of providing aid and its good reputation in doing so (see Chapter Five). As a believer in the Mennonite/Anabaptist faith, I am in agreement with MCC's stated emphasis on Jesus Christ as its motivation, and in particular, that word and deed should go hand in hand. I also support MCC's claim that the first criterion for giving aid is need. Although I

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<sup>6</sup> Lofland and Lofland (1984:7) stress that such an interest is essential.

Without a foundation in personal sentiment all the rest easily becomes so much ritualistic, hollow cant. ... If 'your' agenda is not personally meaningful, you may be alienated from it as well (p.10).

have come to accept MCC's philosophy of development as my own, that acceptance, however, does not prohibit me from being critical of MCC's work, if criticism is warranted.

Riemer (1977:467) contends that social science researchers too frequently neglect to incorporate knowledge and expertise they alone possess. As a Mennonite with a prior knowledge of MCC, I could be considered an 'insider' with respect to the thesis research. As such, I believe I had several advantages over an outsider attempting to conduct the same type of research. First, with an affiliation to a Mennonite Church and having friends in an MCC assignment working with aboriginal peoples, 'permission' and support for the research were easily obtained from MCC staff. The support also led to a smooth transition into the research setting, including MCC volunteers arranging for my boarding in Barano. MCC staff support seemed to have a domino effect, for I feel it aided my acceptance by the volunteers, which, in turn, provided me with access to La'malis, which, like many aboriginal communities, is leery of being researched by academics. Furthermore, I strongly believe I was able to examine confidential documents and files, belonging both to MCC and the Band, that would have been 'off-limits' to anyone but the most skillful, charming and persuasive outsider.

Insider research also can possess several disadvantages. The possibility of emotional involvement with the people under study, to the detriment of data collection, is greater for insiders (Riemer 1977:474). More fundamentally, an insider is less likely to question basic beliefs and assumptions held by the people, for his/her mindset is similar to theirs. For example, the issue of 'moral exploitation' (i.e., volunteers taking finite terms of service to fulfill their need to become 'suffering servants,' a role revered in most Mennonite circles),<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> While there appears to be an element of exploitation involved (i.e., Christ identified with disadvantaged people and suffered for it on the cross, and since His followers are called to be like Him, relatively affluent North American Mennonites 'identify' with disadvantaged peoples through MCC for their own needs related to salvation), my sense is

was not considered by me until it was raised by a reviewer of the thesis. Another practical difficulty with insider research is that it is difficult to replicate (Riemer 1977:474), and hence, it is difficult for other researchers to pursue interesting hypotheses in more depth.

Through increased involvement with MCC I became aware of Project North, an ecumenical coalition for aboriginal justice that is supported by MCC (see Chapter Five). In the fall of 1988, I became a core committee member of the Victoria branch, and in 1989, I was elected to the Project North B.C. board and asked to edit the fledgling *Project North B.C. Newsletter*. Outside of Project North, I was hired by the Tahltan Tribal Council to set up a resource centre consisting of its land claim research, and recently, I have been working as a research officer with the provincial Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs. Rather than put aside my experiences with the Ministry of Aboriginal Affairs, Tahltan Tribal Council, Project North and MCC, and try to approach the thesis 'value free' so as to be 'objective,' I have drawn upon the knowledge gained from those experiences.<sup>8</sup> It is important for the reader to be aware of these experiences, for they have shaped my understanding of aboriginal development (see Chapters Four and Nine), the framework for my assessment of MCC's work in La'malis.

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that the overriding factor for the MCC volunteers was the desire to assist in the alleviation of suffering. Hence, they would have liked nothing better than to have their services no longer required because there was no more suffering. In addition, with respect to the stints of service, the pressures of Western society make it very difficult to assume the role of suffering servant for extended periods.

<sup>8</sup> In his review of Manitoba group homes, Kimelman (1985:293) notes that he tried to be objective and fair but that he could not ignore his prior knowledge of the group home system.

### 3.3 QUALITATIVE METHODS

Qualitative methods are stressed in humanistic research not because it is anti-quantitative, but because they come more easily to the research instrument (Lincoln & Guba 1985:198). The researcher is more inclined toward methods that are extensions of such normal human activities as looking, listening, speaking and reading. These techniques are less structured, and hence more responsive to the subjects (Walker 1985a:3), as well as more adaptable to dealing with multiple realities than are statistical surveys. Data collection becomes an art, with guidelines not rules, where a few sources can yield large volumes of rich data. Qualitative methods allow subjects to become persons with names and faces, each with unique experiences.

The use of participant observation, depth interviews, time diaries, and unpublished documents are outlined below. In addition, the processes of data analysis and report writing are described briefly.

#### 3.3.1 Participant Observation

Participant observation (McCall & Simmons 1969:142) is the method most commonly associated with humanistic inquiry. It “allows [the] real study of social processes and complex interdependencies in social systems” (McCall & Simmons 1969:2), and involves repeated, genuine social interaction on the scene. The observer has been classified into four types, of which “participant-as-observer” best minimizes role-pretending and covertness (Gold 1958).

One of the most valuable things a participant observer can have is good luck (Lithman 1978:2; Wax 1971:268). Being in the right place at the right time is sometimes largely good fortune, and not due to a well-executed research strategy. Good luck, though, is insufficient. Common sense, shrewdness, flexibility, patience and humility are several traits of the adept observer.

The researcher, as an outsider, must strive to gain the people's confidence, which requires a high degree of interpersonal skill (Carter & Wharf 1973:89). In order for people to open up, the observer needs to be well-schooled in the ways of inoffensive social interaction (Bogdan & Taylor 1984:32). The participant "who is supportive, cordial, interested, non-argumentative, courteous, understanding, even sympathetic, will receive a good deal more information than one who acts in an opposite fashion" (Lofland & Lofland 1984:38). Lithman (1978:27) tried not to bother the aboriginal people he was studying, and Rohner (1967:158) found that "a casual, informal and friendly relationship with the villagers was most productive for eliciting the type of information [he] wanted."

The participant observer should be as truthful as possible without jeopardizing the research (e.g., it would be unwise to give details concerning the precision with which notes will be recorded (Bogdan & Taylor 1984:25)), so as both to generate trustworthiness and to establish credibility. Rather than jump right into the task of collecting data, the researcher should use the first days to build a rapport. This could take the form of establishing commonalities and interests, doing favours and participating in activities (Bogdan & Taylor 1984:37). Playing with children helped Hart (1979:30) become accepted by their parents. It is important, however, for a researcher to avoid acting in ways inconsistent with his/her personality (Bogdan & Taylor 1984:39). "Feeling good about one's work is essential if one plans to give it more than the obligatory academic attention" (Hart 1979:18).

Criticism of participant observation takes several forms. Some critics refer to the method as just a romantic attempt to get close to the data (McCall & Simmons 1969:2), while others have labeled it as little more than "sophisticated voyeurism" (Green 1982:65). More substantive comments focus on the distorting effects of selective perception. The observer is limited in what he/she can see (McCall & Simmons 1969:104), often just the

'brightest lights.' Because personalities are involved, the observer will be attracted to certain kinds of individuals, and may, therefore, become co-opted by the friendships that emerge. A bias can develop where the researcher abandons potentially discomfiting lines of inquiry so as not to alienate his/her new friends (Dean *et al.* 1969:21; Bogdan & Taylor 1984:41). However, an awareness that such a problem may occur, increases the likelihood it can be avoided (Lincoln & Guba 1985:304).

Participant observation also poses several practical problems. There is a lack of training available to researchers interested in using the method (Reichardt & Cook 1979:25). Significant amounts of time and funds are also involved (Conyers & Hill 1984:108). Although a year or more in the field is not a requirement (Bastin 1985:93), most fieldwork cannot be accomplished in one or two weeks. As is true of so many endeavours, superior research demands a large commitment of time. Moreover, often far from home, researchers struggle with feelings of uncomfortableness, loneliness, anxiety and inadequacy (Lincoln & Guba 1985:286; Bogdan & Taylor 1984:33). And at first, the amount of data can be overwhelming. Rohner's (1967:158) participation was so intense that he had trouble maintaining his notes, and Hart (1979:33) found it impossible to analyze his data every evening.

A specific concern when participant observation involves aboriginal peoples is their exploitation. Generations of academics have flocked to minority communities in search of information (Green 1982:65). Native reaction to the attention has been unpropitious. Deloria Jr. (in Bowles *et al.* 1972:42) declares that "Indians have been cursed above all other people in history. Indians have anthropologists." Manuel and Posluns (1974:158) characterize anthropologists as people who arrive bedecked with cameras, tape recorders, notebooks and expense accounts, after having checked into the nearest Holiday Inn. Rohner attempted to establish himself as an anthropologist (Rohner & Rohner 1970:11).

Curiosity, uneasiness and later suspicion greeted him. Villagers concluded that he was a spy and his worst offense was public notetaking. Indeed, there is a general distrust of all researchers among aboriginal peoples (Joytpaul & Chaudhuri 1973:142).

In the foreword to Shkilynk's (1985:xv) study, Erikson notes that it is almost unfair to the people, who have suffered so much, to make a case study of their story. Lithman (1978:26) adds that "many efforts by well-intended White writers to focus public concern on the Canadian Indian situation" are forcefully denounced by Native peoples. He suggests their reaction reflects an understanding that "the vast amount of scholarly material has had a very minute effect as far as social change is concerned, and whatever improvements there will be in the situation confronting the Canadian Indians will be due to factors other than scholarly insights."

What distinguishes this thesis from other research involving aboriginal peoples is the focus on an outside organization's work in a Native community; it is not a chronicle of the La'malis people's plight. Indeed, permission to do the research was predicated upon that understanding. MCC Canada's Native Concerns director's support<sup>9</sup> and encouragement led to the La'malis Band being informally approached about the study by a Barano MCC volunteer. Band Council members indicated to the volunteer that if MCC supported the research, they had no objections.

I was presented to Council nine days into the fieldwork. Much of the brief exchange was lighthearted, but the Chief did express several concerns. He feared university professors might use the research to write about La'malis people and that my report could generate bad feelings in the community. I assured him that I was planning to send him and other villagers copies of the supervisor-approved draft for their editorial comments. That

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<sup>9</sup> MCC's support of the study has not included any financial contributions.

assurance seemed to satisfy him. Band Council's 'approval' of the research never did take the form of an official Band Council resolution.

Table 3.2 outlines the stages of the study. The duration of the fieldwork totalled 76 days. I boarded in Barano next to several MCC volunteers and a couple who had been volunteers in the community. Because of prior correspondence and an introductory visit in September 1986, once I arrived in Barano in October, I did not have to spend a great deal of time explaining my purpose. The openness and cooperation of the volunteers allowed me to begin data collection from day one. I believe that my being Mennonite contributed significantly to that initial favourable response.

To build on that beginning, as well as to create opportunities for observation, I helped out at the Band school, played with children of the volunteers and attended weekly Bible studies, services and other activities initiated by their church group. On-reserve, I attended various meetings, such as a general meeting of Band members. As a full-time researcher, I was not saddled with the additional responsibilities of a paid or volunteer position in the community.

Although participant observation provided invaluable insights into both the MCC and La'malis communities, it alone was insufficient (cf., Walker 1985a:5; McCall & Simmons 1969:4). People's actions and normal conversations did not generate all the information I was interested in (cf., Rohner 1967:158). By far the most fruitful data collection method was the depth interview.

### **3.3.2 Depth Interview**

Only under extraordinary circumstances would a participant observer leave the field without having conducted depth interviews. In contrast to a conventional interview that is based on the administration of a questionnaire, a depth interview is "a conversation in

Table 3.2 – Stages of the Thesis Research

Activity	Period
Planning, literature review & preparation for fieldwork .....	Jun. to Oct. 1986
Initial field visit .....	Sep. 18-19, 1986
Thesis proposal meeting .....	Oct. 10, 1986
Fieldwork .....	Oct. 20 to Nov.13, 1986 Nov. 17 to Dec. 12, 1986
Interviews & tape transcription .....	Dec. 18, 1986 to Jan. 18, 1987
Fieldwork .....	Jan.19 to Feb. 5, 1987 Feb. 7 to Feb. 20, 1987
Tape transcription, interviews, data organization & literature review .....	Mar. to Jun. 1987
Analysis & writing <sup>10</sup> .....	Jul. 1987 to Apr. 1993

which the researcher encourages informants to relate, in their own terms, experiences and attitudes that are relevant to the research problem” (Walker 1985a:4). The key to depth interviews is for the researcher to facilitate the respondents to express themselves in their own words. The ideal interview, therefore, is largely unstructured, where the informant provides both the questions and answers upon understanding the research topic (Lincoln & Guba 1985:269; Jones 1985:48). Purposive sampling, as opposed to random sampling, is preferred so as “not to focus on the similarities that can be developed into generalizations, but to detail the many specifics that give the context its unique flavor” (Lincoln & Guba 1985:201).

The interviewer needs to use both verbal and non-verbal skills in order to convince informants that what they have to say is considered important (Jones 1985:51). The interviewee should be made to feel the researcher does not consider himself/herself an

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<sup>10</sup> There were long stretches of time during this period where no work was being done on the thesis.

expert, but as one who is there to learn (Hart 1979:26). The effective interviewer will reformulate responses (e.g., 'Do I understand correctly that ...'), and use such probes as silence, 'uh-huhs,' and calls for examples and more information (Lincoln & Guba 1985:271). Leading questions should be avoided (e.g., 'Don't you think that ...'), and throughout the interview, non-verbal behaviour should be noted, particularly when it seems to conflict with what is being said. At appropriate intervals, the researcher should provide summaries for the correction, extension and/or approval of the respondent. The most desirable way to record an interview is by using a tape recorder (Plummer 1983:93).

Respondents need to be assured the information they provide will remain confidential. It should follow that all data remain the property of the data suppliers. This makes it possible for respondents to recall any information if they so desire, up to the deadline prior to the submission of the final version of the written report.

A very practical problem with depth interviews is many people, particularly those who are disadvantaged, do not wish to be interviewed (Sullivan 1981:50). Often there is a distrust of outsiders. Even if the researcher has gained some trust and is able to arrange interviews, frequently the interviewees will not allow themselves to be taped (Hartmann & Boyce 1983:4; Sullivan 1981:77). A degree of suspicion often limits the extent of replies, and an interview can become a series of questions with brief responses. The success of the interview depends so much on mood and personality (Plummer 1983:97).

The interviewer's age, sex, race and appearance have an impact both in interviews and in being able to arrange them (Webb *et al.* 1966:21). 'Reactive measurement effect,' where informants try to give answers they feel are wanted, can also be a problem (Sullivan 1981:61). And sometimes the onset of questioning creates attitudes and leads to the formation of opinions.

In all, I conducted 42 face-to-face interviews, most of which developed into depth interviews. Generally, in the few sessions that did not develop as I had hoped (e.g., Erica 1986), I was unable to encourage the respondent to go beyond providing brief answers to my questions. The majority of the interviews took place in Barano and La'malis, with the others occurring in the Fraser Valley communities of Clearbrook and Langley, and in southern Manitoba. Active and former MCC volunteers account for most of the interviews, and the remainder involved seven La'malis residents, five non-aboriginal professionals active on the reserve, and two MCC administrators. Hundreds of pages of notes were transcribed from these interviews, and Chapters Six through Eight are based largely on interview data.

### 3.3.3 Time Diaries

Time diaries were used to gain additional data not easily obtained through interviews and observation alone. Rather than asking the MCC volunteers to record their activities under the four categories of contracted, necessary, committed and free time, as outlined by As (1982:93-95), I simplified the instructions to make the task less onerous, and hence, more likely to be completed. Except for the group home staff, I asked that a diary be kept for seven continuous days, focusing on 'what,' 'where' and 'with whom,' in blocks of time no less than 15 minutes, whenever possible.

Six of the ten volunteers active in January 1987 completed time diaries (see Appendix A). Betty (1987a) limited her diary to five school days, Neil (1987b) included an extra day, and Judy and Marg (1987) combined their efforts in a joint diary spanning 14 days. In three instances (Neil 1987a; Judy 1987; Maria 1987a), I was able to seek clarification and probe for additional information through a follow-up interview.

### **3.3.4 Unpublished Documents**

Existing forms of data were also tapped for pertinent information. Unpublished documents may be difficult to locate (Conyers 1982:160), and it may be tedious work sorting through old files and reports for relevant information. In addition, access to these documents can be a problem (Andersen & Butenschon 1983:243).

In my case, dozens of unpublished documents, including letters, reports, applications, taped and transcribed interviews by others, and government records, became sources of additional information and also served to corroborate data collected through observation and depth interviews. MCC staff provided me with complete access to Barano files, with the exception of confidential personnel documents. I was able to examine volunteers' MCC application forms, which contain fairly extensive personal data, upon receiving their permission to do so.

### **3.3.5 Data Analysis**

The use of qualitative methods produces tremendous amounts of data. In keeping with the spirit of the naturalistic paradigm, there can be no definitive rules for the analysis of that data (Jones 1985:56). Inductive analysis is a personal, creative activity that is quite similar to qualitative content analysis. At the simplest level, it entails 'making sense' of the data. Although it is not a complicated task, inductive analysis is very time-consuming (Morton-Williams 1985:29), for it is a continuous process where information is interpreted through coding and categorizing. The data are coded into units of information, which are then placed into categories on the basis of similar characteristics. The processes are repeated numerous times until key ideas and themes emerge from the mounds of data.

### 3.3.6 Written Report

Many adjectives can be found to describe the task: frustrating, grinding, taxing, convoluted – but also artistic, creative, exciting, and gratifying. The person who can manage all of the tasks in good humor, while avoiding both schizophrenia and cardiac arrest, cannot be found easily (Lincoln & Guba 1985:364).

A case report is the capstone to the continuous process of collecting and analyzing data. When well-written, it gives the reader the feeling of having been at the site. Unfortunately, many reports become “dust-catchers,” because their style resembles a factory process (Gran 1983:257).

When a case study is written, the writer should be sensitive to the possible effects the report may have on the local people. An individual’s confidentiality can never be absolutely guaranteed, but the use of pseudonyms and the omission of details not crucial to the report help mask an informant from the external audience (Lithman 1978:vi). Quotations, which have been garnered through informed consent, are used liberally in the report to lend credibility to the interpretation.

With respect to this thesis, relevant portions of the initial draft of Chapters Six and Seven were sent to the volunteers for their review. In the covering letter, I asked each volunteer to take on the role of editor, to correct, delete and/or add to the text.<sup>11</sup> All but three of the volunteers returned their comments, and changes were made to the draft to accommodate the input.

Once my supervisor had approved the draft in January 1993, I mailed a copy of the thesis to Burl, a Mennonite friend who teaches at the Band school. In a prior telephone conversation, I asked him if he would hand-deliver the thesis to Chief Les to ensure that it would not ‘get lost’ in the pile of normal Band office mail. To assist the Chief in reviewing the draft, I included a code sheet that listed the real names beside the pseudonyms. In

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<sup>11</sup> I also took the opportunity to ask additional questions to clarify and expand upon issues.

March 1993, Burl (1993) informed me that Chief Les had reviewed the thesis and did not have any difficulties with the content. He indicated to Burl that much of what I had written about the community would be made public by the Band shortly.

### 3.4 SUMMARY

The concerted effort to involve the subjects of this study in its development by soliciting their input, is reflective of the humanistic approach taken to conduct the research. Humanistic inquiry attempts to convey accurately the perspective of those under study, through interaction with them in their natural setting. For this study, the natural setting is the village of La'malis and neighbouring town of Barano.

In any humanistic inquiry, the researcher is the key research instrument. This study has its origins in my interest in LIC development issues, and I have drawn upon my work and volunteer-related experience with First Nations to assist me in data analysis. Participant observation, depth interviews, and time diaries were the qualitative methods used to generate most of the data. In addition, numerous unpublished documents became sources of additional information and also served to corroborate data collected through interviews and observation.

It is important the reader know both why and how the researcher has conducted a study. Understanding the research paradigm and method better enables the reader to evaluate the conclusions reached. Chapter Four adds to the reader's comprehension of this study by outlining background information regarding the aid recipient, within the context of First Nation issues in Canada.

## Chapter Four

### AID RECIPIENT: LA'MALIS ABORIGINAL PEOPLE

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

Many First Nations comprise the aboriginal population living in Canada. Since the diversity among aboriginal peoples is great, the identification of several 'aboriginal issues' should not be misinterpreted to reflect the primary concerns of every aboriginal group or person. However, the formation of such national organizations as the Assembly of First Nations indicates there are many common struggles. Several of these concerns are included in the discussion that follows since they provide a general context for the analysis of the relationship between MCC and the La'malis people.

#### 4.2 PUBLIC OPINION

It is said that when Columbus landed, one Indian turned to another and said, 'Well, there goes the neighborhood' (Deloria Jr. 1969:148).

Deloria Jr. (1969:167), an aboriginal theologian, believes humour was the cement holding together the burgeoning Native movement of the late 1960s. However, writing at the same time, Cardinal (1969), a key spokesperson in the movement in Canada, used no humorous anecdotes to convey his anger and frustration at the treatment aboriginal peoples have experienced. Indeed, Cardinal (1969:1) denounces Canada's history as

a shameful chronicle of the white man's disinterest, his deliberate trampling of Indian rights and his repeated betrayal of our trust. Generations of Indians have grown up behind a buckskin curtain of indifference, ignorance and, all too often, plain bigotry.

Because of this "buckskin curtain"

there is little knowledge of native circumstances in Canada and even less interest. To the native one fact is apparent – the average Canadian does not give a damn (p.3).

Cardinal adds that while few non-Native people would publicly admit that they hold prejudicial feelings, since society has deemed such views as no longer acceptable, the facade disappears once problems arise.

Several public opinion surveys seem to corroborate Cardinal's harsh words about the 'average Canadian' (Ponting & Gibbins 1980:69). Survey respondents used such terms as 'lazy,' 'untrustworthy,' 'unclean,' 'failures' and 'excessive drinkers' to describe Native peoples, who they also consistently ranked last when assessing the merits of nine Canadian ethnic groups.<sup>1</sup> Ponting's follow-up survey suggests most Canadians are ignorant, inconsistent and muddled regarding aboriginal peoples (in Manthorpe 1989). Although many of those surveyed seem to recognize the special relationship Native peoples have to the land and believe resource companies should not compromise it, they remain unconvinced that aboriginal issues are very important. Frideres (1983:3) argues most Canadians, whether blatantly or covertly, perceive aboriginal peoples to be "biologically and socially inferior" beings. When a person is told long and often enough that he/she is inferior, that person will eventually accept the valuation as being true (Cardinal 1969:4-5). Cardinal believes gaining respect is the most basic problem facing Native peoples.

Before this is possible, the dignity, confidence and pride of the Indian people must be restored. No genuine Indian participation in the white world can be expected until the Indian is accepted by himself and by the non-Indian as an Indian person, with an Indian identity (p.25).

An "honest-to-God intellectual and emotional effort by" both groups is required to bring about that acceptance (p.10).

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<sup>1</sup> Baldwin (1963:98-99), a Black American writer on race relations, considered only the American aboriginal person to rival the Black person as the "most despised creature in his country."

### 4.3 CHURCH

It's time for white Christians to remember God has given them only one mouth and two ears when it comes to working with natives (Dumais in Dueck 1986:20).

The church has contributed significantly to the development of racist attitudes toward Native peoples. Consistent with his polemical style, Cardinal (1969:53) declares that all missionaries “regarded the Indians as savages, heathens or something even worse.” A more balanced perspective uses the term “Jekyll-and Hyde” to describe both the disruptive and integrative impact of the missionary<sup>2</sup> (Hendry 1969:21). Although some missionaries had the eyes to see God’s work among the aboriginal peoples prior to their arrival (Deloria Jr. 1973:249), a heavy dose of paternalism characterized mission efforts in the late nineteenth century (Grant 1984:189).

The burning of Sweetgrass and Tobacco was ‘heathen’ ritual, but praying with their burning incense was supposedly the only sacred way. Songs with the Drum were ‘barbaric,’ but Latin chants were okay. Dancing to honour the return of the birds in Springtime was wrong, but kneeling in the dark confines of a chapel with rosary beads was right (Robinson & Quinney 1985:19).

Nevertheless, an Anglican bishop claims missionaries offered freedom from superstition and the fear associated with it (in Bowles *et al.* 1972:100-101). But James Dumont, who turned down the opportunity to become a United Church minister, accuses churches

of what amounts to cultural genocide. By considering everything Indian as heathen and pagan, and by demanding that native peoples renounce all that their fathers and forefathers cherished, they were in fact asking them to deny their past. But once you deny your past you have no link with your history and, therefore, no identity. This was the last devastating blow of all. The Indian did not know who he was (in Bowles *et al.* 1972:97).

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<sup>2</sup> Grant (1984:205) submits that “the myth of the noble missionary seeking to reclaim degraded barbarians has been replaced, in many quarters, by the myth of the noble savage (a European creation, in the first place) spoiled by meddling missionaries.”

He adds that although churches have become more sensitive about overseas missions, “almost anyone” is still sent to minister on a reserve, including those who do not care to learn the culture.

Dumont admits that his struggle is not with Christianity but with its packaging of western values. Although Christianity has deeply penetrated Native consciousness, it has not become Native.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, centuries of ridicule heaped on old tribal beliefs make it difficult for Native peoples to resurrect them<sup>4</sup> (Deloria Jr. 1973:267). Tribal religions must be accorded respect, and the church needs to study the spiritual values it tried to destroy<sup>5</sup> (Manuel & Posluns 1974:263). That entails the church “identifying with [aboriginal peoples’] needs in their environment, working in an essentially unstructured situation, sharing their problems, discovering and drawing out their strengths, listening and learning and living in their midst” (Hendry 1969:71).

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<sup>3</sup> In 1986, the United Church of Canada formally apologized to aboriginal nations for suppressing their spirituality and imposing beliefs on them.

We needed to ask for the forgiveness of the native people of Canada for our part in the destruction of their culture, for our part in the denial of the richness of the vision which the Great Spirit has given in trust to them (Robert Smith, past moderator, in Senger 1986:15).

In the United States, Deloria Jr. (1973:58) suggests “many Lutherans were ecstatic when informed by Indians that they were guilty of America's sins against the Indians, and they embarked on a massive program of fund-raising to pay for their alleged sins.” He feels other churches also responded “gleefully” and purchased “indulgences” for their sins. Another Native leader has remarked, “It is as difficult to live without the church as it has been to live with it” (in Grant 1984:206).

<sup>4</sup> Cardinal (1977:222) calls for a “de-brainwashing,” resulting in a rebirth “from the stultifying century-long hold that the so-called Christian denominations have imposed.”

<sup>5</sup> Grant (1984:261) argues there have been no significant Native contributions to Christian theology.

#### 4.4 GOVERNMENT

The best thing the government could do is get the hell out of the way (Robert Andras, federal Minister without Portfolio – October 1968, in Hendry 1969:17).

Native criticism of institutions has not been limited to the church. Indeed, the harshest words are reserved for government. Created to protect First Nations from encroaching settlement, Indian Affairs<sup>6</sup> has become the oppressor.

These faceless people in Ottawa, a comparatively small group, perpetually virtually unknown, have sat at their desks eight hours a day, five days a week, for over a century, and decided just about everything that will ever happen to a Canadian Indian (Cardinal 1969:9).

Nicholson (1984:61), a former assistant deputy minister with Indian Affairs, notes that very few of the department's policy and program developers have had field experience.

The department was seen as being inefficient and ineffective in carrying out its mandate. Furthermore, it was deemed to be staffed by civil servants of sub-average calibre (p.63).

Even with field staff, "transfers took place every three to four years in order that the staff did not become too knowledgeable or too sympathetic"<sup>7</sup> (Gibson 1972:19).

Demands from the Auditor-General for greater efficiency have moved Indian Affairs toward technocracy (Ponting & Gibbins 1980:131). In the attempt to establish quantifiable measurements, however, often the wrong things were focused on because they could be

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<sup>6</sup> The current title for this federal department is 'Indian and Northern Affairs Canada.' Prior to this latest change, the title had been 'Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.' To simplify matters, 'Indian Affairs' is used to designate the federal department responsible for aboriginal programs.

<sup>7</sup> Field staff "occasionally subvert the policies and directives issued from headquarters," creating tensions within the department (Ponting & Gibbins 1980:318). Conway, with Indian Affairs in 1968, expressed his feelings as an employee in the field: You always feel the immense guilt of all the White man's crimes about which you can do nothing, and anything you say sounds foolish. You feel, deep down, that they either hate you, feel contempt for you, are absolutely indifferent to you, or want something from you (in Bowles *et al.* 1972:5).

measured more easily. Nevertheless, the Nielsen Report (Task Force on Program Review 1986:27) concludes “that in terms of financial effort, Canada leads all other countries in attempting to meet the needs of native people.” But it is clear that millions of dollars can be poured into reserves without making “a dent” in the soul of Native peoples<sup>8</sup> (Cardinal 1977:31).

For years, whenever the incredible Indian situation was brought to the attention of the public, the government countered with miles of statistics calculated to show how hard government officials were working and how many millions of tax dollars were going to help Indians. Miles of statistics were as sterile as they were stupid – clumsily redundant to anyone who had seen the reality of the situation on any reserve (Cardinal 1969:117).

No honest man can suggest that the accomplishments have been remotely commensurate with the effort. In this situation the late Sir Winston Churchill would have said, ‘Never have so many done so little for so few.’ With this in mind, one sometimes has the feeling that the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development almost welcomes failure, for failure if repeated frequently enough, only demonstrates the need to expand their services still more. They have concentrated far too much on symptoms and not enough on causes (Cardinal in Bowles *et al.* 1972:79).

Ironically, increased government attention has generated greater poverty among Native peoples (Shkilnyk 1985; Driben & Trudeau 1983; Fry 1970). Indeed, Shkilnyk (1985:234) considers it “one of the most compelling paradoxes of our public policy that ever increasing government expenditures on Indians find an exact parallel in ever increasing indices of social disintegration on their reserves.”

The major piece of legislation pertaining to Native peoples is the *Indian Act*. The *Act* has promoted simultaneously the contradictory policies of assimilation, and protection through separation<sup>9</sup> (Wolfe 1986; Ponting & Gibbins 1980). The 1969 White Paper called

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<sup>8</sup> The Nielsen Report agrees with Cardinal that the large expenditures “are merely dealing with the symptoms, not the causes of the problems” (p.409).

<sup>9</sup> In a 1986 publication, Indian Affairs is critical of its past assimilationist efforts (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada 1986). The federal department, though, is quick to note the progress it has made in consulting with aboriginal peoples since the 1960s.

for the *Act* to be repealed and for the provinces to assume responsibility for Native peoples. All but a handful of Native leaders immediately rejected the White Paper.<sup>10</sup> Although the *Act* helped make them colonized peoples, it also protects their unique aboriginal rights. In the face of continued opposition, the government formally retracted the White Paper in 1971 (Ponting & Gibbins 1980:29). However, aboriginal leaders could not prevent the provinces from becoming directly involved in Native affairs. The 1982 Constitution entrenches the need for provincial consent to any future constitutional changes regarding aboriginal peoples (Gibbins 1984:6).

#### 4.5 SELF-GOVERNMENT AND LAND CLAIMS

To recognize aboriginal rights is to understand the truth of our own history, while, for the Native peoples, such recognition is the means by which they may achieve a distinct and contemporary place in Canadian life (Berger 1981:219).

The Penner Report (Special Committee on Indian Self-Government 1983:44-64) recommends that Native self-government be entrenched in the Constitution, with each Band possessing full legislative and policy-making powers, as well as control over their territories and resources. In essence, the Report recommends the government deal with Bands as nations. In 1987, the federal government had not accepted the Report's recommendations. While government was prepared to allow for more autonomous Band administrations, "the constitutional recognition of Indian sovereignty was a pill upon which the political system gagged" (Gibbins 1984:5). The federal government insists any form of Native government must be subordinate to provincial jurisdiction (Little Bear *et al.* 1984:173-175).

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<sup>10</sup> Many observers point to the White Paper as the single most important catalyst in raising political consciousness of First Nations (e.g., Boldt *et al.* 1985:7).

However, the issue will not die for self-determination has always been the desire of aboriginal peoples (Deloria Jr. & Lytle 1984). Native “leaders point out that their forefathers never surrendered their nationhood or right to self-government, nor was it taken from them by conquest” (Little Bear *et al.* 1984:xv). Government officials, though, are threatened by Native self-government because they do not understand it (Berger in Dawson 1985:26). Their position must be overcome, for self-government “is the only means” by which Native peoples can sort out their own problems (p.26).

Self-government and land claims are inextricable issues for Native leaders. Title to the land forms the basis through which self-government is possible. Moreover, all aboriginal peoples have a spiritual bond to the land (Manuel & Posluns 1974:7), which is likened to the relationship between mother and child<sup>11</sup> (McCullum & McCullum 1975:2). Whereas a national survey suggests a high percentage of Canadians support Native self-government (Chamberlain 1987:A3), most Canadians misunderstand aboriginal land claims<sup>12</sup> (Canadian Press 1986:B10; Ponting & Gibbins 1980:81). Many non-Native people fear they might lose their homes if a settlement is reached in their area<sup>13</sup> (McCullum & McCullum 1975:132), or view the claims as ridiculous attempts ‘to give the country back to the Indians’ (Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy 1985:93). But Native claims are based on British and Canadian law. Both imperial policy and British law recognized that title had to be extinguished before settlement could proceed. Hence, the

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<sup>11</sup> This reverent relationship may be endangered for some observers feel younger generations are losing this sense of intimacy with the land (e.g., Wolfe & Strachan 1986:24).

<sup>12</sup> Ponting's survey suggests Canadians are becoming more sympathetic to aboriginal land claims (in Manthorpe 1989).

<sup>13</sup> All claims to date in British Columbia, for example, state no existing public works or private property would be displaced (Hume 1986:A1).

British policy of making treaties with Native peoples became entrenched in the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

Early in the twentieth century, however, the federal government lost patience with Native peoples claiming land, and in 1927 even went so far as to make it illegal to raise funds for that purpose (Berger 1981:235). Finally, in 1973, the federal government was forced to deal with the issue when the Supreme Court of Canada considered the question of aboriginal title with respect to the Nisga'a Tribal Council's claim. Although the Nisga'a lost the case on a technicality,<sup>14</sup> all the judges agreed aboriginal title existed (Berger 1981:246). Only months after the decision, government announced its intention to settle land claims in all parts of Canada not covered by treaties (comprehensive claims), as well as settle grievances pertaining to existing treaties and the administration of the *Indian Act* (specific claims). Since then the Office of Native Claims has received hundreds of submissions (Task Force on Program Review 1986:244), including over 25 comprehensive claims. However, the process is very costly and inefficient (Task Force to Review Comprehensive Claims Policy 1985:101), for only three comprehensive claims had been settled in almost fifteen years.<sup>15</sup>

Frustration with the lack of political progress on the issues of land claims and self-government has prompted some Native leaders to call for more radical action. George Erasmus, former National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, has warned government that his "may be the last generation to sit down peacefully to negotiate" (in Nahanee 1988:1). Violence might be the response of the next generation of leaders.

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<sup>14</sup> The vote was split on whether aboriginal title had been extinguished, but the seventh judge dismissed the case because the Nisga'a had not received permission to sue from the provincial government.

<sup>15</sup> The settlement rate for specific claims is similar, and over 2,000 of these claims could be filed (Task Force on Program Review 1986:247).

#### 4.6 EDUCATION

Behind the demands for land and self-government is the Native desire for self-determination. Although there has been no constitutional agreement on Native self-government, many of the 600 Bands in Canada have acquired control over the management of their education programs, a key development toward self-determination (Barman *et al.* 1986:1). The federal government's acceptance of the National Indian Brotherhood's 1972 document, *Indian control of Indian education*, has made it possible for Bands to manage on-reserve education outright since 1974 (King 1978:39).

Before 1871, Native education was promoted solely by missionaries (Rohner 1967:104). After that date, government subsidized church efforts until the 1950s when it assumed full control and brought in civil servants to replace church workers as teachers (King 1978:29). Prior to European contact, Native education was life-skills training, involving the entire extended family (Stevens 1986b). There was no equivalent to a school, and teaching was oral and by example (Foster 1982:14). Hence, once inside four walls, sitting in rows with one non-aboriginal disciplinarian giving both verbal and written instructions in a foreign language,<sup>16</sup> most Native children became frightened and alienated. The approach turned most aboriginal people against education (Cardinal 1969:54). Indeed, Cardinal believes that not "even the most stupid Indian [could] create a worse mess than has been handed him by the missionaries and bureaucrats over the past one hundred years" (p.61).

While education for Native students has improved since the days of residential schools, 70 to 80 percent still do not complete high school (Pauls 1984:31). Teachers list such factors as alcoholism, poor nutrition and lack of parental support to explain the failure

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<sup>16</sup> Because of great structural differences between aboriginal languages and English, the Native child faced a formidable task in learning the latter.

rate, whereas Native people point at the school environment, curriculum and teachers<sup>17</sup> (Robertson 1970:152). Furthermore, Native elders view the modern educational process as one that is basically godless, hinders the revival of tribal religions and ultimately tends to destroy their communities<sup>18</sup> (Deloria Jr. 1973:260). Many Native people attribute their feelings of hostility, confusion and inadequacy to the forced acculturation they experienced in school<sup>19</sup> (Cote 1986; Mortimore 1975). The disparity between values taught in school and at home has left the younger generations in a void between two cultures (Shkilnyk 1985).

Many people are trapped between tribal values constituting their unconscious behavior responses and the values that they have been taught in schools and churches, which primarily demand conforming to seemingly foreign ideals. ... People are not allowed to be Indians and cannot become whites (Deloria Jr. 1973:254).

#### 4.7 CHILD WELFARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The trend in Native education toward Band control is also emerging in Native child welfare programs (Cote 1986). As with education, Bands have become dissatisfied with government-operated child services, particularly in light of the federal/provincial dispute

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<sup>17</sup> Teachers frequently report children who have never used pencils and paper, and who have not had books read to them (Blowers 1981). On the other hand, teachers share the general public's "massive ignorance" and stereotypical notions of First Nations (King 1978:1). Couture (1978) argues that the western educational system is "half-brained," developing only intellectual analysis, linear thinking and language skills. The development of intuition, metaphorical and symbolic perception have been neglected. True Native education seeks to develop both 'sides' of the brain.

<sup>18</sup> Parents want elders in the schools teaching their language, history, beliefs and customs (Friesen 1984:12).

<sup>19</sup> LaRoque (1975:68) recalls how school helped her become disenchanted with her home-life when she had been content before.

over the legal obligation to provide such services on reserves<sup>20</sup> (Stevens 1986a:16). More importantly, Bands are opposed to the values behind child welfare legislation, such as its failure to consider the importance of the extended family among Native peoples. They charge that the interpretation of the term, ‘the best interests of the child,’ has been fraught with cultural bias (Kimelman 1985:29).

Over 25 years ago, the common interpretation of a Native child’s best interests resulted in what has become known as the “sixties scoop” (Special Committee on Indian Self-Government 1983:31). Provincial social workers ‘scooped’ children off the reserves in order to ‘save’ them from their poor living conditions.<sup>21</sup> In most instances, children landed in non-aboriginal, middle-class homes with either adoptive or foster parents. However, evidence suggests such placements were seldom successful (Kimelman 1985:243). In the 1980s, changes in social work philosophy and an acute shortage of foster homes have led to a greater use of receiving and group homes.<sup>22</sup> Social workers

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<sup>20</sup> Hepworth (1980:113) notes the intergovernmental discord over funding has prevented many Native children from receiving necessary services. Historically, provincial governments have been reluctant to extend child welfare services to status Native persons living on reserves.

<sup>21</sup> James (1986), the provincial social worker for La'malis, believes the widely accepted view in those days was that if a child was removed from a ‘bad’ to ‘good’ environment, the problem was solved. Kimelman (1985:362) notes that in such cases social workers are criticized whether they apprehend the child or not. Gibson (1972:150) adds that in a one community, a church group once threatened a social worker with court action if any Native children died on the neighbouring reserve. As a social worker himself, he

walked a thin and often unstable tightrope between the realities of Indian life and the requirements of the law. ... There was always a danger that I would make a mistake and remove a child because I was ignorant or tired or bad tempered or impatient or persuaded (p.173-174).

James suggests most social workers long for the day when they no longer work on reserves – the day Bands administer all their own services.

<sup>22</sup> Receiving homes are designed to function as emergency shelters (Kimelman 1985:304), where a child can stay as the social worker assesses his/her future. Longer term group homes now serve as substitutes for foster homes. In a report that discusses Manitoba group homes, Kimelman (1985) notes few Native staff and no special activities

now make every effort to keep a Native child within his/her extended family, Band or people<sup>23</sup> (James 1986; Meredith 1986).

Bands are also taking control of social assistance programs. Whether the term ‘social assistance’ or ‘welfare’ is used, its acceptance is often linked to a loss of pride among Native peoples (Domenich 1972:171). Nevertheless, many Native persons view the payments as a basic right, or as compensation for stolen land and a lost way of life (Larsen 1983:124-125). Because social assistance is given out on an individual basis, animosity results (Rohner & Rohner 1970:26) and the collective responsibility of the community is destroyed (Shkilnyk 1985:156). In Cardinal’s (1969:62) words, “When they offered us welfare, it was as if they had cut our throats.”

#### 4.8 BRITISH COLUMBIA

In many respects, the national issues of social services, education, self-government, land claims and the relationships between churches and governments are most intense for the more than 30 tribal councils and approximately 200 Bands located in B.C. B.C. has acquired the reputation as the province with the worst record in dealing fairly with First Nations. As in many parts of the country, the Hudson’s Bay Company (HBC) played the key role in B.C.’s settlement of European peoples. When HBC was granted the responsibility for Vancouver Island’s colonization in 1849, Sir James Douglas, Governor

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were available to enhance the positive self-image of Native children. No Native organizations, however, were asking to provide cultural education or activities for the children. Group homes are “stop-gap” residential settings, where children seem to be simply housed. Moreover, Kimelman noticed many homes stood out as “shabby, neglected” buildings.

<sup>23</sup> Native people view child-rearing as a communal responsibility, for they believe their children are able to relate to several adults in a child/parent manner (Kimelman 1985:36).

and HBC agent for the Island, assumed the usual British view that the Native peoples had proprietary rights which needed to be extinguished through treaty negotiations (Madill 1981). Between 1850 and 1854, Douglas negotiated 14 treaties, which simply provided lump sum payments in exchange for the outright sale of lands. Each treaty allowed Bands to “hunt over the unoccupied lands, and to carry on [their] fisheries as formerly” (Madill 1981:23). The land was surrendered “entirely and forever” in return for some blankets and certain reserve lands. Treaty settlements halted once HBC claimed it no longer had funds for land purchases.<sup>24</sup> As a result, the vast majority of aboriginal peoples in B.C. have never signed away their lands through a treaty.<sup>25</sup>

After Douglas retired, his successors abandoned his desire to protect Native peoples from the encroachment of settlers. Indeed, Joseph Trutch, Chief Commissioner of Lands and Works in 1864, stated:

Indians have really no right to the lands they claim, nor are they of any value or utility to them; and I cannot see why they should either retain these lands to the prejudice of the general interests of the Colony, or be allowed to make a market of them either to the Government *or to individuals* (emphasis in original) (in Madill 1981:34).

Additional reserves were laid out without Native consultation, and when B.C. joined Confederation in 1871, all public lands were declared provincial property (Berger 1981:224). From 1912 to 1916, the McKenna-McBride commission travelled the province in order to finalize the allotment of aboriginal lands. Although the terms of the commission

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<sup>24</sup> HBC informed Douglas that he was to consider only those lands which Native peoples had cultivated or built homes on by 1846. However, Douglas allowed them to select as much land as they desired, which his successors regarded as too lenient. Many of the reserves, therefore, were later reduced in size. Apart from the Douglas treaties, only Treaty 8, signed in 1899, applies to B.C.. Treaty 8 covers the northeastern part of the province (Boldt *et al.* 1985:370).

<sup>25</sup> Non-treaty Bands in B.C. defend their claims on the basis that none of the three methods to extinguish title apply to them. In their situation, neither the signing of treaties, being conquered by military force, nor the selling of lands to the Crown, ever occurred.

did not allow for lands to be removed without the Band consent, it occurred (Ministry of Native Affairs 1988:3). The commission added nearly two times the amount of land it removed, but the 'cut-off' lands were valued at almost three and a half times more than those added<sup>26</sup> (Manuel & Posluns 1974:92). Until the NDP government assumed power in 1991, provincial governments had argued aboriginal land claims had not been valid, for aboriginal title, if it ever existed, had been extinguished by their predecessors.

#### 4.8.1 Holat'in Nation

Prior to the mid 1800s, Holat'in contact with non-aboriginal people had been minimal. The Holat'in Nation consisted of approximately 10,000 people living in one of the richest natural habitats in North America. Villages consisted of three to four families living in large, wooden dwellings, each facing the shore. They maintained a complex economy beyond subsistence requirements, and as a result, they could devote some three months each winter to their ceremonies, including the potlatch. Economic activity centred on fish, primarily salmon, and because of poor soil conditions, farming was negligible. There was also a thriving trade internally among Holat'in First Nations and with other First Nations.

The arrival of HBC and settlers brought about tremendous change. Various European diseases resulted in epidemics that took thousands of Holat'in lives.<sup>27</sup> Despite the devastating loss of life, the Holat'in continued to take advantage of economic opportunities until the 1920s. At that time, however, the breakdown of their economic and social

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<sup>26</sup> As of April 1988, just over half the Native claims in this regard had been settled.

<sup>27</sup> For example, the 1862 smallpox epidemic is estimated to have killed one-third of aboriginal peoples living in the territory presently known as British Columbia. By 1880, the Holat'in population was less than 3,000. In 1987, the total Holat'in population was estimated at approximately 4,000 members.

structures became more clearly evident. The collapse of the traditional potlatch, the move toward single family housing and the use of English were some of the greatest changes.

Missionaries contributed to the breakdown. One of the first missionaries opposed Holat'in society, and viewed the potlatch as the root cause of their 'depraved' ways.<sup>28</sup> The construction of a residential school in the area expanded the church's presence among the Holat'in. Whether at the large residential school or in smaller the village schools, many Holat'in people remember their period of formal education with distaste and loathing. School represented an interruption in their lives, for it was irrelevant to the realities of reserve life. The high student drop-out rate was matched by the turnover rate for teachers. Even the students who 'graduated' often had been promoted simply to keep them moving through the system.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, villagers distanced themselves from the teachers, outsiders who they knew would soon depart (Friesen 1984:13). But

if the teacher survived the first year, he would develop an empathy with the people of the village. If he survived the second year, he would see the separate identities of each individual, the class structures, the feuds, the family solidarities and jealousies. He would feel the strength of the community, the steel blade of a culture normally hidden by mists of prejudice and prejudgment. If he survived the third year, he would begin to hate his own selfish society (Gibson 1972:123).

Frequently, the teacher who 'survived' several years at one school did so because he/she had been able to respect the pupils and create a climate of emotional warmth in the classroom (Kleinfeld 1975).

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<sup>28</sup> Securing the support of several chiefs, a church group petitioned the Indian Agent in 1883 to outlaw the potlatch, which the federal government did a year later (Grant 1984:140). Few attempts to enforce the prohibition occurred until 1921, when the actions of the local Indian Agent resulted in the convictions of several Holat'in men.

<sup>29</sup> In the 1960s, a teacher at a Holat'in village school admitted to the practice because he felt if students were promoted through the system, they in turn, would have a greater commitment to encourage their children to stay in school.

#### 4.8.2 La'malis People

The Buwahlie and Samaltan peoples, who now reside in La'malis, did not have village schools in 1914. Indeed, that year, members of the McKenna-McBride commission learned that few outsiders visited their villages.<sup>30</sup> The Indian Agent appeared every two years, a missionary every three years, and a doctor not at all. On the other hand, remoteness helped the Buwahlie people keep their customs intact longer than many other First Nations. Together with the Samaltan people, their close relatives, they were recognized as the masters of tradition among the Holat'in.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, both First Nations were ranked near the bottom of the Holat'in hierarchy.

Over time, Indian Affairs' workers persuaded themselves the isolation of the villages was a problem in need of a solution. Their solution centred on amalgamating the two Bands and relocating them to one of three sites,<sup>32</sup> including La'malis, located next to Barano (Samaltan-Buwahlie Bands: Amalgamation and relocation, n.d.:29). Reasons cited for the move include no electricity, nor water supply at the Samaltan village, no school, nor water distribution system for the Buwahlie people, and poor housing conditions at both villages. When presented with the amalgamation/relocation proposal in 1960, the Samaltan people rejected it. They noted that La'malis lay outside their traditional area, and to live

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<sup>30</sup> Despite the minimal contact, disease had devastated the two tribes. In 1839, their combined population exceeded 2,100. In 1883, only 214 people remained. An all-time low was reached in 1931, when only 85 members were listed by the census.

<sup>31</sup> Buwahlie men had the reputation as the most imaginative Holat'in carvers.

<sup>32</sup> A Chief of another Holat'in tribe also supported the amalgamation of smaller villages.

I think it is wrong for the Indian Department to waste money by building schools and wharfs and light plants in those isolated villages. The people in those villages are just fed up because there is nothing in those villages for them to stay for. There is no life in those villages and in a few years they are all going to be empty. I suppose some of the older people that don't have any education and who have been there all of their lives are happy there, but not the younger people.

there would make access to their reserve lands difficult. However, their Chief was convinced it would be better for the children in La'malis (Gibson 1972; Fry 1970). Indian Affairs also persisted, and outlined the “benefits” of relocating. The “blackboard list” of benefits generated at a 1961 meeting is a source of controversy<sup>33</sup> (Samaltan-Buwahlie Bands: Amalgamation and relocation, n.d.:30).

It is reported that the Samaltan people were promised 14 fully furnished homes at La'malis. It has also been reported that the Department [Indian Affairs] threatened to cut off all help to the Band should they decide to remain. On the strengths of these arguments, in May of 1962, the Samaltan people voted unanimously to relocate, providing that all members could move at the same time, and that adequate housing be provided.

After the agreement was reached, Indian Affairs stated the housing program would have to be spread over several years. Officials did not view that as a major stumbling block for they assumed families with school-age children would move first.<sup>34</sup> When the first move occurred in 1964, three completed houses awaited one Buwahlie family and two Samaltan families. However, when the two Samaltan families made the journey, the rest of the village accompanied them. The years that followed were filled with tragedy.<sup>35</sup>

Gibson (1972:147-148), a social worker for Indian Affairs at the time, remembers his first visit to La'malis.

The new village, when I first saw it, was a sea of brown mud in the centre of which were four department houses painted dark red. The fishing boats were in the river, some lying on their sides, some under water, some hauled out on to the bank. A

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<sup>33</sup> There is no accurate written record of what was on that list, and more importantly, confusion exists whether the items were possible benefits or actual commitments on the part of Indian Affairs (the latter being the understanding of many of the Samaltan people present).

<sup>34</sup> Researchers, who were asked to examine grievances related to the relocation, concluded that these officials did not understand how the community functioned, and therefore failed to appreciate the manner in which the people would approach the move.

<sup>35</sup> Fry's (1970) 'novel,' *How a people die*, focuses on the early years of La'malis. As an Indian Agent at the time, he had firsthand knowledge of the situation.

week before, two children had died in one of the boats when the tide came in and flooded the boat through an open sea cock and drowned the little children while they slept. It sounded very depressing, and the impression was not improved by the rain and the north wind and the mud which clung to my boots like clay. I can remember looking towards the town which lay two miles to the south, with the police office and the store and the beer parlour and those who were bigoted and many who were tolerant and I thought that it might take five years before Abel [pseudonym] and his friends were settled. It might take ten years. It might never happen.

Ron (1986a), who grew up in the Samaltan village, adds:

People were literally killed walking down the streets here when they first moved. It was horrible. If you talk to any of the old-timers who were here then, they'll tell you it was just ghastly. ... They were treated really, really terribly, and so they turned to liquor.

The accidental death rate those first years was staggering<sup>36</sup> (Peter 1986). It was not long before elders expressed the desire to return to the "old country" (Samaltan-Buwahlie Bands: Amalgamation and relocation, n.d.:34). Indian Affairs, however, had anticipated this response and had taken measures to prevent such an occurrence. Contingent upon receiving a house in La'malis, the family had to sign an agreement that allowed the Department to demolish its old home. Within two years of the move, Indian Affairs had burned down the Samaltan village. Since most of the families did not have houses awaiting them when they left for La'malis, their possessions stayed behind. Once in La'malis, many boats were lost as alcohol consumption "went out of control like a runaway forest fire" (Fry 1970:97). Without transportation, few were able to make it back to retrieve their possessions, which included invaluable heirlooms,<sup>37</sup> before the fire consumed them.

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<sup>36</sup> Shkilnyk (1985) reports many of the same devastating results from the 1963 forced relocation of the Grassy Narrows Band in northwestern Ontario.

<sup>37</sup> Many villagers believe the persons who set fire to the old villages first removed the artwork and then sold it across Canada for personal profit (Ron 1987a).

Today, villagers still express bitterness about the entire relocation process (Cathy 1986; Peter 1986). Periodically, some of them visit the old village sites,<sup>38</sup> and often weep as they hear the voices of departed loved ones among the decaying cedar beams. Elders continue to talk of a permanent return, but as they die, the dream fades (Peter 1986).

La'malis Band membership stands at almost 400 people now, two-thirds of which live on the reserve. The addition of over 30 new houses since 1984 has virtually exhausted available space, and so acquiring land adjacent to the reserve, both for housing and a new school, is a top priority (Les 1986c). The Band manages its education program, from preschool to grade seven, and the child welfare committee is working toward assuming control of child related services. Moreover, the formation of the Band's own fishing company has provided several men the opportunity to harvest, once again, traditional Holat'in foods. Villagers and interested outsiders alike, share a cautious optimism for the future of La'malis.

#### 4.9 SUMMARY

Many other First Nations in Canada strongly identify with the recent bleak past of the La'malis people. The suffering of aboriginal peoples in this country can, to a large degree, be attributed to society's ignorance of them and their inherent rights. More importantly, many Canadians do not respect them, labelling them as lazy, alcoholic beggars on welfare. Decades of such labelling have contributed to many aboriginal peoples losing their self-respect.

The church's role in this depersonalization process centred on its paternalistic efforts to convert the 'heathens' from their 'godless' ways. Similarly, and often in cooperation

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<sup>38</sup> Few signs of their previous existence remain (Val 1986). Chief Les (1986a) dreams of building a mini-village at the old Buwahlie site.

with the church, government has pursued the conversionist policy of assimilation, albeit within a policy of separation. Not surprisingly, government's confused approach has created the situation where an increase in its attention to aboriginal peoples parallels the increased disintegration of their communities. Furthermore, government policy continues to frustrate aboriginal leaders for it opposes their unwavering commitment to self-determination. Government inaction on self-government and land claims, the key elements of self-determination, may soon precipitate violent Native action.

First Nation leaders' consonant insistence on self-determination has had a significant impact on the delivery of educational and social services. First Nations are beginning to slow the acculturation process so forcibly promoted in the church and government controlled residential and village schools. Unfortunately, many aboriginal adults are now in a cultural void because of their experiences in those institutions. Past social work practices also promoted the acculturation process. Many an aboriginal child's 'best interests' involved his/her removal from the reserve to the 'good' environment of a non-aboriginal middle-class home. Fortunately, social work people have not turned a blind eye to the destructive effects of that practice, and they now work with Bands to keep aboriginal children in their home communities.

Common Native struggles are nowhere more sharply defined than in B.C. The majority of the large and diverse aboriginal population living in this province has never had their aboriginal title extinguished by the Crown through treaties. Indeed, until recently, the denial of the existence of aboriginal title had been the consistent position of provincial governments. Prior to the existence of provincial governments, at the time of HBC's arrival, Holat'in First Nations possessed vibrant, complex cultures which functioned beyond the subsistence level. However, European disease, aggressiveness and arrogance combined to decimate the aboriginal communities literally, culturally and spiritually.

Although more isolated than many of the other First Nations, the Buwahlie and Samaltan peoples could not remain untouched by the European intrusion. Non-aboriginal medicine eventually stopped the epidemics, but European arrogance and paternalism furthered cultural genocide. The darkest period in the two First Nations' recent past began with their amalgamation and relocation to La'malis. Once proud fishers, craftspeople and artisans became consumed with and by alcohol. But as a people, they have survived that period, and now plan for the time when they will become a self-governing, self-sufficient community.

MCC commenced its activities in La'malis with the overall objective of contributing to the Band's goal of self-determination. But both Cardinal (1969) and Deloria Jr. (1969) claim aboriginal peoples are better off without non-aboriginal organizations active on the reserves. These aboriginal leaders seriously question the effectiveness of "do-gooders," who they see rushing into Native communities determined to 'help' at all costs. Chapter Five switches the focus to MCC, outlining the nature and purpose of this aid donor.

## Chapter Five

### AID DONOR: MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

We acknowledge that there are many white people who have a genuine interest in what happens to the Indian. They really want to help. But they don't know how and their best efforts only muddy the waters (Cardinal 1969:90).

The First World War and the Russian Revolution were key events that triggered the formation of MCC. As German-speaking people, the tens of thousands of Mennonites located in the Ukraine became objects of hatred and distrust because of the war with Germany (Epp 1980:18). The Bolshevik Revolution ended the freedoms that had come with self-government, which the Mennonites had enjoyed from the time of their arrival in Russia late in the eighteenth century (Dyck 1967:127). Over a century of those freedoms combined with access to good agricultural land, generated considerable wealth within the Mennonite colonies. Bolshevik nationalization and redistribution schemes, therefore, had a disastrous impact on the Mennonites, seizing much of their money, food, seed and livestock (Epp 1980:19).

The policies and a severe drought at the beginning of the 1920s virtually halted agricultural production in the Ukraine. In July 1920, a Mennonite delegation traveled to Kansas to report the desperate situation to representatives from several North American Mennonite organizations (MCC 1982:5). Two weeks later at a meeting for all Mennonite relief agencies, a provisional central organization was established. On September 27, 1920, the organization, named the Mennonite Central Committee, held its first meeting. A year later, with permission from the Soviet government, MCC opened feeding projects in the large Mennonite colonies.

In 1925, the crisis in the Ukraine ended. That year, the MCC executive met in order to decide whether to dissolve the organization. The decision to continue has enabled MCC,

headquartered in Pennsylvania, to grow to over 1,000 workers, more than half of whom are located overseas, and be active in some 50 countries around the world (MCC 1986c:4). Indeed, it has been stated that MCC has provided more recognition for Mennonites the world over than any other group or movement (Jantz 1985:18).

## 5.2 OBJECTIVES AND OPERATIONAL PRINCIPLES

In the first year of MCC's existence, five men made up the entire staff (Classen 1970:327). The number of workers remained small until the Second World War created a great demand for volunteers. It was during the war that the first non-Mennonites began serving with MCC, and that has increased to the point where, in 1987, 29 percent of Canadian applications to the organization came from non-Mennonites (MCC 1987a:13). A similar trend has been the rise in the involvement of women. Men dominated MCC in the early years, but since the 1970s, women have accounted for a greater percentage of the total placements. A significant increase has also occurred in the age of MCC workers. From 1968 to 1986, the average age of MCC personnel advanced from 25 to 35 years (MCC 1986c:4). Staff persons appreciate the better skills, more experience and maturity of the older workers, but they fear that if the trend continues, MCC's creativity and flexibility will be reduced (Coggins 1986:17). Although "MCC has always been critical of short-term youth mission agencies which offer 'a year of fun and games in another culture'" (Coggins 1988:18), the organization is being pushed to adopt similar programs in order not to lose touch with youth.

Bolivia, Bangladesh, Haiti, Egypt, Botswana, Kenya, China and Zaire have absorbed many of the increased number of overseas workers in recent years. Services in agriculture, nutrition, business administration/management, health, education, child care, community development and administration are among those provided by MCC workers. For

example, workers in Thailand are involved in an agricultural demonstration centre used as a base for teaching. In Haiti, volunteers help local people prevent soil erosion through a reforestation program. Funds for those and all other MCC programs are financed mainly through cash contributions and government grants. MCC's total income, including the value of donated materials, reached a record \$33 million (U.S.) in 1985, mainly because of the tremendous response to the Ethiopian famine.

MCC (1987b:1) informs its workers that they constitute the organization's most valuable resource. As a result, MCC attempts to select persons who:

- are both committed to the Christian faith and active members of a Christian church;
- are ready to identify with and participate in the life and activity of the Christian church and community where assigned;
- possess the personal, emotional and vocational resources needed for creative work in demanding frontier situations;
- demonstrate the resilience needed for adjustment to new ideas and cultures and have the aptitude to learn a foreign language where needed;
- are willing to be responsible to a group, accepting financial limitations, new social patterns and the disciplines of a working community; and
- are capable of working within the framework of program goals and able to work at problems of program and human relations with honesty and openness (pp.3-4).

More specifically, "workers are expected to abstain from the use of tobacco and non-medicinal drugs" (p.4), and to avoid consuming alcoholic beverages when alternatives are available. Married couples are also encouraged to postpone having or adopting children until after they leave MCC. In addition, a worker's overall performance is to be evaluated annually, both by a supervisor and through self-appraisal.

Once applicants have been accepted and placed, they attend a ten-day orientation. The first full day of the orientation officially begins their term, the length of which is normally three years for overseas assignments and two years in North America. The entire cost of the term is the full responsibility of MCC. Costs covered include round-trip transportation, room and board, medical care, family assistance, child education, vacations and personal

monthly allowances<sup>1</sup> (see Appendix B). MCC's (1987b:2) objective is for volunteers neither to lose nor gain financially during their terms.

MCC (1982:32-35) claims that several major themes are found in its projects. 'In the name of Christ,' is the foundation for all of MCC's service. MCC's "program is unapologetically a Christian ministry"<sup>2</sup> (p.32), where there is a fusion of word and deed. The organization desires to relate intimately to its constituent churches and their agencies. Relations with other Christian groups which express similar convictions regarding Christian service are also cultivated. Furthermore, "MCC seeks to be flexible and mobile, ... ready to move into new areas of service as called upon and as commissioned by the supporting churches" (p.34).

Compassion, stewardship, need and justice also are cited as major themes in MCC's work. Significant efforts have focused on refugees, victims of war, underprivileged and neglected people.

Energies have been directed not only to help people in the moments of crisis and acute suffering but also to attack chronic problems and the root causes of starvation, illness and ignorance (p.33).

Under the biblical imperative to share, MCC operates as a channel for such gifts as food, clothing, farm and medical equipment. Although the organization has sensed a

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteers who must make payments on educational loans can access MCC's (1987b:10) loan assistance program, which covers up to \$1,400 (Cdn.) per person annually. MCC also contributes up to \$175 per year toward the payment of premiums for those workers with life insurance.

<sup>2</sup> MCC (1987b:2-3) summarizes its Christian faith as follows:

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's Son, as the revelation of God and as Lord of all who accept Him by faith. We believe that the Christian church is composed of those who commit themselves to live under His lordship and who share in fellowship with each other. Christian love is the central quality of the Christian faith and becomes the basis for our relationship with all people regardless of creed, ethnic origin, nationality or political view. MCC's response to human conflict, injustice, war and racial tension is based on the biblical teachings of nonviolence.

responsibility to aid fellow Christians, it claims its first criterion for giving aid is need. MCC argues its “services everywhere are available without regard to race, creed, nationality or social status of the recipients” (p.34). In addition to providing basic needs, “MCC seeks to understand the corporate structure – economic, religious and political – which violate justice and to bear faithful witness to the way of Christ in every circumstance” (p.35).

Insights gained from over six decades of service have led to the development of several principles which guide programs (pp.35-37). MCC views devoted, quality workers and good interpersonal relationships as the keys to a program. As a result, MCC claims “that if it is to use effectively the services of large numbers of short-term workers, a core of continuing career professionals is required” (p.33). Working with nationals overseas and having its volunteers speak the local people’s language are also considered important. Further, MCC acknowledges there are limits to money’s positive influence on program development, and that abundant finances do not necessarily ensure a good project. The organization avoids programs involving the creation and maintenance of buildings so as not to lose its mobility. MCC wants to be ready to experiment with new forms of service, yet only when there is a degree of certainty the new responsibilities can be fulfilled.

MCC also states it is concerned about not limiting itself to addressing dramatic, and hence, easily identifiable needs. The organization endeavours to work even when the task calls “for a long, arduous, uneventful labor of love” (p.35). Similarly, MCC wishes to respond to needs that larger service agencies may bypass, and to work in areas where tensions are acute (e.g., regions of guerilla warfare).

Many of these insights led to the promulgation of MCC’s assumptions, objectives and priorities (pp.29-32). They are used as guidelines in the planning, implementation and

evaluation of all programs. First, MCC assumes that because of social disintegration, physical disasters and human kind's sinful nature, there will continue to be needs to which it can respond. Moreover, MCC assumes its constituent churches will continue to provide resources so it can respond to those needs. The organization's overarching objective is to share those "resources in the name of Christ and proclaim Jesus as Lord" (p.30). To do that with integrity, MCC endeavours to establish and maintain an identity separate from nationalistic, cultural and ideological interests contrary to its understanding of Christian faithfulness.

On the other hand, MCC strives to identify with the weak and oppressed. Whenever relief is provided, the goal is to maximize the initiative, dignity and participation of the victims. In all development projects, the objective is to encourage self-reliance based on local capacity. At the same time, mutual respect is to characterize the spirit of MCC's involvement, for MCC realizes there is as much learning to do as teaching. Instruction is not to be limited to the project site, for MCC believes constituents need to become sensitive to the suffering and injustices which exist both overseas and at home so they can participate in MCC's work with understanding. In addition, MCC attempts to influence public policy decisions which impact disadvantaged people.

Connected to these objectives, assumptions and insights, MCC has stated six priorities (pp.31-32):

- (1) Program planning will focus on regions suffering from conflict, poverty and injustices.
- (2) In light of widespread hunger, priority will be given to programs which emphasize food production, nutrition and family planning.
- (3) Because much hunger is due to unequal distribution of food, land and other economic power, priority will be given to programs which encourage more equal distribution of these resources.
- (4) Priority will be given to programs in which MCC or constituent national churches or mission boards have administrative responsibilities, as opposed to programs to which MCC loans personnel only.

- (5) Priority will be given to programs which have a high degree of local participation. Special emphasis will be given to the training of local leadership.
- (6) More resources should be given to the preparation and training of MCC workers.

Further, the scope and approach of every project is evaluated regularly. In order that the largest portion of funds can be used directly in a project, MCC tries to minimize overhead costs.

### 5.3 ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

In 1920, several men operated MCC out of the United States. Some 70 years later, MCC has evolved into a binational agency with numerous sections. MCC Binational, the original body headquartered in Akron, Pennsylvania, has the main function of coordinating and supervising the overseas work. Also headquartered in Akron is MCC United States (MCC U.S.), formed in 1979 primarily to administer American programs. Its Canadian counterpart is MCC Canada, established in Winnipeg in 1963, which manages both domestic programs and Canadian contributions to overseas aid. Because the CIDA and the aid agencies of the western provinces make considerable funds available to MCC Canada, its formation has generated significant income for the international operation. In addition, there are four regional MCC chapters in the United States, and five provincial organizations in Canada. The local chapters assist in personnel recruitment and may initiate some programs unique to the region. Each MCC organization is governed by a board which meets annually and can represent up to seventeen Mennonite and Brethren in Christ conferences or groups.

## 5.4 MCC CANADA (MCCC)

In 1987, MCC Canada supported national programs in the areas of the Ottawa Office, Victim-Offender Ministries, Voluntary Service, and separate Employment, Handicap, Peace and Social, Women's, and Native 'Concerns' programs. Throughout all Canadian programs and projects, 149 persons served as full-time volunteers in 1987. Furthermore, each program listed above possesses its own budget and seeks to address its stated concern (see the annual publication, *MCC Canada Report*, for program details).

### 5.4.1 Native Concerns

Although its director admits "the Native Concerns program has not exactly been a popular people's movement within the MCCC constituency" (Wiebe 1987c:S1), it has become one of the oldest, largest and most expensive Canadian programs (Table 5.1). MCC Canada's involvement in a resettlement program for Paraguayan Indians in the 1960s prompted constituents to enquire about working with aboriginal peoples in Canada (Funk 1987:5). The earliest MCC Canada contact with Native communities occurred when volunteer nurses and teachers were placed in Labrador and Newfoundland. But MCC Canada's response to Native issues remained on a case-by-case basis until 1974 when a director was appointed to act as programmer, counsellor and resource person for the newly created Native Concerns program (Funk 1987:8).

Funk (1987:12), in examining the first twelve years of Native Concerns, places the program emphasis into four broad categories:

- constituency education;
- resource development;
- justice issues; and
- special programs.

The goal of constituency education is to raise constituents' level of awareness of Native issues so they can understand and support program initiatives. Apart from visits to church

Table 5.1 – Native Concerns' Budget (Nov. 1, 1986 – Oct. 31, 1987)

	<u>1987 Budget</u>	<u>1987 Actual</u>
Staff salaries	\$ 58,620.00	\$ 66,991.11
Staff benefits	7,400.00	8,158.45
Voluntary service	7,000.00	4,854.24
Staff travel	4,170.00	7,053.67
Telecommunications	5,300.00	5,070.51
Gardening	32,000.00	48,918.80
Aboriginal Rights Coalition (Project North):		
MCC share	8,240.00	7,167.25
Meetings	4,000.00	5,519.21
CASNP	600.00	602.10
Resource development	6,000.00	6,661.19
Wild rice	4,000.00	3,274.33
Seminars	4,200.00	1816.01
Native conferences	300.00	330.02
Journal assignment	3,000.00	–
Drama	2,000.00	–
Treaty land entitlement	1,500.00	–
Educational materials	700.00	817.02
Model library	400.00	359.40
Other	<u>3060.00</u>	<u>2741.73</u>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>150,490.00</u></b>	<b><u>\$170,335.04</u></b>

Source: Wiebe 1987c:S6

groups, specific educational projects include the development of a research library and the production of films, slide sets and dramas.

An evaluation of Native Concerns in 1978 led to the recommendation there be a greater emphasis on resource development. A staff person assumed responsibility for resource development in 1980 and soon thereafter, he helped design a portable unit for wild rice processing still in use by several northern Ontario Bands. The largest and most

recognized resource development effort is the summer gardening program. Despite beginning with only one volunteer in 1977, the program grew rapidly. After ten years, 156 gardeners had worked in 36 Native communities (Funk 1987:26-27). Several Native communities have already 'graduated' from the program, for they no longer require a summer volunteer to work with their gardens (Wiebe 1987c:S1). Other resource-based projects, such as elk and bison ranching, moose husbandry and reindeer herding, have been explored but not implemented.

Addressing justice issues is the "most complex and often misunderstood mandate given to Native Concerns" (Funk 1987:30). Cooperative action includes membership in other organizations promoting Native justice issues. Participation in the Canadian Alliance in Solidarity with Native People (CASNP) predates MCC Canada's formation. CASNP is one of the few groups in which Natives and non-Natives work together on an agenda. In contrast, Aboriginal Rights Coalition (Project North) is supported primarily by non-Native members of major church bodies, including MCC Canada. MCC Canada joined and began supporting the Coalition (Table 5.1) in 1976.<sup>3</sup> One of its main objectives has been to support aboriginal peoples struggling to control economic and political development in their traditional areas. Associated with that, the Coalition has consistently argued that the settlement of land claims must precede any development.

Native Concerns also does its own research into justice issues. Although the staff conducts much of the research, several volunteers have completed research assignments. One of the first assignments was to be an examination of aboriginal land rights, but some local objections to the subject matter prompted a change to the topic of resource

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<sup>3</sup> The Director of Native Concerns chaired the Coalition, then called Project North, from 1984-86 (Funk 1987:34).

development. In the mid 1980s, a researcher focused on several topics, including actions taken regarding the settlement of outstanding treaty land entitlements.

Working closely with Voluntary Service, Native Concerns has been able to participate in a variety of special projects. From 1976 to 1986, 266 full-time voluntary service assignments related directly to aboriginal peoples (Funk 1987:38). Projects in education, community development and social rehabilitation accounted for a large percentage of those assignments. Indeed, placements with significant interaction between volunteers and Native peoples represented almost 50 percent of all Canadian voluntary service assignments for that period.

A major review of Native Concerns in September 1987, led to the formulation of several affirmations, concerns and challenges (Listening Committee 1987). The review affirmed spiritual concern is primary, but with the understanding that all aspects of life pertain to spirituality. In addition, the program's approach of standing alongside and listening to Native peoples was commended. Concerns raised include the presence of a double standard with respect to advocacy and justice issues for Mennonites and others. The short tenure of volunteers also was seen to create a lack of program continuity. And one of the main challenges cited was to involve Native peoples directly in more extensive constituency education.

Menno Wiebe (1987c:S2-3), Native Concerns' director since its inception, believes the program's greatest challenge is to educate the constituency about Native issues. Funk (1987:18) suggests Native Concerns' stance toward its constituency

is a more independent prophetic position that underlines the complicity of Mennonites in the systems and power groups that oppress native people economically and politically. The tone has been somewhat critical of the church and advances the MCC Canada stance as a viable alternative to the paternalism and ecclesiastical domination of the institutional church.

He adds that the constituency's greatest resistance has come when the program has supported Native peoples in their conflicts with government.

The micro-vision of the constituency responds to specific needs in an impersonal way. MCCC personnel, on the other hand, deal with people on a face-to-face basis and are aware of all the relationships that have a bearing on the need and attempt to minister to the whole person. Quite often the most helpful response to the situation may have little to do with the need that is understood at the constituency. The Native Concerns department is one of the few areas of [the] MCCC program where the constituency becomes aware of all the components that are involved in addressing a specific need. The immediacy of the Native Concerns program forces people to declare themselves in ways that are not necessary in other more distant programs. The validation of the Native Concerns mandate requires an admission that a third world problem exists in Canada (pp.44-45).

And if that admission occurs, it means "the forces that created a safe and prosperous haven for Mennonites are also capable of isolating and oppressing a whole nation of people in the name of progress" (p.45). He commends Native Concerns for risking being misunderstood by the larger Mennonite constituency.<sup>4</sup> Nevertheless, he maintains careful educational efforts are needed to eliminate misunderstandings. Funk concludes that developing meaningful relationships with Native peoples and adopting their agenda have been the emphases of the program.

#### **5.4.2 Native Concern's Director: Menno Wiebe**

When he was appointed director, Menno Wiebe was asked to implement the new program in concert with Voluntary Service. He claims the service approach has been critical to MCC's acceptance by Native peoples.

The Native people with whom I have discussed this have found it particularly refreshing to see Whites coming into their community who aren't there to make a fast buck off Indian problems. They can't point fingers at VSers [voluntary service workers] with that accusation (Wiebe 1987b).

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<sup>4</sup> Funk (1987:44) notes the MCC Canada executive and board had consistently supported program actions on justice issues.

Furthermore, he contends

the servanthood stance of Anabaptist workers plays down the status orientation of professionalism, seeks co-residency with the people, and as a whole discourages abuse of power in the community. This servanthood stance arising out of Anabaptist thinking permits a horizontal rather than a vertical relationship which fits well into the near egalitarian structure of most Indian cultures (Wiebe 1987a:34).

And when volunteers are placed in positions of authority, they are to turn it back to the community, an action that promotes local accountability (p.37).

At volunteer orientations, Wiebe is usually part of a special session on Native/volunteer interaction. His advice to volunteers includes the following:

- purify yourselves from all notions of superiority; admit that you come from an arrogant culture;
- identify yourselves fully, personally, denominationally and culturally – keep no one guessing about the real you;
- do not coast on your professional status gained elsewhere;
- undo your own need to manage and control;
- if the dream is not theirs it is not worth pursuing;
- wait for feedback on what you say and do;
- know the people, their kinship connections, history and culture;
- learn their legends and listen to the elders;
- do not get into the fray of competitive denominationalism; and
- read and interpret Scripture with rather than for the people (Wiebe 1987a:38).

Wiebe (1987b) adds that volunteers often “get to know the people” because they do not arrive at

a mission chapel or compound that protects them. VSers have been thrown right into the middle of communities. ... I would have to say though, that MCC has very much to learn yet about community development skills. Some of us need to make a very strong pitch to schools and colleges that they teach community development. ... When you get thrown into the work, you spend all your time in culture shock, local frustration and other neuroses, which hinder you from being a community builder. Having said that, I am quite amazed at the kind of community development that has taken place.

Since community development is a protracted process in Native communities, Wiebe supports the recommendation of three-year terms for volunteers. He also acknowledges

the importance of Native languages and cautions volunteers not to assume English soon will be the only tongue spoken by aboriginal peoples.

Wiebe points to MCC's emphasis on voluntary service as one of the main factors in his decision to accept the directorship that began in September 1974. Prior to that appointment, Wiebe (1987b) served ten years as the director of the Canadian Conference of Mennonites' Native ministries program. Growing up in the central Fraser Valley, he recalls several experiences which steered him toward working with Native peoples.

A Native man in his Model A Ford sold salmon to my mother. She was a great perfectionist, but to help those people, she bought the fish [it was illegal for those Native people to sell their fish]. I think she would have gone to jail if it had come to that. I also worked in a fish cannery, as well as logging camps, with Indian people and learned to appreciate their way of handling adversity. There was something about their personality that I really appreciated (Wiebe 1987b).

Later, Wiebe had extensive Native contact on special MCC assignments to Oklahoma and South America that led to a deeper appreciation of the beauty and meaning of indigenous cultures.

Two other factors were important in Wiebe's decision to assume the Native Concerns' directorship. From his ten years experience with a missions agency, he became convinced that Native peoples are not interested in the differences between Mennonite groups. MCC's position, therefore, provided him with an opportunity to work with Native peoples on an inter-Mennonite, and hence less factional, basis. Second, Wiebe (1987b) was attracted by MCC's word/deed combination. He believes that Christian testimony combined with visible help for down-to-earth needs is consistent with the Native understanding of religion.

I have heard Native peoples say in one form or another, 'Religion penetrates all of life, or it's no good.' So they don't even have a separate category, for religion means life (Wiebe 1987b).

Moreover, Wiebe agrees with those Native theologians (e.g., Deloria Jr. 1973) who describe North American Christianity as having been largely bastardized by an aggressive, conquering and controlling European influence. Wiebe acknowledges a growing rejection of the church, but maintains very few Native persons have rejected Jesus Christ. He believes MCC has been welcomed into Native communities because it declares its intention to have workers participate in local churches and not establish a separate Mennonite church<sup>5</sup> (Wiebe 1987a:39).

Although Mennonites are increasingly moving into positions of power in North American society, Wiebe (1987a:35) contends that a sense of peoplehood binds Mennonites and aboriginal peoples.

The experience of the Mennonite witness in the native communities is that our very declaration of who we are is a necessary prerequisite for an honest exchange between peoples of two different cultures. As we declare fully who we are ethnically and theologically we have opportunity to relate to those whose cultural identity is already known and well established. My good Cree friend once told me, 'If you expect me to open my door, you better open yours as well.' Such is honest two-way communication. Since native people by and large are not integrated in their cultural approach but rather regenerate their own cultural identity, they seem to respect others who assert their own cultural heritage as well.

Mennonites also possess a history of suffering and minority status, a common history which Wiebe claims provides for greater mutual understanding.

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<sup>5</sup> MCC is both criticized and commended for its work in church planting. The same church constituency will criticize MCC both for not emphasizing evangelism enough and for usurping the work of its mission agency. MCC is commended by those who are more ecumenical and who do not wish to compete for church members with other denominations. Wiebe (1987a:39) admits MCC has overemphasized action at times, but adds that has been "a corrective on evangelistic words that were no longer believable."

## 5.5 MCC BRITISH COLUMBIA (MCC B.C.)

In B.C., Mennonite and Native communities are in closest proximity in the Fraser Valley. It was in Clearbrook, the geographic centre of the valley and heart of the B.C. Mennonite community, that MCC B.C. was formed in October 1964. In the early years, efforts focused on supporting overseas work. That focus led to the development of a material aid department, which today operates a warehouse for goods donated to MCC in western Canada. There, items are sorted into various kits (e.g., layette bundles; school, health, and sewing kits) and packaged for shipment, primarily to Asia and Central America.

As donations to MCC B.C. have increased, more funds have become available for local programs.<sup>6</sup> In 1988, 35 MCC-supported volunteers were active in communities throughout the province. One of those volunteers was on a special short-term assignment researching Mennonite and Native relationships in the province.

A major impetus for the research arose from the realization B.C. Mennonites know and understand very little of their Native neighbours (Native Concerns Advisory Group 1987). Therefore, the volunteer was asked to approach the research as a listener, in order to hear firsthand the concerns of Native leaders. Among the suggestions in his report is that B.C. Mennonites “research the question of how they have directly or indirectly participated in the oppression of Native people,” with the objective of formulating an apology (Zerbe Cornelsen 1988:33). More importantly, he suggests personal interaction between the two groups increase through Native institutions, public events and the Aboriginal Rights Coalition (Project North). He believes personal encounters break down “the fundamental problem of racist attitudes in church and society” (p.33).

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<sup>6</sup> A rough guide for program disbursements is based on a 80/20 formula. Of the general donations received by provincial MCCs, 80 percent is normally transferred to MCC Canada, which in turn directs 80 percent of its receipts to MCC Binational in Akron. In each case, the remaining twenty percent is used for both national and local operations. However, in B.C., the formula has changed to a 70/30 ratio in recent years.

### **MCC B.C. Voluntary Service Coordinator: Fred Kaarsemaker**

As a voluntary service assignment in B.C., Zerbe Cornelsen's (1988) research came under the administration of Fred Kaarsemaker, who had been the MCC B.C. voluntary service coordinator since September 1982.<sup>7</sup> It was Kaarsemaker's responsibility to make arrangements for the researcher, which were primarily financial, and then keep in touch with him throughout the assignment. But for many volunteers, an assignment involves a move to a new community, and for them to be able to function there, Kaarsemaker arranged housing, furnishings, transportation and other necessary details. After the volunteers were settled, he tried to see them four times a year.

Kaarsemaker (1986) points to his university days as the time when he became serious about development issues. Although he was in law school, he spent much of his time associating with community development students. Kaarsemaker so identified with the community development group that he, and several friends, decided to pursue the idea of working a year or so in Africa. As it turned out, one of the many letters to the continent was redirected to a Christian organization based in Europe. Because the organization did not recruit personnel in North America, it introduced the couple to MCC, which had helped start the agency. After several years of correspondence with MCC, he and his wife joined MCC and were placed in Niger as administrators for three years.

As non-Mennonites unfamiliar with MCC at first, the couple's African assignment heralded their involvement with the larger Mennonite community. Upon returning to Canada from Africa, they entered a Mennonite seminary in Indiana, and after three years there, applied to organizations, including MCC, for another assignment. MCC suggested

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<sup>7</sup> Kaarsemaker (1986) also was the half-time development education coordinator, which involved "speaking, itinerating workers, keeping informed and being creative in thinking of ways to get information out to people." He also worked together with agencies like the Red Cross, World Vision and YMCA on different educational projects.

the position of B.C. voluntary service coordinator, and because the couple wished to remain in Canada, they accepted.

In addition to being the main contact person for volunteers, Kaarsemaker's position meant he was the MCC B.C. staff person who was involved in every phase of an assignment. When organizations approached MCC, his job was to explain how voluntary service operates and inform them of the type of workers MCC recruits.

For example, a reserve near [a town] wants a youth worker. I tell them how MCC works and ask them to fill out an application form. Then I tell Winnipeg that the ball is rolling. When I get the questions answered, I ask Native Concerns if they have questions about the project. If they are happy with it, then I take it to the provincial executive. If they approve it, it goes to MCC Canada because all VS assignments [in Canada] are MCC Canada projects (Kaarsemaker 1986).

Once a project was approved at both levels, Kaarsemaker developed a job description and informed the Personnel department in Winnipeg about the kind of volunteer required for the assignment. Files of applicants were then sent to him, and if he thought one was suitable, he forwarded the file to the organization.

Kaarsemaker (1987b) guided the development of several projects which involved aboriginal peoples other than the Holat'in. Interactions have taken place through hospital and foster home work, and through an involvement with a small mission organization. Furthermore, under the direction of Native Concerns, summer workers have promoted gardening in several aboriginal communities.

Kaarsemaker (1987a) noticed that whenever a Band made a request to MCC, even if it was controversial, the provincial board took it very seriously.<sup>8</sup> If a request was simply for money, it normally was rejected because MCC sees itself as primarily a personnel agency.

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<sup>8</sup> Kaarsemaker (1987a) believes the board recognized it had done little to help aboriginal peoples, and therefore, expressed a willingness to do much more. At the same time, however, it attempted to stay away from politically controversial matters.

Even when the request was for a volunteer, the assignment may not have materialized because MCC could not find a suitable person.

When things fall into place and a project is created, MCC conducts a review after four or five years. The major question of the review is: ‘Does the organization still need MCC?’

Rarely does MCC deny a Band personnel because it thinks they ought to be on their own. But if MCC senses that the Band feels they owe it to MCC to offer them a new assignment, we tell them that we are not going to be upset if they hire somebody else. It’s not a high priority that an MCCer be placed with them, and so if we have a volunteer capable of several things, that assignment may not even be brought up. That gives the Band more time to find their own people (Kaarsemaker 1987a).

However, Kaarsemaker (1987b) maintains that

a V.S. worker is worthwhile if the people feel that the V.S.er cares about them. If the V.S.er can go against the majority of white opinion and see and respect the strengths, efforts, hopes, and aspirations of the people, then they and MCC are welcome. The invitation to share in the life of a community is not always given to MCC because the Band can’t find its employees elsewhere. The invitation or request goes out to MCC because of the quality of care, respect and commitment shown by V.S. workers who come as **Servants** not as imposers of a program (emphasis in original).

In addition, Kaarsemaker (1987a) asked former volunteers living in B.C. to be part of a network “to help returning or outgoing MCC workers adapt or prepare for their new surroundings.”

## 5.6 SUMMARY

In some ways, Kaarsemaker represented the changing face of MCC. It is no longer unusual for a MCC worker to be in his or her mid thirties and possess a non-German Mennonite background. Twenty-five years ago, young Mennonite males dominated the organization. In the mid 1980s, the average age was ten years older, females were in the majority and almost one-third of the workers came to MCC from outside the Mennonite constituency.

From the initial relief effort in the Ukraine in the 1920s, MCC has expanded its operations to some 50 countries. Although MCC continues to coordinate relief efforts, its focus has shifted to long-term development work, particularly in agriculture, health, education, social services and community development. Priorities are those programs which emphasize food production, more equal distribution of resources and a high degree of local participation in regions where suffering is severe. Key insights gained from implementing such programs include the importance of good interpersonal relationships and learning the local people's language. The overriding theme of all MCC programs is that they are to constitute a holistic Christian ministry that combines verbal proclamation and social action. The principles of compassion, stewardship, need and justice are to guide that ministry.

The implementation of MCC programs occurs through a complex organizational structure. In keeping with the principle of encouraging local participation, a total of twelve MCCs located throughout Canada and the United States work together to operate both international and local programs. Although the majority of funds are destined for international programs, domestic endeavours have increased both in number and size over the last twenty years. In Canada, approximately 150 volunteers were active in a variety of national programs and local projects in 1987. One of the largest and oldest national programs is Native Concerns.

Constituency education, resource development and justice issues have been Native Concerns' emphases from its inception in 1974. Wiebe, its director, considers constituency education as the greatest challenge facing the program. Wild rice management and summer gardening have been the two major resource development efforts. The emphasis on justice issues has caused the most tension with constituents. A contributor to

a major review of Native Concerns commends its staff for pursuing such issues and thereby risking the disapproval of a significant portion of the constituency.

MCC's practice of sending volunteers to work alongside oppressed peoples was one of three important factors in Wiebe's decision to direct Native Concerns. At orientation sessions, Wiebe and staff inform volunteers that they must suppress their need to manage and control, wait for feedback and work on turning authority and accountability back to the Native people. Wiebe was also attracted by the prospect of working on an inter-Mennonite basis, for he had discovered that Native peoples are not interested in learning about the differences between Mennonite groups. The third key factor was that MCC promotes the type of Christian ministry that is consistent with the holistic Native understanding of religion.

As the director of a national program, Wiebe keeps himself informed of MCC projects with aboriginal peoples across the country. In B.C., a research effort in 1988 focused on Mennonite and Native relationships in the province. The main suggestion of the research report centres on increasing personal interaction between the two groups in order to break down racial stereotypes. As the B.C. voluntary service coordinator at the time, Kaarsemaker supervised the research. Indeed, Kaarsemaker was the one MCC staff person involved in every aspect of a voluntary service assignment in B.C.. Over the years, he noticed that project proposals submitted by Bands were always considered seriously. For him, sending a volunteer to a Band was worthwhile if that person stood in contrast to most of society by respecting the people's efforts, strengths and aspirations.

In 1987, Kaarsemaker and Wiebe were the two MCC staff persons most directly connected with the organization's work among the Holat'in in Barano. Indeed, Wiebe became involved in the effort before formally assuming the Native Concerns directorship. Chapter Six begins with the events that led to MCC's arrival in Barano, and then continues

with a discussion of those volunteers who completed their terms prior to the thesis fieldwork period.

## Chapter Six

### EXPERIENCES OF BARANO VOLUNTEERS, 1974-1986.

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

A myth developed around MCC's entry into the Holat'in community of La'malis. Given the circumstances, its development was entirely understandable. In many parts of the world, the organization's involvement with a people can be traced back to a relief effort following some type of a disaster. In Barano, the foundation for MCC's participation was laid by the work of the Mennonite Disaster Service (MDS), the official arm of MCC that assists victims of North and Central American disasters (MCC 1977a:20-21). It is not surprising, therefore, that MCC people (e.g., Wiebe 1988; Russ 1985:1) had explained MDS's presence in Walith early in 1974 as a result of many homes there being destroyed by gale-force winds. Although such a storm is possible in Barano, it was not a west coast gale that damaged homes and alerted MDS people to the need for reconstruction assistance at Walith (Lucy 1989).

The nonmythical explanation of the MDS presence is less dramatic and more complicated.<sup>1</sup> Clarence (1987b), vice chairman of MDS in B.C. at the time, points to his contact with Sam, a former Chief from outside of Holat'in territory, as the impetus for the limited rebuilding project. The contact occurred through a visitation program that Sam coordinated at a prison in the Clearbrook area. Through the program, Sam became aware that Clarence was a carpenter and asked him if he ever used his skills "for the Lord."

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<sup>1</sup> When asked for more detailed information on the sequence of events during that time, including the date of the 'storm' and the extent of damage it caused, Clarence (1987b), the first MDS person to visit Walith, stated that there had not been such a storm. Some of the houses on the reserve were in need of repair primarily because of neglect, and not wind damage.

Clarence mentioned his work with MDS, and Sam, familiar with the housing situation through Rachel, his Holat'in wife, was able to relate to Clarence the seriousness of the deterioration of some of the houses at Walith. Clarence (1987a) pursued the matter, and in February 1974, he, his daughter, and a fellow church member, together with Sam and his wife, made a weekend visit to Walith. However, Clarence did not bring his carpentry tools, for the emphasis of the visit centred on the services that Sam and Rachel conducted at the Pentecostal Church on the reserve.

That had impressed quite a few Natives, that here were people who had not pressed their own religion yet needed Bible study for their own nourishment and included local people in doing so (Wiebe 1987b).

Three weeks later, Clarence returned under the auspices of MDS with a Holdeman Mennonite (a traditional Mennonite group, primarily rural, who are often confused with Hutterites) from the central Fraser Valley, in order to assess the materials needed for some repair work on three of the worst homes. The physical labour, done by the Holdeman man, his helper and Clarence, began the next weekend.<sup>2</sup>

We thought the help that was given to the three houses would be an encouragement to the Indians to continue the work on more houses. We didn't want to spend more time there than necessary because we had work to do at home. We completed the work in such short time (I think it was three days) that the Indians walked away shaking their heads, 'We could never do it that fast.' We had overwhelmed them with the work accomplished and consequently they didn't pick up on the work when we left. Lesson learned: we should have done the job in such a manner that they could have related to. That way, they might have seen themselves continuing on more houses. We should have worked at a pace that would have stretched them a little, and that stayed within their reach. ... By learning from the error we made, the MCCers that followed were able to understand the Indians better. They paced themselves so the Indians could follow (Clarence 1987a).

Nevertheless, Wiebe (1988) contends

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<sup>2</sup> The Indian agent for the area agreed to pay for most of the men's expenses (MCC 1974c:1).

it was the hands-on practical help given to the Holat'in families of Walith that made a very lasting impression. The help took place in a down-to-earth manner in which the Mennonites worked side-by-side with the Holat'in people in the work of clean-up and rebuilding.

Rachel's sister, Lucy (1989), who was living in Walith at the time, will never forget Clarence and the Holdeman men.<sup>3</sup>

They were very nice about my cooking. A few times they came back to visit me. ... They showed us love and showed us they wanted to do something for us. We came to be really close to them and they used to come once in a while to visit us. Clarence and others would come, I don't remember their names, but I know they were Christians. They wanted to help the Natives.

She felt at ease in their presence, particularly with Clarence, who, when he visited, "just walked in as though he was one of [her] family." She and the other villagers "really appreciated" the men, for "they were humble people."

The completion of the building effort brought a call for further assistance. After discussions with villagers, Clarence sensed that the aid needed was beyond the scope of MDS. At that point, he contacted MCC and Wiebe began his participation in the evaluation of an appropriate response to the Native people's request.

Wiebe became personally acquainted with the Holat'in in the area through Clarence. Together they and other Mennonites visited the three reserves located near Barano. From contacts made at Walith and Paukumaht, and through the group's own observations, La'malis was designated the community most in need of assistance. With the focus on La'malis, the group then grappled with whether or not the assistance offered should have an emphasis on proselytism.

Should we go in there with a mission [evangelistic] because we have our feet in the door? Or should we ask the question differently (Wiebe 1987b)?

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<sup>3</sup> Lucy (1989), however, does not remember the men repairing any houses, but only the old church building on the reserve.

Reports of outside evangelists holding week-long mini-crusades on La'malis, the activities of the Seventh Day Adventists there, and conversations with Pentecostal people, were the crucial factors that persuaded the group to ask the question differently. Wiebe (1987b) was asked to formulate a plan of action, which he initiated under the principle, "ask the people."

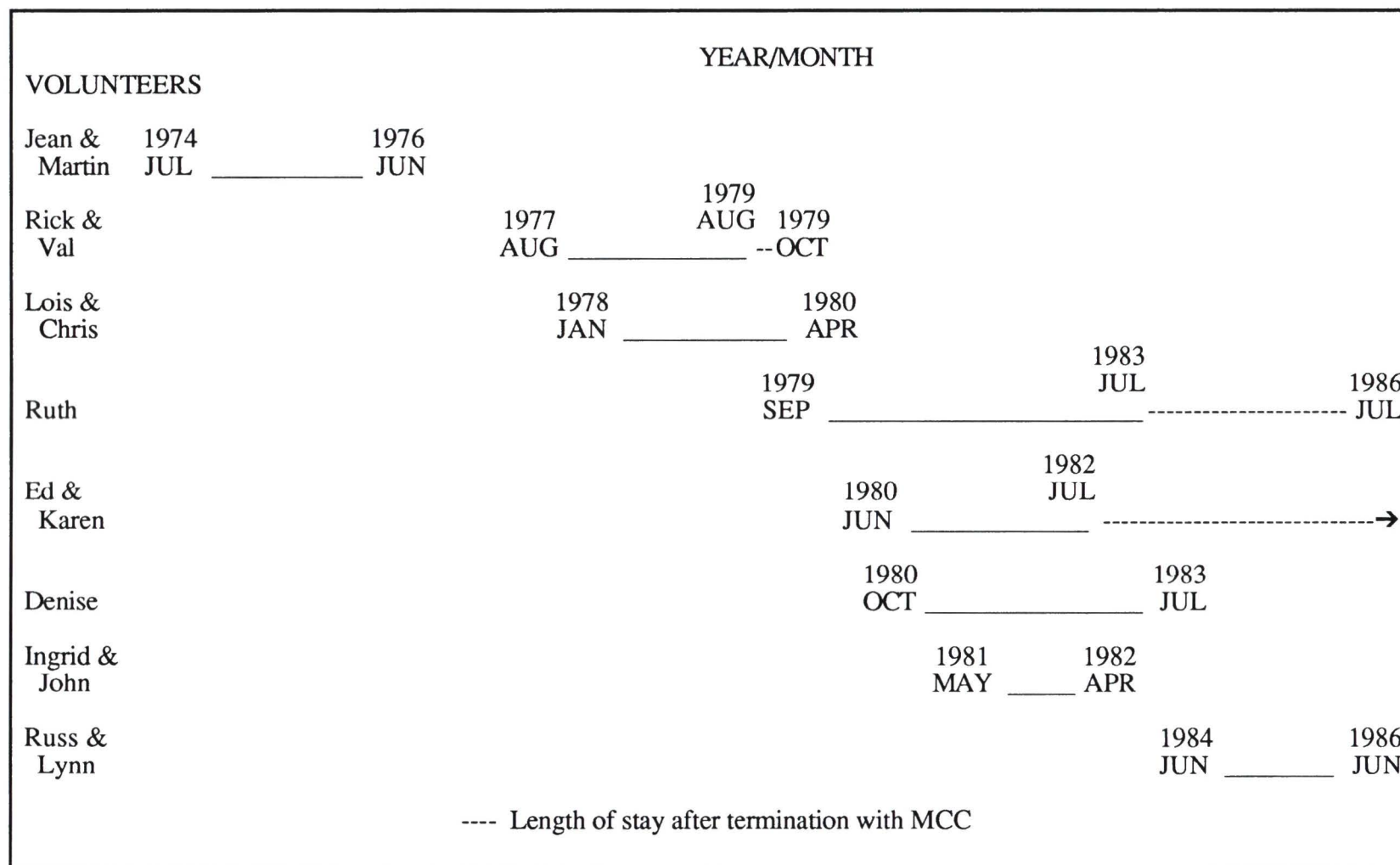
After walking through the village meeting Band members, and holding frank discussions with the Chief, Wiebe sensed that a MCC volunteer couple would be welcome on the reserve.<sup>4</sup> At the same time he was aware of the Band leaders' concern that he might be representing yet another religious group that would initially indicate a desire to be responsive to the people, but would follow its own hidden agenda once established in the community. He also realized that outside preachers frequently conducted services yet failed to remain to address some of the more pressing needs of the community. Wiebe (1988) contends the decision to send volunteers was guided by several conditions. First, the villagers' aspirations were to "be respected above proposed remedies coming from the outside." Through a non-paternalistic relationship, the agenda for help was to be mutually conceived and implemented. Finally, volunteers were not to be opportunistic in 'taking hold' of positions of power on the reserve. With those qualifications in mind, Wiebe began the search for the first MCC volunteers to be sent to La'malis.

In the first 12 years (1974-1986) of MCC's participation in the affairs of the La'malis Band, 14 volunteers lived and worked in the area (Figure 6.1). The remainder of this chapter chronicles the experiences of those volunteers. Whenever possible, an effort has been made to use their own words to describe their Barano activities. Self-evaluations and the assessments of others (e.g., Clarence and Wiebe's views on the impact of the MDS involvement) are also included. Evaluative comments, such as those pertaining to the

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<sup>4</sup> Wiebe (1987b) never received a formal request from Band Council for the initial MCC workers. He believes the talks with the Chief opened La'malis to MCC.

Figure 6.1 - Time Period of Volunteers' Presence in Barano, 1974 - 1986



Sources: Personal Interviews

volunteers as a group, MCC staff and the organization in general, are not presented here but in Chapter Eight.

Innumerable forces, many difficult to identify, shaped the attitudes and beliefs of the 14 volunteers prior to their acceptance of the Barano assignments. What is of particular relevance here, is what the volunteers cite as the factors that led them into the work:

- Why did they choose to serve with MCC, when the vast majority of Mennonites, and Christians in general, never attempt a term of service?
- Why did they choose MCC and not one of the many other volunteer organizations?
- What type of contact did they have with aboriginal peoples prior to joining MCC? and
- Did they accept the placement because they wished to work with Native people?

These queries pertain to the volunteers' pre-service experiences, which had a bearing on the nature of their impact in the Barano area.

## 6.2 JEAN AND MARTIN

### 6.2.1 Pre-Service Experience

The impetus behind Jean (1987) and Martin's (1987b) association with MCC arose from the timing of their commitments to Christ. Although they are both from Mennonite families, church activities did not form an integral part of their childhood years. The work of the church did not concern them until just prior to their marriage, when they concurrently committed themselves to Christ. From that moment, they felt the need to respond to the challenge that they put their new found faith into action.

The specifics of their response began to unfold when Martin returned to high school to complete his education three and a half years after he had dropped out (Table 6.1). Several

Table 6.1 - Personal Information: Jean and Martin		
	JEAN	MARTIN
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	26	26
EDUCATION:	Teaching Certificate (1967)	Grade 12 (1971)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:		Mennonite Baptist
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM:		7
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:		Winkler, Manitoba
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM		1
END OF TERM		2
DATES IN BARANO:		
BEGINNING		July 1974
END		June 1976
Sources: Jean 1987; Martin 1987a, 1987b		

teachers there encouraged him to attend the 1970 Urbana, the triennial, international, interdenominational, missionary convention in Urbana, Illinois. At the convention, Martin and Jean made contact with several different mission organizations. They were most impressed with MCC and its use of leaders to facilitate small group discussions on approaches to missionary work. Furthermore, a computer referral service listed MCC as a match to their interests, and so, paradoxically, Urbana prompted Jean and Martin to look more seriously at the Mennonite organization. MCC's approach to Christian service attracted them because they could participate without placing themselves into the typical

missionary role of church planter,<sup>5</sup> for which they did not have the necessary training. Less than a year after the convention, they applied to MCC.

Several months passed before MCC responded with a placement option. There was an immediate opening for houseparents in a Children's Aid group home for teenage girls in Toronto. Jean and Martin were asked if they could be in Akron, Pennsylvania, in one week to attend a general MCC orientation session. Ready for a change, they accepted the assignment and then began the busiest week of their lives. Their parents thought the timing of the move was somewhat ridiculous, but Martin quit his factory job, put the house up for sale, and with his wife and six month-old firstborn left for Akron.

Jean and Martin were first contacted by Wiebe about a possible assignment in Barano as they were nearing the end of the term. They were in Winnipeg at the time, finishing the last six months of the two-year term working at a facility which offered certain types of law offenders an alternative to prison. The term ended and they were prepared to begin the assignment in Barano, but MCC people were not yet prepared to send them. The call to leave for British Columbia did not reach them until a month later in May 1974. Even then, the destination was only as far as Clearbrook, and not Barano.

Shortly after their arrival in Clearbrook, Martin accompanied Clarence, Wiebe and other MCC staff persons on a visit to Barano. The main objectives of the excursion were to introduce Martin to the Band, find suitable housing for him and his family, and inquire about the possibility of opening a thrift store in the area. One evening, through an informal discussion, the delegation derived several goals for the work in Barano:

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<sup>5</sup> The mission organization of a church sends out church planters into regions targeted for the establishment of new congregations. The main duties of a church planter are encouraging people in the community to attend services, and serving as the pastor for the fledgling group. Often this worker is expected to raise financial support for his living expenses, an effort not required of MCC volunteers.

- (1) provide a low-key Mennonite presence;
- (2) understand the complex situation of the Indian adjustment to an industrialized way of life;
- (3) respect and possibly encourage the traditional potlatch and other social patterns of the Holat'in;
- (4) avoid addressing primarily women and children and give priority to adult males;
- (5) take a studied stance of reconciliation between the two tribes to minimize destructive contentions; and
- (6) cooperate with the Pentecostal group on an informal basis and provide an alternative expression of the Christian faith to that of the Anglican and Seventh Day Adventist Churches (Wiebe 1974).

However, with respect to all three of the immediate objectives, the visit proved to be a disappointment. Most importantly, any endeavour on the reserve appeared in jeopardy, for what had been an invitation turned to rejection with the election of a new Chief and Council. Indeed, the new Chief had been quoted as saying, "I don't want any more Whites in the [Band] office" (Martin 1974). Jean and Martin spent the next six weeks housesitting in the central Fraser Valley.

The couple felt the interim period was a long and somewhat frustrating time. Jean, in particular, was anxious that they settle down before she gave birth to their second child. Some of the uncertainty was removed by Martin's second visit to Barano. The MCC administrative people who accompanied him on the trip remedied the housing problem when they agreed to purchase a used house trailer. With living accommodations secured, Martin and his family moved the next week.

A major hurdle had been overcome, but there was still the unresolved matter of Martin's specific duties.<sup>6</sup> The overall objective of the assignment was clear.

There seemed to be a real need for a positive 'white' influence in La'malis. That, to me, was my mandate (Martin 1988).

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<sup>6</sup> With one young child, and a second one due in less than two months, Jean was not expected to be involved directly on the reserve. Nevertheless, MCC considered Jean a volunteer under the category of 'unassigned spouse.'

To become that influence, Martin was told to assist the Band in whatever was needed, but there was still the matter of an unreceptive Band administration. However, the cold reception began to thaw upon the couple's first visit to the Walith Pentecostal Church soon after their arrival in Barano.

It happened that there were a number of Councillors from La'malis there, and of course we were very friendly and introduced ourselves. I told them why I was there, that I had been invited but that things had not worked out, and that the new Chief didn't really want us on the reserve. And this Councillor just said, 'We're having a meeting tomorrow, and we'll work something out' (Martin 1987b).

True to his word, the Councillor used the following day's Council meeting to remove any objections to Martin's participation in Band affairs.<sup>7</sup> The next barrier, however, proved to be more troublesome. The lack of openings in the Band office restricted Martin's on-reserve activities to introducing himself to as many residents as was possible. Although they were encouraged by MCC (1974b) staff to "see progress and development in small things,"<sup>8</sup> a feeling of restlessness and impatience at the slow progress of becoming involved in village affairs (Jean 1974) was not alleviated until two months later in September, when Martin secured the position of welfare aide.

### 6.2.2 Assignment

This position was Martin's first job that pertained specifically to Native people. When Wiebe had approached him and Jean about a second term of service, their exposure to

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<sup>7</sup> Martin was not at the meeting, but from subsequent observations of the relationships between Council members, he was able to deduce an explanation for the Councillor's action. Essentially, Martin believes he had been the beneficiary of the Councillor's desire to assert his influence on Council.

<sup>8</sup> MCC (1974a) staff did not want Martin to 'rush' into a village position. They envisaged an integration period between three to six months, during which Martin would work part-time in order to not 'appear idle.' Martin (1988) received enough encouragement from Native and non-Native contacts that he never considered abandoning the assignment.

aboriginal peoples had been minimal. Much of the contact that had taken place was not of a positive nature. For example, aboriginal people convicted of breaking the law passed through the facility at which the couple had been volunteers in Winnipeg. The sheltered, insular environment of a Mennonite town in southern Manitoba effectively shielded them as youths from firsthand dealings with Native peoples. Consequently, the conditions at La'malis initially shocked and overwhelmed Martin.

I remember my first sight of La'malis. ... It was just a shambles. I thought, 'What am I doing here? What in the world have I got myself into? Oh Lord, surely we made a mistake. This can't be right.' I guess I had not really thought a lot about what conditions would be like. You think of the reserves around here [in southern Manitoba], and they're not very pretty but you only see them from a distance. But there I began to think, 'Do I want to have my wife and son living here?' ... Then already though, the housing was in such short supply that it wouldn't have worked out. ... But that first vision is burnt into my mind so well (Martin 1987b).

It took some time before Jean and Martin could see beyond the negative images.

A lot of stereotypes were reinforced when we first came there. I went into town and saw these two Natives, and they were both totally drunk, and she was standing on the street urinating. It sort of hits you in the pit of the stomach. She died later in our term, from an overdose of alcohol, I believe. It's very tragic, and yet the stereotypes were strongly reinforced. The stereotypes begin to breakdown once you get to know them as people rather than just sitting in the car looking at them. It's different when you walk through the reserve and talk to people than when you just drive through (Jean 1987).

When you take them as individuals, they all have their unique kind of personalities. ... It makes a big difference once you talk to them (Martin 1987b).

The open-ended nature of Jean and Martin's assignment is unique with respect to MCC's work in Barano. All other volunteers entered into the community with the knowledge that they were to fill a specific position. The ambiguous task of making contact with the La'malis people did not concern Martin.

They [MCC] weren't that concerned that you produce a product or that you had so and so many names on a visitation list, that kind of thing; and so that made it a lot easier. If we had gone in there cold not knowing what MCC was about, starting our first assignment, I think we would have felt sort of guilty for living two months and not really having anything concrete to show for it (Martin 1987b).

Once Martin obtained the position of welfare aide, it was no longer a problem for him to meet village people. The pervasiveness of social assistance on La'malis ensured that he met all of them.

Since Martin's (1987b) main responsibility as welfare aide was the determination of eligibility, "a lot of people would get very upset with [him]."

There were some people who would work a few days logging and not bother going back, or sleep-in a few days in a row, or get drunk and get fired. Then you had to make this decision. It was so hard. If you were to judge them on our own experience, you would say the guy just doesn't deserve welfare. He could work. He was strong, healthy, and knew how to log, and there were logging jobs out there. How do you decide these things? ... To make that decision created a lot of hassles (Martin 1987b).

There were times in the beginning when he refused the requests of some of the men. Instead, he would try to help them find work. In some cases he succeeded, but in other instances the denial of welfare generated a visit from the Chief or a Councillor. These intercessory visits occurred because the claimant usually had direct access to Council. It was unusual for a village man not to have either a brother, cousin, or brother-in-law serving on the elected body. As time went on, Martin did not reject the requests of men with families, for he realized that if they did not receive welfare, their children would suffer.

Martin did not understand his position to be simply a desk job. He made regular visits to all village homes, first to establish rapport, and then to keep in touch with the people. The way in which Martin approached his work caught the attention of MCC (1974d) staff.

Top heavy bureaucracy, inaccessible [sic] professionalism and non-adapted specialization have characterized too much of the relationship between Indian and non-Indian peoples. Your relationship is different. They call you Martin and they mean it. The aged and the kids, teenagers, fellows and gals, communicate easily with you, Martin. They talk about a lot of things to you besides welfare dollars. They inform you of suitable cedars to carve into new totem poles. And, they speak of newly found faith in Jesus Christ. I heard them speak to you of beadwork and arthritis, of carving chief's masks and of alcohol abuse, of fishing trips and of street hockey, of budgets and government grants. There is an unhurried

conversation on the steps of your office, out in the street, in the living rooms, and on the government dock (Wiebe 1975).

Wiebe (1987b) believes Martin won MCC's initial credibility in La'malis because he moved about the community and tried to make his job as unbureaucratic as possible.

He showed interest in the people's activities. He had eyes to see their hard work, ears to hear their agonies from their point of view, and he didn't jam it all into his profession. He heard the people and was very deeply appreciated, as well as Jean, who was much more tied up with the children, and so didn't have as much contact.

Les (1986b), who became Chief of La'malis in 1978, named Martin as one of the volunteers who communicated well for the people,<sup>9</sup> for "he was able to relate the people's concerns to the welfare staff, and that helped in the formation of the community's receiving home and child welfare committee." Indeed, villagers indicated to the second MCC volunteer couple that they had been "impressed" with Jean and Martin (Val 1986).

But, as a non-Native person in a position of authority on the reserve, Martin had to deal with negative feelings directed toward him. One carver in particular, who "hated [his] guts" in the beginning, became very angry at Martin on one of his visits.

I tried to be as kind to him as I could. Anyway, I noticed he had this mask and I asked him to tell me about it and I expressed my interest in seeing more. That sort of changed the whole atmosphere of the scenario. Maybe he thought, 'This guy is actually interested in me.' He then started to bring out some of his old carvings (Martin 1987b).

Through this and other visits, he realized there was much latent artistic talent on the reserve.<sup>10</sup> With the encouragement of Wiebe (1975), Martin (1975a) then applied for and

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<sup>9</sup> Jean and Martin also communicated, in defense of Native peoples generally, to the larger Mennonite community. While in Barano, they wrote a letter to the editor of a Mennonite periodical countering the claims of a previous letter-writer who had described Native peoples as lazy, immoral drunkards:

Handing out money instead of seeking more constructive ways to give meaning to these people's lives, is the government's and society's way of easing their consciences and quieting the native voice (Jean & Martin 1975).

<sup>10</sup> An anthropologist claims the Samaltan people could once boast of having the most imaginative carvers among the Holat'in.

received a grant that enabled three men to carve and paint for eight weeks, eight hours a day on a salary basis. The works were exhibited at several shows in different locations, and at the end of the grant period the artists were allowed to sell their wares. Martin (1987a) himself purchased a number of the 100 or so paintings that were produced. The project, one of his last endeavours, gave Martin a sense of satisfaction from being able to play a role in reawakening some creative expression in the village.<sup>11</sup>

The nature of Martin's work brought him into contact with the provincial ministry responsible for Social Services (Social Services). Social Services was cooperating with the federal Department of Indian Affairs in the construction and operation of a receiving home on the reserve. The home was the dream of a village woman, for it represented a means by which villagers could halt, at least temporarily, the removal of their children from the community. Martin was asked to monitor the progress of the building contractors, and to recruit volunteers from the village for such jobs as painting the exterior.

He was also instrumental in the departure of the Band manager, who was suspected of misappropriating funds. Martin, along with the recreation director, informed Council of their suspicions, and before any action was taken, the man abandoned his job. Elsewhere, Martin (1987b) initiated a food-voucher system with a grocer in Barano. On a voluntary basis, villagers brought Martin their signed social assistance cheques and he gave them the equivalent amount in vouchers.

Or they would say, 'Put this money in an envelope for me,' and in that way they wouldn't go out to the pub and blow it all or have somebody steal it. That seemed to work out quite well too. It wasn't the ideal situation, but in a way they were learning to budget their money, even though somebody else was doing it for them. It was helpful because that way the kids were assured to get groceries. They could only cash the vouchers at the store, and the store only had groceries.

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<sup>11</sup> Martin was credited with helping one of the village artists, who had had a serious drinking problem, to become the La'malis recreation director (MCC 1976a).

The system though, was “taking the responsibility away from where it rightfully should be, on the individual,” and so Martin (1975d) altered it so that it would teach budgeting skills. Although 95 percent of the people did not abuse it, Martin (1975e) stopped the voucher system several months later because there was no contingency plan to cover any outstanding bills.

At the interpersonal level, Martin established friendships with several men on the reserve. On one occasion, the former Chief, who had been voted out in the summer of 1974, spent hours telling Martin (1975c) about the past. Those who knew him were astonished that he spoke so freely to Martin. Even the acting Chief, who at first did not want him working in the Band office, once called Martin (1975b) in the middle of the night after one of his crew died in a fishing accident. He asked Martin to come over and together they prayed and read the Bible. Martin (1987b) points to his emphasis on complete honesty and integrity as a key to the Chief warming up to him.

I made a constant special effort to be above reproach. I didn't want to create more problems between Whites and Indians. I did what I could as best I could to help them and befriend them, and I guess it worked.

Moreover, a La'malis couple noted, “Many people have come and preached to us, but only Martin ever stayed to show us how to live a Christian life from day to day” (MCC 1976a).

While Martin was establishing relationships in the village, Jean was struggling with the adjustment of staying at home. The role of housebound mother was new to her and the location of their house trailer compounded her feeling of confinement.<sup>12</sup> The beginning of the assignment, therefore, was a trying time for her.

I remember being really depressed quite a few times those first few months, ... feeling a sense of not caring much about anything. I have such a strong memory of the pounding rain on the roof (Jean 1987).

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<sup>12</sup> The house trailer was almost fifteen kilometres from the reserve, and Martin had use of the only vehicle available to them at the time.

Jean feels that her depression could have been less severe if there had been another MCC couple with whom she could have shared her frustrations.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, her time of melancholy passed, and she was able to visit the village with their children.

I would go on to the reserve with our boy and he would play with some of the children. At first, I saw these children as being dirty and having sores, yet they're all kids, they play same way and do the same sort of things. ... I don't think our boy suffered any ill health from being around those kids. I thought about it at times when he was playing with them at preschool, but you get used to it pretty quickly. If you look past that stuff and see people as people, it makes a difference (Jean 1987).

Such village experiences are part of the “fond memories” of the assignment that overshadow the depression of that initial period.

As the two years drew to a close, Jean and Martin were asked whether they would stay on. Despite excellent moral support from MCC staff and the feeling of security brought about by the absence of financial pressures (Jean 1987), several factors led them to decide against the proposition. There were still strong ties to home, and they had always considered the assignment as a two-year term. In addition, there was family pressure to “get back to real living again.” But the deciding factor concerned their children. Their eldest child was to enter kindergarten in the fall and they were not impressed with the school system in the area. Furthermore, Jean was pregnant again, and so they decided it was in their best interests to return to Manitoba. They think fondly of their MCC experience,<sup>14</sup> and may apply to the organization again once their children are older.

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<sup>13</sup> The Barano church situation contributed to Jean's frustrations. Both she and Martin felt uncomfortable in the Pentecostal Church (MCC 1974d). A Walith woman attending the Pentecostal Church interpreted that feeling to mean Martin was “not sufficiently Christian” and not “interested in that much contact” (MCC 1974d).

<sup>14</sup> At times they wonder if they made the right decision leaving Barano. If they had not had children, they would have probably remained in the community.

Wiebe was not eager that another volunteer be placed in Martin's vacated position of welfare aide. His desire was that the work be handled by a Band member, because he did not want MCC to be so entrenched in the Band's administration that self-determination would be hindered. He was not opposed, though, to volunteers helping in other village activities. MCC posted volunteer openings for community development workers and a recreation leader for La'malis, but placements never materialized.<sup>15</sup> Jean (1975) stressed the replacement volunteer be

the sort of person who listens and asks questions rather than offers solutions to all problems immediately. ... It is of utmost importance that he is not someone who will overwhelm the people in La'malis.

Through Martin's work at the receiving home, Wiebe and other MCC personnel became aware of the problems facing the La'malis people in child care. But it was not until over a year after Jean and Martin had departed that the next volunteers arrived in Barano.

## 6.3 RICK AND VAL

### 6.3.1 Pre-Service Experience

First-hand research on marine algae (Rick 1977), and on the development of inventory methods for determining the biomass of kelp beds for the purpose of harvesting (Val 1986), were the occupational pursuits of the volunteer couple that followed Jean and Martin. Rick and Val (Table 6.2) became the first MCC houseparents at the La'malis receiving home in September 1977. Although Val had previously worked and lived near

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<sup>15</sup> A MCC (1976b) staff person felt one reason why it was problematic replacing Jean and Martin was that the Band did not identify Martin as belonging to an organization such as MCC.

Table 6.2 - Personal Information: Rick and Val		
	VAL	RICK
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	24	27
EDUCATION:	B.Sc. (Marine Biology) (1976)	B.A. (Philosophy/Religion) (Incomplete)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Roman Catholic	Evangelical Free
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM:		2
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:		Vancouver, B.C.
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM		1
END OF TERM		2
DATES IN BARANO WITH MCC:		
BEGINNING		August 1977
END		August 1979
Sources: Val 1986, 1977b; Rick, 1977		

Barano, it was a place called 'Second Mile' in Ontario, that stimulated an interest in Native peoples which led her and Rick to accept the term in La'malis.

Second Mile, near Kenora, served as the base for a study community that gathered there for several summers in the mid 1970s. Prior to developing their friendship with the couple who purchased the property and initiated the study group, Rick and Val had had no connections with the Mennonite community. The couple asked Rick and Val to join them for the summer of 1976. Even though Val was well into her first pregnancy, she and Rick accepted the invitation. As it turned out, that summer several people in the study group had an interest in aboriginal issues. Attending powwows, learning about the mercury

poisoning of the English River system and the Native seizure of Anishinabe Park in Kenora, were some of the experiences that generated in Rick and Val feelings of compassion for aboriginal peoples, and the desire to assist them in their struggles.

Rick and Val returned to B.C. at the end of the summer, and over the course of the next year, they made acquaintances with several Mennonites living in the central Fraser Valley. In that period, they visited the MCC B.C. office in Clearbrook. The staff there contacted Wiebe, and a time was arranged so that he could meet the couple. At the meeting, Val jokingly remembers Wiebe “ranting and raving about La'malis, and about not finding anyone to work there.” The Band’s health representative had requested that MCC send a couple for the receiving home (Erica 1986). Wiebe approached Rick and Val about the assignment, and they accepted.

### **6.3.2 Assignment**

When Rick and Val arrived in La'malis, they were virtually on their own. The villagers were reluctant to approach them, and since the receiving home was not in operation, Rick and Val had no one to inform them about the facility. Moreover, without training or experience in houseparenting, they did not have a background on which to draw. In retrospect, Val does not think their inexperience was a hindrance. In her opinion, “the needs were simple really - anyone with a will could have met them” (Val 1986). Inasmuch as there was no time for them to ease into their new work and environment, their collective will was put to the test early.

Within days of their arrival, Rick and Val had to care for up to six babies in diapers, not including their own one year-old boy, and an equal number of school-age children. This condition was not a temporary phenomenon, for the workload altered little over the first three months. In December, they had had the same seven children since September, as

well as up to four more at any given time (Val 1977a). The lengthy stays of the children were contrary to the rationale behind the development of receiving homes.<sup>16</sup> A practice at La'malis, however, was that children were brought to the receiving home without the involvement of a social worker.

We continue in our struggle to turn responsibilities back onto the people who should carry them. Every time a child is brought to the receiving home by some one other than a social worker we must make a decision as to our course of action taking into account the immediate situation and the long term inferences (Val 1977a).

Such instances forced Rick and Val to assume the role of social worker in addition to their duties as houseparents.

The receiving home building itself was not adequate to handle the demands placed upon it during that time. The population of the receiving home regularly exceeded its designed capacity of eight children. Furthermore, infants, mentally disabled children and juvenile offenders could be found living in the home at the same time. Several teenaged boys caused problems, and although Rick (1978b) and Val had the right to refuse admittance, Social Services placed pressure on them to accept the young offenders for the home was the only facility of its kind in the area. Moreover, the building was the best facility to hold large meetings on the reserve. Val (1977a) became especially frustrated with American Pentecostal preachers who would have held services into the early morning hours had she and Rick not enforced the receiving home rules. There came a point where Val (1977a) wished she could either “run away, sleep, or just sit around and stare into space.” In all, the situation became almost intolerable for Rick and Val. With no relief staff, it was very difficult for them to get away from the receiving home.

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<sup>16</sup> Receiving homes are designed to function as emergency shelters, where a child's stay should be measured in days (Kimelman 1985:304) while a social worker assesses the child's future.

It was difficult because there was no exchange with other workers. We knew no one. The work was sweeping up the darkness of the village, for the worst cases ended up there. ... We definitely lived in La'malis and had no contact with the outside at all. We were just buried there because there was so much to do (Val 1986).

Not only were they swamped by the workload, but they also had to contend with the cynicism and hostility of the receiving home committee (Val 1977a), which comprised Native and non-Native persons in the fields of health and education.<sup>17</sup> One member of the committee was, at first, particularly difficult. Rusty, “a walking encyclopedia” (Val 1986) of local Holat'in history, viewed the couple with mistrust because he was suspicious that the organization they represented might turn out to be a “bleeding heart charity.” His initial attitude toward Rick and Val was one primarily of “threat and testing.” Rusty wanted the couple to work at the home without relief, as a test of their character and commitment. Similar attitudes prevailed among the other committee members. But, with time, the attitudes changed. Indeed, Rick and Val were able to develop close friendships with some of the committee members, most notably Rusty.

Our struggle to follow Christ is often made easier by those who are not Christian - people like ... Rusty - who in their own way (strange as it is at times) are calling for justice and reconciliation on the reserve. At least they are calling (Val 1979a).

Someone other than Rick and Val also played a key role in the attitudinal reversal of Rusty and the other committee members. Rick and Val's firstborn, who was one year of age when they came to La'malis, helped them and the villagers become comfortable with each other.

He was a cute, blond-haired child who was immediately welcomed by all, which helped make inroads against the awkwardness of not knowing anyone. He and Rusty hit it off immediately. Kids know no bounds, and that is a great cross-cultural exchange. They make a difference (Val 1986).

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<sup>17</sup> The receiving home was built to meet the needs of both La'malis and the larger Barano community, and hence the committee included non-Native people. In reality though, very few non-Native children entered the home during Rick and Val's (1986) stay.

Close to the end of the term, Val gave birth to their second son, who was also welcomed by all the villagers.

Although most of their energies were focused on the receiving home in the fall of 1977, Rick and Val did find time for other activities. Rick accompanied the Band manager and some Councillors to Naskitlo to discuss economic alternatives with the Naskitlo Band (Val 1977a). In La'malis, Rick played floor hockey regularly with village men. Val (1977a) took a trip with some men from the reserve to help them install approximately 20 oyster spats in a lagoon near the Samaltan people's former village site. Given the general view of the role of women on the reserve, Val considered the excursion a rare opportunity. Together, she and Rick were able to attend a potlatch in October, and personally invite the "poorest of the poor" in the village to a Christmas feast at the receiving home. The feast was made possible by the exodus of many children during the Christmas season. Rick and Val did not have to endure the new year without a break from the receiving home. Another MCC couple, Lois and Chris, arrived in January to become relief houseparents.

The arrival of Lois and Chris allowed Rick and Val greater freedom to participate in activities apart from their duties in the receiving home. Val attended a course on automobile mechanics taught in the village by Chris in order to take notes and copy them for the students (Rick 1978b). She also helped initiate wool-spinning for a group of village women, using the expertise of a friend. Later Val (1979a) stepped in and organized a women's craft group after the project had sat idle for several months. Rick, on the other hand, was asked by Rusty and the other Band school teacher to assume the chair of the Band education committee (Val 1988). Much of the burden of ensuring that the Band school would be in operation for the 1979-80 school year fell on his shoulders (Val 1979b). Together, Rick and Val met with Lois and Chris for weekly Bible studies,

attended more potlatches,<sup>18</sup> and with their son kayaked to the former Samaltan village site.<sup>19</sup> At the receiving home, they put in a garden and a new lawn, and built a chicken pen and greenhouse<sup>20</sup> (Rick 1978a).

The work at the receiving home, however, did not become any easier. “Darkness in the village tended to be complete at times,” burdening them to the point where they “could not make themselves” write a quarterly report (Val 1979a). “For a long time, MCC didn’t know how best to be involved in the community,” wondering about the receiving home positions (Val 1986). Val, though, is convinced their time was not wasted, “for those kids needed help.” Moreover, Chief Les (1986b) includes Rick and Val among the volunteers who did more in the village than simply their job duties.

The two-year term ended early in August 1979, but Rick and Val remained in the Barano area until October. Much like Jean, Val (1986) praises MCC staff for the support they gave.

I think their support was excellent. It was an honour to be associated with them because I’ve seen quite a few human resource organizations, and I haven’t seen that in them. I don’t know how they maintain the level of leadership they have in MCC. ... You really felt they were putting a lot of energy into you, and that you were a resource.

Although Rick and Val (1979b) considered being part of MCC a privilege, had they known about the difficulties awaiting them in La'malis, they

might have been too afraid to accept the position [laughter]. Being ignorant was an advantage in that case (Val 1986).

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<sup>18</sup> They attended approximately ten potlatches during their time in Barano.

<sup>19</sup> MCC (1978) staff encouraged them not to become so involved that they would not have time to do some kayaking or hiking. Even with the assistance of Lois and Chris, Social Services staff indicated to Rick (1978b) and Val that they were still spending too much time at the receiving home.

<sup>20</sup> The garden was not very successful, and a pack of dogs raided the coop and killed most of the chickens (Val 1979a).

Nevertheless, less than half a year into the assignment, they felt very much at home in La'malis (Val 1978). Whenever they left the reserve they missed the warmth of the small community. After two years of intense involvement, however, they were “anxious to get away and live like humans” (Val 1986). A move to Bamfield in October to pursue their interests in marine biology was meant to be temporary. However, they bought property there and did not return to Barano as planned.

## 6.4 LOIS AND CHRIS

### 6.4.1 Pre-Service Experience

Whereas the purchase of property was a factor that kept Rick and Val from returning to Barano, the sale of property freed Lois and Chris (1987b) to pursue Christian service, which eventually brought them to Barano. The farm that Lois and Chris owned in the Fort St. John area was to have been passed down to their son, but his hay fever and other allergies made working in the fields too uncomfortable for him. Lois and Chris were at a stage in their lives (Table 6.3) when they no longer wished to operate a farm, and hence they sold their acreage. Their wish was not to ‘retire,’ but to pursue Christian service. At one point, they considered assisting the Alliance Church in constructing a church in Quebec, but the project folded.

Still interested in pursuing an avenue of service, they visited relatives in Manitoba who encouraged them to look into opportunities with MCC. MCC personnel offered them the position of relief houseparents at the La'malis receiving home, and they accepted the assignment. Working with Native peoples was not an unfamiliar position for the couple. As a licensed mechanic, Chris (1987a) had done repairs for aboriginal people on a reserve near their farm, and he developed a reputation among them for selling dependable used

Table 6.3 - Personal Information: Lois and Chris		
	LOIS	CHRIS
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	52	53
EDUCATION:	Grade 5 (1936)	Grade 8 (1939)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite Buick Gospel Mission	Mennonite
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	31	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Fort St. John, B.C.	
CHILDREN LIVING WITH THEM AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM	-	
END OF TERM	-	
DATES IN BARANO:		
BEGINNING	January 1978	
END	April 1980	
Sources: Chris 1988, 1987a, 1987b, 1977; Lois 1977		

automobiles. In addition, the couple had hired Native people as seasonal farm labourers. This previous contact helped Lois and Chris begin the assignment with some understanding of aboriginal people.

#### 6.4.2 Assignment

It was not long before Lois and Chris were immersed in the operations of the receiving home, for shortly after their arrival, Rick (1978b) and Val went on a holiday to Vancouver. The level of their involvement in the home remained high throughout most of the term. Apart from the receiving home, Chris worked 12 to 16 hours a week in

maintenance at the Barano hospital (Rick 1978b), and early in the term, he taught a course on automobile mechanics in the village. Lois also worked outside the receiving home. She held a homemaker's position that brought her to Walith once a week. In the second summer of their term, Lois and Chris were asked by Wiebe to initiate Native Concerns' gardening program in La'malis. However, a lack of interest among villagers, combined with the couple's extensive commitments, forced them to abandon the program. When they were not working, Lois and Chris spent time socializing on the reserve<sup>21</sup> (Ruth 1986).

Rick and Val's departure did not disrupt MCC's presence among La'malis people, since Lois and Chris had not yet completed their term. The departure, however, did disconnect MCC from the provision of regular houseparents for the receiving home. In discussions with MCC administrative people on the organization's future in Barano, Rick and Val (1979a) "suggested that it might not be wise to continue plugging people into the receiving home as local help was starting to emerge." Lois and Chris (1987a) considered the availability of local staff<sup>22</sup> an indication their services were no longer required. Hence, in December 1978, they informed Rick and Val (1979a) that they would be returning home soon. But there had been a misunderstanding, for MCC staff wanted the couple to complete their term in Barano. As it turned out, the emergence of local help allowed Lois and Chris to begin another project prior to Rick and Val's termination with MCC.

The veer away from the receiving home was a response to the Band's frustration at the apprehension of many of its teenagers by provincial social workers. Many of the children

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<sup>21</sup> Chief Les (1986b) mentions Lois and Chris among the volunteers who helped his community in large and small ways.

<sup>22</sup> The local help was a non-Native couple, Gail and Ron, who became MCC volunteers at the Barano group home in 1986 (see Chapter Seven).

were being placed in foster homes in distant communities. In June 1979, Lois and Chris began preparing the MCC trailer home so that it could accommodate children from the Band. By August, they had two teenage foster children (Val 1979b). Within months, the 15 year-old foster girl “made a commitment to Christ” (Chris 1979b), and at Christmas time, she and her brother accompanied Lois and Chris (1979a) to Fort St. John for the holidays. The trip marked the end of the two-year assignment, but because MCC could not find a replacement couple, Lois and Chris returned and continued fostering the two children until April 1980. Throughout their time as foster parents, Lois and Chris (1987a) continued to sit on the receiving home board and work at the facility when staff was needed. On those occasions, they brought the two foster children with them to the reserve.

Whereas the receiving home was funded by the Province and designed to be a resource for the larger Barano area, the Band funded foster home was limited to La'malis teenagers from its inception.<sup>23</sup> The home itself was set up in the MCC trailer for several reasons. The combination of limited funding and an acute housing shortage made the reserve an impractical location for the home. Furthermore, MCC B.C. staff wanted the foster home located off the reserve in order to keep the teenagers removed from the negative aspects of village life. However, the separation of the children from the reserve was never intended to be an isolationist action, for Lois and Chris were encouraged to help the children maintain their family ties. The entire operation was to be a consultative process involving Lois and Chris, the child, the parents, and the Band Council. Lois and Chris

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<sup>23</sup> In 1979, MCC (1979a) proposed an annual budget for the foster home, which included the living expenses of Lois and Chris, at a total cost of \$16,700. The Band was to supply \$16,200, and Chris' job at the Barano hospital was to bring in \$4,800, to make MCC's income amount to \$21,000. The expected surplus of \$4,300 was to be used in voluntary service projects elsewhere in Canada.

retained the authority to make the final decision as to whether or not a child would enter the home.

The inability to halt the alarming rate at which teenage children were being removed from the community, compelled the Band Council to seek outside assistance in establishing a foster home. Although MCC agreed to staff the home, the departure of Lois and Chris early in April 1980 left the organization unable to fulfil its obligations. Because of the unavailability of suitable personnel, MCC could not place another couple into the foster home until the end of May. Without staff, the home ceased operations for most of April and May.<sup>24</sup> However, the disruption of foster care did not interrupt MCC's direct involvement with the La'malis people.

## 6.5 RUTH

### 6.5.1 Pre-Service Experience

One of the last projects Rick worked on was related to on-reserve education. As chair of the education committee, he had been responsible, along with members of the Band's preschool society,<sup>25</sup> for replacing the woman who had quit her job after ten years as teacher of the nursery class (four year-olds). With a new school year rapidly nearing, the decision was made against advertising for the position. Instead, MCC was approached for a replacement teacher. Meanwhile, Ruth (1986) learned about the assignment because her

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<sup>24</sup> When Lois and Chris moved back to the Fort St. John area, the two remaining foster children were taken in by Gail and Ron for the two months until the next MCC volunteer couple arrived.

<sup>25</sup> Ruth (1986) understands that Erica had been very pleased with the receiving home volunteers, and she therefore approached Rick about MCC supplying a teacher for the preschool.

friend applied to MCC with that particular position in mind. At the time, Ruth was completing the requirements for a teaching certificate (Table 6.4), and was sending applications to elementary schools in the central Fraser Valley. However, her friend's application to MCC rekindled Ruth's childhood desire to do voluntary service. She applied to MCC, reluctantly stipulating that the assignment be in North America, so as not to create additional concerns for her parents<sup>26</sup> (Ruth 1988). In a turn of events, her friend received a teaching position in the Fraser Valley, and Ruth was accepted by MCC and assigned to be the new nursery teacher in La'malis.

In most cases, recipients of MCC volunteers accept the worker on the basis of both MCC's recommendation and the information contained in their application forms<sup>27</sup> However, Ruth was flown up for an interview so the preschool society members could base their decision on a personal encounter. The interview convinced the society that Ruth was suitable for the position, and shortly thereafter she returned to the community to begin the assignment.

Until her first visit to Barano, Ruth had had no personal dealings with Native peoples. Upon seeing the reserve for the first time, Ruth (1979a) expressed shock and amazement at the living conditions of the people.<sup>28</sup> Ruth realizes now that her naivete then helped her to remain unafraid at the prospect of working with Native peoples.

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<sup>26</sup> Ruth (1988) had wanted to go to Africa on a three-year term, but she knew her parents would have been "absolutely crushed" had she done so. They had already indicated to her that a two-year term away from home was too long.

<sup>27</sup> Financial considerations are also a factor. In this particular case, the Band was informed that MCC required \$7,200 in order to support Ruth for the first year of her term (MCC 1979b). Her expenses were budgeted at \$7,001, and so MCC anticipated a surplus of \$199 for use in other Canadian voluntary service projects.

<sup>28</sup> In the third month of the assignment, Ruth (1979a) reported to the MCC B.C. annual conference that

the thing these people need most is Jesus. He's the only one that can do anything to change their lives.

Table 6.4 - Personal Information: Ruth	
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	21
EDUCATION:	Teaching Certificate (1979)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite
MARITAL STATUS:	Single
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Abbotsford, B.C.
DATES IN BARANO WITH MCC:	
BEGINNING	September 1979
END	July 1983
Sources: Ruth 1986, 1979b	

I went in quite naively. I think if I were to go on to a different reserve now, I would be more hesitant than I was then, because I'm more aware of the tensions between White and Native peoples (Ruth 1986).

After three years of academic training, she was eager to begin her teaching career.

### 6.5.2 Assignment

Ruth's (1988) enthusiasm<sup>29</sup> had been aided by getting "out from under [her] parents' wings."

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Less than a year later, she summarized her attitude toward the Band in a quarterly report: "Since I have not been brought up the way they have, felt their childhood, or understand their history, I am not to make judgements, but rather to care and to love" (Ruth 1980).

<sup>29</sup> Chris (1979a) alluded to her buoyant spirit in a December 1979 letter to MCC B.C. staff, claiming, "She hasn't had a bad day yet." Lois and Chris (1979b) also had weekly Bible studies with Ruth.

Coming from a situation that was like a 'rat race' to me, I was so excited about starting out in a new place, where nobody knew me and I could be whomever I wanted. ... And so I felt free to go in with a real gung-ho attitude (Ruth 1986).

Since no housing was available, Ruth lived with Lois and Chris in the foster home for the first three months. Before the end of November she was able to move into an apartment that was much closer to the preschool. The move made it easier for her to go in mornings and assist the primary teacher (kindergarten, grades 1-3) with the kindergarten children at the Band school. In the afternoons, Ruth (1979a) greeted the "12 cute little chubby Indian children" in her nursery class.

Ruth (1980) was pleased with the development of her class.

Academically, at the end of the year, the children were more than ready to enter public school kindergarten. I also noticed an increase in self-confidence, and that they had a little better ability to get along with each other.

Many of those children, however, continued to be taught by Ruth for four more years. The Band school's primary teacher resigned and Ruth was asked to take her position.<sup>30</sup> For the next six years, three of which were with MCC, Ruth taught the primary class at the Band school.

When she decided to leave her teaching position to return to university, Ruth felt comfortable knocking on any door in La'malis to say her farewells. However, it took her approximately five years to attain that feeling of ease with the villagers. During the first two-year term, she talked only to a handful of parents. If she needed to communicate with them, she would write notes for their children to take home. She was hesitant to go to their homes and speak with the parents in person.

I felt I wanted and needed to take it slowly and not force myself on anyone. I felt totally accepted by the handful of parents who came to talk to me. I guess I wanted

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<sup>30</sup> There was no separate kindergarten class until the 1984-85 school year. Ruth (1988) agreed to the kindergarten children's desire to attend school full-time rather than the usual half-days.

to have their trust and acceptance of me before I felt like I even had the 'right' to approach them. I didn't want to appear as the 'know-it-all' white person (Ruth 1988).

At parent/teacher meetings, she produced numerous photo-albums of the children so that the inevitable silence would not be uncomfortable, for she would not try to force or maintain conversations. But awkward moments were rare among her students.

On the contrary, Ruth felt most uninhibited in the classroom. If it would have been in her power to do so in those early years, she would have isolated her classroom from outside contact.

I didn't want anyone in the Band office to come to the classroom, and I didn't want to go there either. ... When I started at school it was just me and the kids, and I liked it that way. If the kids were tired, coming to school at 9:30 [school began at 9:00], I would put them to sleep. When they would wake up, we would do some work. It was really casual. I had a lot of freedom, so I guess I was spoiled (Ruth 1986).

Since her energies were focused solely on the children, she became very attached to them.<sup>31</sup> This attachment led to her involvement spilling over from the classroom, such as when she would invite children over for supper.

Then when the celebrations started, including the potlatches, and I would walk in and ten kids would come and try to sit on my lap, the parents noticed. One mother said to me, 'You can tell who is caring from the kids. You really know what kind of a person someone is if kids like them' (Ruth 1986).

Not all villagers agreed with how Ruth handled the children. In her first summer in Barano, she volunteered her services at a government sponsored daycare run by Native teenage girls. Although it was fun playing with the children, at times she found it difficult to watch how the children were being treated. The teenage girls reacted similarly to Ruth's (1980) conduct, for they told her that she "hugged the children too much, and that too

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<sup>31</sup> Ruth's (1989) first students remain in contact with her.

much hugging spoils the children.” Ruth fought the urge to direct the operations of the centre.

In her third year in Barano, Ruth (1988) began an extremely popular practice with her students.

I started taking kids to my parents’ farm, Thanksgiving weekend 1982. My pastor asked if I’d come down and give a report at church and suggested I bring some of my students along. I chose two who had never been to Vancouver before and we had such a great time that I thought I should make this a regular thing. I decided to make it a ‘graduation’ present for those students who were leaving my class to go on to the next class. So, on the May long weekend 1983, I started the tradition of taking ‘the graduates’ on the trip. How many I took depended on how many students were in Grade 3 that would go on to Grade 4. I could take four in my car – that’s how many extra seatbelts I had.

Even when she had 14 children ‘graduating,’ as in 1985, Ruth carried on the long-weekend tradition.

Slowly, through further exposure to village life, older residents also visited with her in her home.

I latched on to certain people in the village, and I developed some really close friendships with them. Then the whole family would see me coming to pick up someone, and that we were doing a lot of things together. That showed them I cared about them, even if it was just taking their cousin out for supper. ... To me, what is needed is for every volunteer to pick one or two villagers and get to know them personally, giving them a feeling of self-worth. Hopefully it would snowball. But it would take a long time (Ruth 1986).

In a Native community such as La'malis, very few things are not common knowledge.

Villagers could not help but notice Ruth was spending a great deal of her personal time on the reserve.

Rapport with the people happened gradually. I think if I had left after two years, none of the adults in the village would remember me now (Ruth 1986).

Ruth attributes her success in establishing a rapport to her enthusiasm and non-aggressive, hence non-threatening personality, and perhaps most importantly, her practice of bringing

first students, then other villagers, to her apartment for supper. Only rarely did she feel her social life needed a rest.

In one stretch of time, a guy in the village came to my place for supper everyday. He had no sense that, 'I've been here too much lately' [laughter]. On the fifth day, I started to feel like I wanted to pretend I wasn't home. So there were occasions when it got a bit much (Ruth 1986).

Ruth (1986) believes the growth of the volunteer contingent and the subsequent formation of the local Mennonite church group in 1984, has reduced the amount of time volunteers socialize on the reserve. Upon ending voluntary service, Ruth was asked by Wiebe to recommend improvements to MCC's service. Her sole recommendation was that, when working with Native peoples, the length of terms be longer in order to allow time for friendships to develop.

Chief Les (1986b) talked at length about Ruth when he discussed the contributions of MCC volunteers. He senses she meant so much to the village, particularly the children. Her involvement in the community<sup>32</sup> was such that

one year she was nominated to run for the village Salmon Queen. At first she refused, but she quickly understood that it was something the people wanted. She won the contest (Les 1986b).

In addition, Nelson (1987), a Councillor and Chief Les' brother, noted Ruth had become a good dancer. Wayne (1986), a popular La'malis Band manager, believes Ruth's sincerity enabled her to gain the trust and great affection of the Band.<sup>33</sup> Neil (1986b), a MCC volunteer who became Band school principal in 1986, has also sensed that she is loved and

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<sup>32</sup> Chief Les (1986b) noted that, on some days, Ruth would arrive at the Band school at 5:00 or 6:00 am. and not leave the village until 8:00 pm.

<sup>33</sup> One of the things Wayne (1986) noted about Ruth was that she would take children into her home.

respected by the Band. Burl (1986), a Mennonite teacher at the Band school since 1984, goes so far as to call Ruth a “saint.”

If Mennonites had saints, Ruth would get my vote for sainthood. ... Her inner attitude made her exceptional. She could leave school and not feel totally depressed. She was always hopeful. ... To have that kind of inner spirit all the time is a real gift, and that’s what you need to have in order to work in a place like this.

He and his wife, Darlaine (1986), Mennonite church group members, would tell Ruth how terrible her work must be, but she always responded positively and with optimism.<sup>34</sup>

With respect to the classroom, Neil (1986b) considers Ruth an outstanding teacher, endowed with a special gift. Cathy (1986), the Band’s home/school coordinator, agrees, and Samantha (1986), the assistant Band manager, likens Ruth to “a little mother” who was able to express freely her feelings toward the children. Wiebe (1987b) appreciates the way she conducted herself in the classroom.

I think the style of MCC, where we come in as servants, not as lords, is critical. Even though she was the teacher, Ruth sat on the floor with her students. She invited the local elder into the classroom, where he sat higher than she did. I don’t want to overstate this, but in some ways that was symbolic of something else that was happening in that classroom. Rather than talking loudly, she said, ‘And now we will hear [the elder] tell us stories.’ She set the stage by using her position in the classroom, then lowered herself. To me that’s a beautiful example, and I would like to see churches operate that way.

In addition to her initial two-year assignment, Ruth served two consecutive one-year terms. In the summer of 1983, she decided the time was right for her to part with MCC. Several factors combined to help her make the difficult decision. For a period in her last two years with MCC, Ruth lived with three other MCC volunteers in a townhouse apartment. Despite the warm fellowship, living in such close quarters proved tiresome over time. Furthermore, there was pressure from home. Her parents supported MCC, but

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<sup>34</sup> Ruth (1986) claims she had the most enjoyable position of all the volunteers there because she worked with the youngest children.

they were troubled by Ruth's comments that she might devote her life to the organization. That was commendable for other people, but they wished their daughter would start to earn money and plan her future. According to them, the best place for her future was closer to home, where there were plenty of eligible Mennonite men. Ruth was not particularly interested in pursuing the life her parents had envisioned for her, but she was attracted by the prospect of having control over her finances.

Rather than return home, Ruth followed the example of Ed, who, along with his wife Karen, had terminated with MCC a year earlier, but had stayed on as one of the teachers at the Band school. Moreover, although she could have remained with MCC, the administrative staff did not formally request that she accept another term. That made it easier for her to leave MCC, because she did not have to say 'no' to anyone in the organization.

As late as January 1986, Ruth was telling people that she would be in Barano until her retirement. Then one night, Ruth's sister, Lynn, telephoned and told her about the premonition she had while she was praying for her. Lynn sensed that Ruth would soon leave Barano. Ruth's immediate reaction was, "No way!" yet she prayed about it also and felt the same message coming from God. However, she pushed the thought of leaving out of her mind because it was 'too horrible to think about.' But deep inside she knew it was time to move on. After she resigned herself to that end, the subsequent change in school operations was, for her, confirmation of the decision. Come September, she thought another teacher would be best suited to handle the new demands of the position.

Since Ruth's departure, Cathy (1986) has heard children talk of their former teacher and say they miss her. Peter (1986), a Band Councillor, also believes the children felt a deep loss when she left, and adds that it really hurt him to see her leave. Chief Les (1986b)

concluded his discussion of Ruth by stating he has feelings for her that words cannot express.

## 6.6 ED AND KAREN

### 6.6.1 Pre-Service Experience

Ruth's departure from Barano left Ed and Karen with the distinction of being the only former MCC volunteers living in the community. Originally, they came to Barano primarily as the replacement couple for the foster home vacated by Lois and Chris. Since they were to arrive in the community in May 1980, Ed and Karen were asked if they were interested in initiating the gardening program that Lois and Chris had been unable to implement the summer before.<sup>35</sup>

Ed and Karen's desire to move to Barano under MCC was the result of timing and Karen's (1980) work in Winnipeg as a community nutrition coordinator. In January 1980, they had been married a year and had work that was related to their university education, which they had completed the previous spring (Table 6.5). They, therefore, felt comfortable about the timing of applying to MCC. In their discussions with MCC, whom they approached without indicating a preference for a specific type of assignment, it became evident that Karen had developed an empathy for Native peoples. As a community Ed, who had been substitute teaching, did not have the same type of personal contact with nutrition coordinator, one of her primary goals was the training of Native nutrition aides.

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<sup>35</sup> Ed (1988) and Karen do not recall being made aware of Lois and Chris' aborted attempt at gardening. While they were still in Winnipeg, they talked to Chris via telephone and received the impression that he was not optimistic about the success of a village gardening venture.

Table 6.5 – Personal Information: Ed and Karen		
	KAREN	ED
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	25	27
EDUCATION:	B. Home Economics (Comprehensive) (1979)	B.A. (History/English) (1976) Teaching Certificate (1979)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite	
YEARS MARRIED AT: BEGINNING OF TERM:	1.5	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Winnipeg, Manitoba	
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM		–
END OF TERM		1
DATES IN BARANO WITH MCC:		
BEGINNING		June 1980
END		July 1982
Sources: Ed 1986, 1980c; Karen 1986, 1980		

aboriginal peoples, but the prospect of working with them appealed to him as well.<sup>36</sup> He was also attracted to the assignment because it did not require that they leave home for three years.

Arriving at the point of seriously considering service with MCC was not an unnatural progression in their lives. Since both Ed and Karen had grown up in families active in Mennonite churches, they were familiar with MCC's philosophy of service. Karen, in

<sup>36</sup> On their own initiative, Ed and Karen (1986) consulted Wiebe for his insights and read, upon his recommendation, several books on Native culture. Further, desiring more information about La'malis, the area and the foster home, they telephoned Lois and Chris.

particular, had heard many positive comments about MCC, for her father served as a member of MCC Canada's board for 11 years. Although there was never any pressure placed on them to join MCC, the familial connection served to entrench the organization as the most likely choice for the type of service they envisioned.

Similar to Jean and Martin's perception of their own skills, Ed and Karen perceived themselves as possessing abilities other than those best suited for missionary work. Furthermore, Ed was reacting against what he considered to be an unbalanced emphasis on spiritual matters in most approaches to Christian service. An assignment geared toward meeting a basic need in child care was, therefore, appealing to the couple.

### 6.6.2 Assignments

There were no gardens in La'malis when Ed and Karen arrived. Armed with a rototiller, they were able to interest a few villagers to plant some potatoes, beans, onions and carrots.<sup>37</sup> Of the half a dozen or so starts, only two gardens produced vegetables at the end of the summer.

It was really [pause – laughing] ... well, I learned a lot. We both didn't know a thing about gardening or how to approach the people with the idea; or how to encourage them in such a way that they would do it themselves. It was always a temptation to want to see results, and therefore try and do it yourself. There were a lot of starts and non-finishes, ... and only two people initiated something the following year. It was an experiment at best [laughing] (Karen 1986).

Two factors weighed heavily against the success of the production component of the gardening. First, climate and soil make it extremely difficult to grow vegetables in the

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<sup>37</sup> They also assisted several Walith villagers with their gardens (Ed 1981).

area.<sup>38</sup> More importantly, Holat'in people traditionally lived off the harvest of the sea, not from the cultivation of land. Hence, absent from their cultural heritage, an interest in gardening was not something that could be rekindled. Nevertheless, villagers were pleasantly surprised when gardens yielded potatoes.

The introduction of an inexpensive supply of fresh vegetables into the diet of Native peoples is only one component of the gardening program (MCC 1986a:H2). The social aspect of gardening is considered more significant, for it has the potential to build bridges between Native peoples and Mennonites. Even if not one potato is dug up, it is hoped that gardeners gain a better understanding of the hardships faced by Native people. Karen appreciates the focus on building relationships, an emphasis which helped her and Ed share meaningful experiences with the La'malis people. The process of becoming acquainted would not have occurred as quickly or readily without the gardening, for their duties as foster parents did not bring them in contact with the villagers on a daily basis.

Ed and Karen were enthusiastic about fostering Native teenagers.

I came here with a lot of self-confidence and enthusiasm, and a good week into the assignment, that was all shot! – not quite, but those were tough times (Ed 1984).

With only one boy at the outset, Karen's enthusiasm did not begin to wane until three weeks into the assignment. The "honeymoon period" was over

once his brother came, and then two girls, making it four altogether. Things definitely changed then. It became really difficult then – emotionally heavy (Karen 1986).

The youngest girl had been in and out of foster homes for years, but just prior to joining Ed and Karen she and her sister had lived with their mother. Ed and Karen sensed that, in the

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<sup>38</sup> The second summer, "gardening was literally a wash-out" because of heavy rains in May and June (Karen 1981). Although Ed and Karen had discussed gardening with some Paukumaht people and had sensed interest, no gardens were planted there or at Walith that summer.

girl's eyes, they were to blame for her being taken away from her mother, albeit the woman had been anxious to place both girls in the foster home.

So this girl didn't say anything to us for three weeks. She was very bitter and sullen. It's almost better working with a person who shows anger than one who doesn't talk. It was really difficult. ... We had her for almost the whole two years, but only after about one and a half years, did we start seeing some breakthroughs (Karen 1986).

It did not take long before they began to feel frustrated.

We are finding it difficult to develop a feeling of 'home' here at the trailer, because the loyalties are so strongly with mother and siblings in the village, or with father up north, or both. This is natural enough, I suppose, but occasionally quite frustrating nonetheless (Ed 1980a).

The feeling arose not only because of their inexperience in handling troubled teenagers, but because they had not been informed of the importance of adhering to fundamental social work procedures.

For us, the beginning of the assignment was difficult because we didn't know anybody and we didn't know exactly what we were supposed to be doing. We hadn't ever dealt with teenagers like that. ... There were a lot of new things, and as to be expected, we felt disoriented and were kind of flailing around for a while. ... The problem was that the Band didn't have the personnel or the resources to make sure something happened with those children after they were placed in the foster home. ... There was no social worker involved, and no plan as to how these kids would rejoin their families (Ed 1986).

It was unofficially assumed the latter would occur, but no one planned for it to happen, and the possibility of those children not rejoining their families was not adequately considered.

The emotional strain and uncertainty was exacerbated by the absence of respite.

One of the things we felt we needed was some relief, a break from our job. I guess we were caught in the dilemma of thinking, or being told, that it was a foster family situation, and that foster parents really don't get a break, just like a family. ... If we had known that we were going to get some time off, I think we would have had more energy. ... Going on and on with no break in sight bothered us a bit (Ed 1986).

Indeed, had they known beforehand about the difficulties they would face as foster parents, they probably would not have come to the community.

But I hate to say that it was the wrong decision to come. We certainly learned a lot having been through that experience (Karen 1986).

If they were contemplating a similar assignment today, Karen's response would be:

'What type of relief do we have? Do we have any time off?' Not knowing the feeling of burning out or of not having any of your own space, I didn't know to ask for that beforehand. I would say that's not their fault, because it was something we just didn't ask about. As it turned out, we had a couple of weeks off a year, and a week at Christmas. But other than that, we were with the children all the time. There was no time for us to be on our own. ...

I also have feelings that there was some lack of sensitivity on the part of MCC, in not being totally aware of our situation. We were emotionally burnt-out half a year into our assignment. We were feeling a lot of strain and we just needed some time away. ... I really have high opinions of MCC, I really do. But there's always room for improvement, and if I had been in administration, there would have been room for improvement. Situations are not all that well understood, and maybe people aren't all that great at communicating. I don't think we were great communicators. We never sat down and said that we felt inundated and in need of relief. In a sense, it was partially our fault (Karen 1986).

We sometimes felt we needed more guidance, but we often realized that it wasn't forthcoming because nobody had it to give to us. Nobody knew the situation better than we did (Ed 1986).

Ed and Karen's need of guidance had been intensified because of their unfamiliarity with being foster parents.

We definitely came as inexperienced houseparents. I'm sure that we made mistakes in how we related to those children. Someone with experience might have done a better job (Karen 1986).

When they did make mistakes, they "tried to deal with them consistent with the philosophy of the organization" (Ed 1986). Ed believes they would have benefitted from having social work experience, but MCC could not place anyone more qualified than they. For Ed, the work humbled him and taught him to live with ambiguity.

I learned that the 'Indian problem' and how a Christian or anyone else should deal with it, is a lot less clear than it had been from a distance (Ed 1984).

Another child, and an opening in the Band school, improved Ed and Karen's situation. This time, the child was their own, and her birth alleviated some of the strain in the foster home.

It was really difficult beforehand, but I found that having the baby in some ways brought relief. We could be more demanding of the children and they seemed to respond better. They saw how my hands were tied, and they really did come along with more support. It also took some of the focus off some of the problems we were experiencing with them, and it gave us this positive focus on the new baby. ... The girls loved her. ... So in a way, she added more physical strain, but emotionally, she provided a breakthrough in terms of the way we related to the kids, and them to us (Karen 1986).

However,

when our first child was born, there was no offer of relief, a little pregnancy leave. At the time, I was a little hard done by, and I don't know if we lacked commitment or were unreasonable. But we didn't demand anything, and as result, we didn't get anything. It would have been nice of them to have perceived the need and offered us help (Karen 1986).

Some tension had been released before the baby was born. In the summer of 1981, Ed applied and was accepted for the vacant teaching position (grades 4-7) at the Band school. Two years previously, the class of five students had had three teachers (Ruth 1986). Another teacher made it through the entire following year, at which point Ed assumed the challenge. Rather than generating more difficulties, the new job and baby made fostering less stressful in the second year of the assignment since it created more of a typical family situation.

Ed pursued the teacher opening because, in part, he and Karen had been encouraged by MCC staff to use their skills outside the foster home.

On top of being foster parents, they gave us carte blanche by saying, 'If you perceive needs that you can address, we certainly encourage you to get more involved.' At the same time, they said we should do some feeling out (Karen 1986).

Karen's response to that encouragement included the weekly instruction of a home economics class for older teenagers,<sup>39</sup> a responsibility she shared with the La'malis home/school coordinator. Karen also collaborated with the La'malis nurse to hold a fitness class at Paukumaht (Ed 1980a), and later she started a similar class in La'malis (Ed 1981). Before he became a full-time teacher, Ed (1988, 1981) substituted at the Band school, and he worked with La'malis teenaged boys and fisheries people on a salmon enhancement project in the village.<sup>40</sup> Together, Ed and Karen served on the La'malis family guidance committee. They also attended an 'elders dinner,'<sup>41</sup> and several potlatches, some of which included the use of rarely seen masks. On one occasion early in the term, they experienced a potentially life-threatening situation with several villagers.

The Band boat sank. As it happened, we were on it at the time. We had gone with a couple of guys from the village ... to have a look at [the former Samaltan village site], where some of the La'malis people are from, as well as do some fishing. The boat's motor stopped and refused to start, meanwhile we were being pushed by the wind and waves toward a rocky island. We managed to work the boat around to the lee of the island, where it decided it had taken too much of a beating, and promptly sank. We all had made the safety of the island along with most of our possessions, so our lives weren't ever really in danger. After a cold, uncomfortable night, we were picked up by the coast guard, and taken to Barano. Quite a few of the village people met us there and we had a real sense of love and concern from them. The whole unfortunate incident brought us closer to these people, and brought them closer to us (Ed 1980b).

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<sup>39</sup> She had mixed feelings about the course content (Ed 1981). Some of the teenagers had their own children, and Karen felt that the emphasis should have been placed on topics of greater relevance to the class (e.g., dietary needs of infants).

<sup>40</sup> Ed (1988) assisted in the construction of a large box, which was then set in the La'malis River with fertilized eggs in trays. However, "later that winter, heavy rains dislodged the box and the project went the way of many similar well-intentioned efforts."

<sup>41</sup> The dinner was organized by the Band's alcohol counsellor, who was concerned village elders were being neglected (Ed 1980a). The enthusiasm of the younger villagers to the idea generated a banquet of traditional Holat'in foods, and an evening filled with dances and speeches.

Ed (1986) commends the staff for endowing volunteers with “so much discretionary authority.”

However, Ed (1986) uses the account of their arrival in Barano to illustrate the extent to which MCC staff were “in touch” at the time.

When we passed through Clearbrook, the MCC B.C. director gave us directions as to where we could find the trailer - but he gave us the wrong trailer number! So when we first got here towards evening, we had to a fair amount of detective work to find out where we were supposed to be living.

When they did find the MCC trailer, it was in a mess.

But my inclination is not say, ‘Why wasn’t everything ready for us?’ It was sort of exciting to have to find the place (Ed 1986).

Karen (1986) adds that MCC staff “tried their hardest to find out” about their situation through numerous visits to Barano.

An aspect of being volunteers that Ed and Karen found a nuisance was the monthly accounting of expenses. Although it was nice to have some of the income-related pressures removed,

you had to account for everything, which was a pain because it took time and consistency to be that accountable. And after a while, I got tired of feeling like a charity-case with parents, friends and church (Karen 1986).

Ed (1986) agrees that it was “a pain” trying to balance the ‘greensheets’ (financial reporting forms), but admits “it was good knowing where the money went and being responsible and careful about spending it.” As far as the limited income is concerned, Ed senses that most volunteers feel “a little bit of suffering and deprivation” comes with accepting an assignment. Karen adds though, that she and Ed did not suffer hardship as volunteers, for they were able to pursue the hobbies and take the trips they wanted.

Deciding their future with MCC after the two years was not difficult.

We felt there was only one loss in terminating, and that was the close relationship we had with the MCC staff people, and that time of fellowship at the retreat every

year. But we still see Menno Wiebe every time he comes up, and we seem to have a lot of contact with MCC. So, we don't feel we lost that much (Karen 1986).

The situation with the foster home played a major role in the decision.

We've had reason to feel that the Band does not, in fact, really care much about what happens in its foster home. There seems a general attitude of neglect toward the home (Ed 1981).

Toward the end of the term, Ed and Karen were operating the foster home without Band funds<sup>42</sup> (Wiebe 1982), because of a financial crisis on the reserve. But that arrangement was one that MCC did not want to perpetuate, and so the end of the assignment provided a convenient point at which to conclude the program. It was also a way for Ed and Karen to resolve the indefinite relationship they had with the foster children.

Several years after leaving Barano, Denise (1987), the volunteer who replaced Ruth at the preschool, still maintains her friendship with Ed and Karen.

They are really super people, those two. Ed is so very intelligent, and yet he never lords it over anyone. He knows how to come down to a person's level and get along with all kinds of people.

Wayne (1986) mentioned that "Ed is considered a very conscientious teacher who puts in long hours at school." Irene (1987), a Councillor's wife, noted that Ed and Karen used to come to many of the village gatherings "until they started to get involved in their own activities." Nelson (1987), a Councillor and Chief Les' brother, cited Ed as one of the teachers who had become a good dancer.<sup>43</sup> And Linda (1986), the assistant to the Band social worker, feels Ed and Karen are "nice, caring people with big hearts, who have done a lot of good on the reserve." Moreover, she notes that Ed has a better grasp of the Holat'in language than she does.

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<sup>42</sup> MCC contributed the necessary funds to keep the foster home running. Wiebe (1982) noted that Ed and Karen displayed remarkable maturity throughout the ordeal.

<sup>43</sup> Nelson (1987) contends that "everybody fell in love with Ruth and Ed."

The conclusion of their involvement with MCC did not prevent Ed from continuing on in his teaching position. Beginning with seven students in the fall of 1981, Ed taught the class for five of the next six years as it grew to include up to fifteen students.<sup>44</sup> He and Karen, thus, became the first MCC volunteers to remain in Barano following a term of service.

## 6.7 DENISE

### 6.7.1 Pre-Service Experience

Ed and Karen's termination reduced the total number of MCC volunteers active in the area to two from a previous high of six.<sup>45</sup> The presence of only Ruth and Denise shifted the focus of MCC's efforts from child care to education.

In contrast to Ruth, Denise (1980) entered her MCC assignment lacking academic instruction (Table 6.6) but with practical experience in Christian service, notably in daycares and nursery schools. On six separate occasions between May 1970 and her time in Barano, Denise (1988) undertook Christian service assignments.<sup>46</sup> Part of her nursery school experience derived from a year she spent working for the Mennonite Brethren

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<sup>44</sup> Ed was a substitute teacher for the Barano school district in the 1984-85 school year. He returned to the Band school the following year, and he remained there until the end of the 1986-87 academic year, when he resigned in order to accept the newly created half-time position as tutor for the Band's high school students. He planned to devote the remainder of his time to the Mennonite church group.

<sup>45</sup> For a period of less than a year, beginning in the spring of 1981, Ingrid and John joined Ed and Karen, Ruth and Denise as MCC volunteers working in Barano.

<sup>46</sup> Three of the assignments were located in Rapid City, South Dakota, the first of which was with MDS. Another year, Denise (1988) participated in a summer recreation program with Native children in the same city. Her work in a Christian day camp in northern Manitoba also centred on Native children.

Table 6.6 - Personal Information: Denise	
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM	29
EDUCATION:	Grade 11 (1968) Diploma (Biblical Studies) (1973)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite
MARITAL STATUS:	Single
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Winnipeg, Manitoba
DATES IN BARANO:	
BEGINNING	October 1980
END	July 1983
Sources: Denise 1988, 1987, 1980	

Church mission agency. In Winnipeg, a similar type of work with a non-church agency brought her into contact with Native children. Impressed by the visual elements of their cultural heritage, such as the dances and artwork, Denise (1987) became fascinated with Native peoples. Her fascination evolved into a desire to learn more about them, and because she was familiar with the work of MCC from her upbringing in a Mennonite church, she turned to the organization.

I heard about MCC in church where they would say so and so is doing MCC work in such and such a place. Also, the aspect of travel appealed to me (maybe that's a bad motive, but it was there) for I love to travel. ... A lot of times you can do a different type of work with MCC in a volunteer program than you can elsewhere. ... Part of my motive as well, was that I wanted to work for MCC because they could get me on to a reserve. I would then have a reason to be on the reserve and people wouldn't be suspicious of me (Denise 1987).

The position of instructor for the nursery class in La'malis provided an opportunity to fulfil those desires.

### 6.7.2 Assignment

All but one aspect of the assignment appealed to Denise (1987).

It was a two year assignment and I just about died when I found that out. I wasn't ready to commit myself to something when I had no idea of how I was going to fit in or feel; whether it was my thing or not. So I remember struggling with that and ... really wishing I could do one year at a time. But there was no way I could. So I committed myself to two years and stayed for three.

Although she was stepping into the same situation Ruth had worked in for over a year, Denise (1987) was unaware of the nature of the working conditions.

Somehow I envisaged that because it was on a reserve, that as far as supplies and other things needed to run a nursery, there would be nothing. I thought everything either would have to be made by me or I would have to be very creative and come up with a lot of activities that involved as few materials as possible. I also had no idea of what kind of building I would be in. I thought it might be the basement of somebody's house.

Her low expectations increased the level of her excitement when she viewed the fully equipped, two-room nursery school building for the first time.

In the initial period after her arrival in October 1980, Denise devoted all her energies to the classroom. At first, she felt somewhat insecure about her teaching ability, because many of her children were learning slowly. A year later, as she assisted Ruth by doing creative play with the same children in kindergarten, she discovered that Ruth also found it difficult to teach those children. Nevertheless, Kate (1986), Denise's aide and a villager since 1969, characterizes Denise as a "patient, kind and really loving teacher." Samantha (1986) notes that, although she did not have children of her own, Denise was like 'a little mother' who expressed her feelings openly to the children.

Apart from the frustrations of teaching, there was the unpleasant dilemma associated with lice.

Of course, there were a lot of problems with lice, as I scratch my head [laughing]. But, you know, that's something that never bothered me. I know a lot of times, I would have friends come up and visit me and it was hard for them to take one of those children and put them on their laps. But it never bothered me (Denise 1987).

That attitude impressed Wiebe (1987b).

Denise and Ruth would say, 'Oh yeah, we sometimes get lice, but it's worth it.' So I wrote a little article entitled, 'The Price is Lice,' which was printed in most church papers. Denise did some hairdressing at her place for women on the reserve. With captive individuals, those were great occasions to carry on conversations and get news reports of La'malis. There was friendship, and there was touch. I believe in these innocent, lighthearted profundities.

What did bother Denise (1987) in the beginning was the journey to the preschool building each day.

It killed me to walk over that bridge and walk down that road to my school those first few months. My heart would pound every day because I would see the curtains parting and faces watching me walk down the street. It was very frightening for me.

In her second year, she felt more comfortable walking through the reserve, but she continued to shy away from it in the evenings. That changed as a result of her decision to try something different in the second summer of the assignment.

During part of the summer of 1981, Denise teamed up with Ingrid, who together with her husband worked as MCC relief houseparents at the village receiving home, to hold Bible related clubs for Native children. The children were uninterested in the clubs, and faced with the advent of another summer, Denise was not anxious to resurrect the program. Into the vacuum entered the suggestion from Wiebe that she promote gardening on the reserve. Her immediate response was negative, primarily because she was unfamiliar with basic horticultural practices. Wiebe, nevertheless, asked her to think it over. She ultimately accepted the position when she realized that gardening would likely give her opportunities to converse with village elders. That prospect excited her because she had not been able to pursue her strong interest in the cultural past of the Holat'in people since her interactions with elders had not progressed beyond the obligatory greeting stage.

Denise realized the benefits she had anticipated from gardening. She and another gardener sent out by MCC found it necessary to be on the reserve in the evenings and often

they would be asked into a home for a cup of tea. Through the visits she came to enjoy simply sitting in silence with people.

People would ask us in for a cup of tea and we would sit there in silence for an hour. ... That's not our culture at all. If there's five minutes of silence amongst our people, everybody starts to fidget. But it's beautiful there and I really enjoyed that. ... I never once thought they were sitting there judging me. I never once felt inferior or self-conscious with them (Denise 1987).

From sharing their tea and silence, Denise (1987) was able to share in their laughter.

They laugh a lot, and they laugh all the time. ... I find them to be a real jovial people, and it doesn't often come out when they're in public or with White people. But my word, you get to know them and they start to feel more comfortable with you, and it's amazing.

As friendships emerged with a few of the elders, Denise had the occasion to participate in some of their customs. In cooking with some of the village women she made bannock that received compliments for its authentic flavour.

The actual gardening however, did not turn out as well.

The weather was the pits, so the gardens didn't really grow. ... But the hardest part came from what they told us at orientation [MCC's gardening orientation], 'Whatever you do, don't do the work for them. Go out there and encourage them, spend a lot of time with them and work beside them, but don't do it for them.' And I found that really, really difficult because they did not have the motivation (Denise 1987).

Nevertheless, Denise did not consider her physical labour a complete failure. A handful of the villagers consistently worked at their gardens, and their expressions of pleasure at the potatoes produced made it worthwhile for her.

Denise was so pleased with her summer that she decided to stay on another year. The year was an extension of the summer to the point that she wished to spend her weekends in the village because she had more friends there than in town. She was captivated by the unhurried and unpretentious manner of the people to the extent that had it not been for the

combination of her “itchy feet”<sup>47</sup> and her lack of interest in teaching the same program a fourth year, she would have prolonged her stay beyond a third year.<sup>48</sup>

Denise (1987) describes her three years in Barano as “a good experience.”

I really have nothing but pleasant thoughts about my time with MCC. My, this sounds like it was a dream, but it’s true. I don’t think I have anything negative to say.

However, a contributing factor to her ending the “dream” is that she could “only go so long on a volunteer’s salary.” Much like Ed and Karen, Denise found the greensheets an annoyance, adding that the quarterly reports were also difficult to produce. In any event, neither the greensheets nor the quarterly reports were worth complaining about.

The support and encouragement of MCC staff persons and fellow volunteers helped make her time in Barano so enjoyable.

I would come home for Christmas and holidays and stop in at the MCC Canada office and the whole gang would be surrounding me, wanting to hear what was happening in Barano. There was genuine interest there. ... You think that because they had so many placements and workers, I would have been just a name and Barano just another place to them. But it wasn’t that way (Denise 1987).

Moreover, Denise considers her volunteer unit was as close-knit as a unit could be.

Indeed, her future plans include a return to voluntary service with MCC.

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<sup>47</sup> As of April 1987, the three years in Barano constituted the longest period Denise had ever remained at one job in one place.

<sup>48</sup> The Band presented Denise with a painting and two carvings as parting gifts.

## 6.8 INGRID AND JOHN

### 6.8.1 Pre-Service Experience

In her three years, Denise witnessed the arrival and departure of the first non-Canadian volunteers to work in La'malis. Ingrid (1987) and John (1987) arrived in May 1981, on what they believed would be a two-year assignment as relief houseparents at the reserve receiving home (Table 6.7). Raised in Mennonite churches in the American Mennonite heartland of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, the couple grew up in an environment where Christian service was stressed.

Many of our friends and acquaintances, at one time or another, were in some type of service. Our church placed a fairly strong emphasis on service, particularly things like M.D.S., and in an older tradition, things like barn raisings and such. So it was an almost natural out-growth of that perspective of our faith that we decided to do a term of service (John 1987:1).

However, it “was more a matter of chance than design” that they chose MCC rather than other service groups.

Although MCC was the only agency to which they formally applied, Ingrid and John did look into several assignments offered by other organizations. But of all the options, including one with MCC at a group home for juvenile offenders in the Maritimes (John 1988), the assignment in Barano appeared to be the most viable one. They chose the assignment despite possessing neither formal training in child care programs, nor experience in working with North American Native peoples. After high school, John (1981) worked as a carpenter, truck driver and paver operator, while Ingrid's (1981) employment included switchboard, clerical and secretarial positions. They made the choice

Table 6.7 - Personal Information: Ingrid and John		
	INGRID	JOHN
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	23	23
EDUCATION:	Grade 12 (1976)	Grade 12 (1976)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite	
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	1.5	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Lititz, Pennsylvania (American Citizens)	
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM		—
END OF TERM		—
DATES IN BARANO:		
BEGINNING		May 1981
END		April 1982
Sources: Ingrid 1987, 1981; John 1987, 1981		

because they wanted to remain in North America, and because they had gained an interest in child care from the time they were houseparents at a children's home in Mexico.<sup>49</sup>

### 6.8.2 Assignment

In addition to the position of relief houseparents, the job description for the assignment included the provision of relief for Ed and Karen at the foster home.<sup>50</sup> Ingrid

<sup>49</sup> Ingrid and John's work in Mexico with Children's Haven International spanned the first four months of 1980. John also did some construction work along with his duties as a houseparent.

<sup>50</sup> Ed (1988) remembers only one or two occasions when Ingrid and John provided relief for he and Karen at the foster home.

and John were also informed that the regular houseparents were planning to leave, and so there was the possibility they would replace the couple.

In the meantime, it was believed various odd jobs would be found for us in the community. As it turned out, the regular houseparents were replaced by a couple who had previously worked at the home. This arrangement had been made prior to our arrival in Barano which I assume MCC was not aware of. So we remained relief houseparents throughout our term. ... The 'odd' jobs in the community never materialized (John 1987:2).

They worked in the receiving home mainly on weekends and when the regular houseparents requested some time off.

Our domestic chores were lightened by a Native girl who helped with cleaning. There were a few older children too which added a challenge for us because of the rebellion which so often accompanies the middle teen years. But for the most part, we thoroughly enjoyed the younger children (John 1987:2).

Apart from the receiving and foster homes, John participated in a free food distribution project on the reserve, and he assisted Ed and Karen with the second attempt at gardening (summer 1981) in the village. Ingrid worked as an aide in the Band school, and she and Denise operated Bible related clubs for Native children during the summer.

Ingrid and John did not experience a second summer in Barano. Eleven months into the assignment (April 1982), the provincial government closed the receiving home.<sup>51</sup>

Although some ideas of alternative work in Barano were kicked around, nothing seemed to open up. It was both difficult and easy to leave Barano. On the one hand, I was feeling very restless and tired of not having much to do. I just wanted

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<sup>51</sup> John (1987:3) cites three reasons which the government gave for closing the receiving home:

- (1) insufficient funding because of budget cutbacks;
- (2) operating at below capacity: during the time they worked at the home ("it was seldom, if ever filled to capacity"); and
- (3) an emphasis on keeping children in their communities as opposed to placing them in a distant receiving home.

When Social Services discontinued the funding, the home became the Band's responsibility (Meredith 1986). The transfer, however, took place at a time when the Band was also encountering financial difficulties, and so the building ceased to function as a receiving home.

to get back to work again. On the other hand, Barano was so beautiful and our friendships, particularly in the MCC unit, meant so much to us (John 1987:3).

The couple completed their two-year term at a men's hostel in Kitchener, Ontario (Ingrid 1987).

Although somewhat more uncertain than Denise, Ingrid and John (1987:4) are also entertaining the idea of another term of service with MCC. However, John (1987:4) would avoid the type of work they had in Barano.

Knowing what I know now, I probably would not want to choose the assignment we had at Barano. Not because of the good friends we made, nor the location, nor the positive experience we had, but because I feel my skills and strengths were inadequate to meet the job situation as we found it.

Nevertheless, John (1987:3) benefitted from the shortened term.

My cross-cultural experience made me more aware of some of the problems and struggles of the Native people. I learned about some of their traditions too, but it was barely long enough to really understand their world view (i.e., their priorities, sequence of thought/logic, etc.).

John (1987:3) found that "a year [was] hardly long enough to build a good relationship with a total stranger in an unfamiliar culture." He developed "a working, superficial-type relationship with some [villagers], but nothing deep." Moreover,

living as a volunteer was, at least for me, a time of feeling financially free when I did not have to worry about paying bills or if there were sufficient funds to do so. The greensheets seemed to be a necessary nuisance (John 1987:4).

The other volunteers' supportive friendships also helped Ingrid and John cope with the difficulties and uncertainties of the assignment.

The early departure of Ingrid and John, and the lapsed terms of Ed, Karen, Denise and Ruth, left Denise's replacement, Betty, as the only volunteer in the area after the summer of 1983. With the receiving and foster home programs inoperative, it was not until MCC agreed to be the operating society for the new Barano group home that Betty

was joined by other volunteers. The first MCC couple to assume the responsibilities of group home parents arrived a year into Betty's assignment.

## 6.9 RUSS AND LYNN

### 6.9.1 Pre-Service Experience

Russ (1987) and Lynn (1987) were not one of the original two couples that had been selected to initiate MCC's staffing of the group home. Yet it was not by chance that they were chosen as a 'last minute' replacement when one couple backed out of the assignment. Kaarsemaker, the voluntary service director for MCC B.C. since the fall of 1982, asked Ruth half-seriously whether her sister, Lynn, and brother-in-law, Russ, might be interested in the opening. In a subsequent telephone conversation with the couple, Ruth only mentioned Kaarsemaker's query as an aside, for she knew they had just made a commitment to purchase a house in Winnipeg. Nevertheless, the offer was considered seriously, for Russ and Lynn had talked previously about working for MCC.

Both Lynn and Russ had known about MCC prior to Ruth joining the organization. Through their active participation in Mennonite churches (Lynn 1984; Russ 1984), they were frequently exposed to the agency's work and people. On separate occasions prior to their marriage, they had inquired individually concerning service opportunities with MCC. No suitable placements were arranged through these contacts, and not until Russ was in the final year of a bachelor program in architecture (Table 6.8) did the topic of MCC come up again for serious discussion. The offer of the group home assignment came at a turning point in their lives. Russ would soon graduate and was planning to enter a Master's program, and he and Lynn were also contemplating starting a family. The decision was made quickly, for they felt that if the opportunity was not seized, they might become too

Table 6.8 - Personal Information: Russ and Lynn		
	LYNN	RUSS
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	24	26
EDUCATION:	Grade 12 (1978)	Diploma (Christian Education) (1978) Diploma (Building Technology) (1980) B. Environmental Studies (Architecture) (1984)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:		Mennonite
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM:		1
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Abbotsford, B.C.	Vancouver, B.C. Winnipeg, Manitoba (1 Year)
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM		—
END OF TERM		1
DATES IN BARANO:		
BEGINNING		June 1984
END		June 1986
SOURCES: Lynn 1987, 1984; Russ 1987, 1984		

settled in a lifestyle dominated by studies or children and mortgage payments to undertake a term of service in the future.<sup>52</sup>

Apart from the convenient timing of the assignment, the work itself appealed to them. Lynn (1984) relished the thought of working with children, even 'problem' ones, and Russ

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<sup>52</sup> After they had made the choice to go with MCC, they were able to have the house purchase rescinded. The manner in which that potentially difficult situation was resolved indicated to them that they had made the right choice to leave Winnipeg.

was excited that the Native communities were to be consulted regarding the operation of the group home. He had gained an interest in Native issues from an anthropology course he had taken with Wiebe as the instructor. Although the couple had had no direct dealings with Native peoples, they were not concerned. Lynn had visited Ruth several times, including a trip with Russ in the summer of 1983, and so she was not unfamiliar with the villagers, who in turn, knew she was Ruth's sister. Hence, because of Ruth's presence in Barano, Russ and Lynn were confident they had a clear picture of the situation into which they were about to place themselves.<sup>53</sup>

### 6.9.2 Assignment

As it turned out, the assignment did not distort that clear picture. Prior to the usual orientation session for new MCC volunteers, Russ and Lynn assisted a Mennonite couple who were operating a different group home. Kaarsemaker had made the arrangement because of their unfamiliarity with group homes, and the three weeks there proved to be a time of intensive training. After the three weeks, they traveled to Barano to acquaint themselves with the situation there. In the two-week period, they had the opportunity to discuss the group home program with the interim staff, a local couple who had been in the home since the opening date of April 1, 1984. The trip also helped dispel a misconception held by the children in the group home. The news that Christians were coming to work in the home prompted them to call their social workers and plead to be placed elsewhere. When Russ and Lynn proved not to be the dull, strict, conservative couple they had imagined, the children informed their social workers that they would stay. On June 19,

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<sup>53</sup> In contrast to the other set of houseparents, Russ (1988) and Lynn had been informed at the outset that the group home children's ages could range from infancy to the late teens.

Russ and Lynn officially began their term at the orientation session in Winnipeg, and on July 1, they were at work in the group home.

The group home was not filled to capacity when Russ and Lynn returned to Barano. Of a possible six children, only two greeted them their first day on shift. By the end of the week there was a third child. Because Neil and Donna, the other set of MCC houseparents, were not yet available, Russ and Lynn's first shift extended to two weeks. By the end of the shift they needed the days off to recharge their energies.

Throughout the term, participating in the Mennonite church group provided them with a source of renewal. The meetings with other attenders increased in importance over time.

Our get-togethers were like we needed that time to recharge our strength. ... My guess is, if we wouldn't have had that support group, we probably would have spent more time getting to know, say, a brother of one of our kids. ... A positive thing is that as more people come to the church group, various responsibilities can be distributed, which frees the group to do other things. For example, the group asked itself, 'What more can we do? Can we run a drop-in centre on the reserve, and is that something they want us to run?' Those are tough questions. We had Wiebe come in and specifically look at that with us: How do you approach something like that when there's obviously a need for organizations like Big Brothers and Big Sisters? A lot of these kids just sit in front of the T.V. with nothing else to do. Basically, we found it was more than we were able to take on (Russ 1987).

Although they eagerly anticipated the gatherings, their commitments to the group home forced them to miss some events.

Despite that commitment to the group home, Russ (1987) doubts whether their input was critical to the development of the children.

As far as having any type of impact on any one person that would have been life-changing - probably not. But I don't think our term was intended to be that. ... We definitely learned a lot. We obviously gained more from the experience than anyone did from us being there.

Some of the 'gains' were derived from the relationships they had with several group home children.

I think we established a lot of really good relationships with the teens, and also the younger ones, who we're still keeping in touch with now. ... One girl still writes us letters beginning with, 'Dear Mom and Dad,' and she's fifteen now (she does it jokingly). She thanks us for the things we taught her. I'm not trying to say we had a big influence, but we have a good friendship with her (Lynn 1987).

Indeed, early in the term, Donna (1984a) remarked on how quickly Russ and Lynn were able to establish a rapport with the older children.

New houseparents did not represent a large adjustment for the children, for Russ and Lynn continued with the program that had been in place. Together with Neil and Donna, they adapted the program as time went on. The length of the shifts was one of the program items that had to be worked out.

We tried six, seven, and even three day shifts, but for the four of us, basically five days seemed to be about the best. It was enough time to get into it, but not too long to get burnt out. You could tell on the fifth day that the frustration level would rise, and tempers would quicken (Russ 1987).

Every third shift was four days long so that in four weeks, each couple had two Sundays and two Thursday nights free to attend the local Mennonite church group for services and Bible studies. Often though, they would invite the children to the church on Sundays and obtain relief staff for Thursday nights when they were on shift.

Russ and Lynn tried to approach their relationship with the children on a friendship basis as opposed to one predicated on parental authority.

Our attitude was that the kids didn't need another authority figure. Having worked with and counselled teenagers (camp and youth worker), I felt it was important that they have someone they could talk to. We didn't expect them to think of us as 'parents.' We were like friends but they respected our role as houseparents (Lynn 1988).

Neil and Donna felt that we all needed to take on the role of parents. ... But we never looked to the kids to think of us parents, or even as role models, for they walked into the group home with no clue as to who we were (Russ 1987).

Rather than give advice as would a social worker, Russ and Lynn tried to listen and provide a shoulder for the children to cry on.

The approach was greeted with such enthusiasm that initially, a great deal of their time away from the group home was filled with their new 'friends.'

In the beginning, the kids would come over constantly and stay for a long time. Or they would phone, sometimes in the middle of night [teenagers who had been in the group home and were back on their reserves were responsible for the late telephone-calls (Russ 1988)]. But in a nice way, we kind of discouraged that (Lynn 1987).

On their days off, Russ and Lynn focused on the necessary paperwork. Lynn compiled the group home finances, and together they wrote reports for the social work office and prepared briefs for the local advisory committee. They attended workshops and foster parents association meetings, such as the annual provincial meeting held in Vancouver in the fall of 1984.

The main source of aboriginal input into the group home was to be from the local advisory committee. Wiebe (1987b) is pleased with Russ and Lynn's work on the advisory committee. He claims they understood its rationale "at its core and cultivated it with care." In a letter to the couple, Wiebe (1986a) commends them "for making the advisory committee workable." Since the end of their term was near, Wiebe proceeded to ask Russ and Lynn four "heavy questions" (e.g., how MCC might address the systemic problem resulting from the forced relocation) because of their "skills in observation and assessment."

Exactly two years after the first official day of their term, Russ and Lynn left Barano. The difficult decision revolved around Russ' desire to resume his architectural career and the limited opportunities to pursue such a direction in the area.

It was hard to leave, really hard. From my point of view though, if Russ was to continue in architecture, and there was nothing up there for him, then we had to leave. It didn't make sense for him to stay out of architecture another two years (Lynn 1987).

Russ had managed in his spare time to design the school playground in La'malis, and he was interested in the opening created by the departure of the community planner. However, the focus of the position had changed, for with the first phase of the new housing completed, the Band was shifting its priorities more toward economic development. Other options (remaining at the group home, establishing a special needs home for one or two children, and Lynn working as a drug and alcohol counselor for women on the reserve) were no longer realistic with the arrival of their baby and Russ' desire to return to architecture.

There were also forces pulling them home. With the birth of their first child close to the end of the term, both sets of grandparents were eager to have their grandson living near them in the Lower Mainland. More importantly, Russ had an invitation to work for an architectural firm in the central Fraser Valley. Given the situation, they decided that the most sensible alternative for their immediate future was to terminate with MCC and move from Barano.

## 6.10 SUMMARY

MCC's work with the Holat'in people can be traced back to a relationship that developed out of a Christian visitation program at a prison in the central Fraser Valley. The relationship between Sam and Clarence led to an MDS project in which functional repairs were done on three homes in Walith. The call of the Walith Band for further assistance was passed on to Wiebe at MCC, and through consultation with Clarence and others, he agreed to send a volunteer couple to work on the nearby La'malis reserve. From that beginning in 1974, 14 full-time volunteers had completed their terms of service with MCC in Barano by 1986.

The pre-service experiences of the 14 volunteers reveal the diverse backgrounds with which they entered their assignments. The range of their prior personal contact with aboriginal peoples extended from a minimal and largely negative exposure (Jean and Martin), to one that included daily interaction at work and an attraction to traditional Native culture (Karen, Denise). Although the separate accounts of how they arrived in Barano are much more unique than similar, there are several commonalities. Twelve of the 14 volunteers had a Mennonite background that made them aware of MCC's existence prior to considering Christian service, and the assignment in Barano was the first one with the organization for all but one couple. Furthermore, only one volunteer had had employment that related directly to the type of work being done in an assignment. Consequently, most assignments were significant departures from the volunteers' previous experiences.

All but the first assignment can be categorized as endeavours in either child care or education (Figure 6.2). The assignments generated approximately 29 person-years of activity<sup>54</sup> in MCC's 11 years in Barano (there were no volunteers active in the community from mid 1976 to mid 1977). Of the 29 person-years, three volunteers worked a total of eight years as teachers in La'malis. Apart from Martin's position as welfare aide, the receiving, foster, and group homes absorbed the remainder of the volunteers' efforts. Only the last assignment, at the group home, did not pertain exclusively to the La'malis people.

Initially, all assignments were established on the basis of a two-year term, and only Ingrid and John were unable to work in Barano for at least that length of time. The total length of terms ranged from just under a year for Ingrid and John, to four years for Ruth, with Denise as the other volunteer deviating more than half a year from the two-year time frame (Figure 6.1). Two volunteers, Ed and Ruth, continued on as teachers in La'malis

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<sup>54</sup> This figure includes Jean's two years as an unassigned spouse.

Figure 6.2 - Positions Held by Volunteers in Barano, 1974 - 1986

POSITION	YEAR/MONTH						
<b>Social Assistance</b>	1974 SEP	-----	1976 JUN				
<b>Child Care:</b>							
Receiving Home		1977 AUG	-----	1980 APR	1981 MAY	-----	1982 APR
Foster Home		1979 JUN	-----	1980 JUN APR	-----	1982 JUL	
Group Home						1984 JUL	-----
<b>Education:</b>							
Nursery		1979 SEP	-----				1983 JUL
Kindergarten - Grade 3				1980 SEP	-----		1983 JUL
Grades 4 - 7					1981 SEP	-----	1982 JUL
<b>Gardening</b> (May - August)				1980 --	1981 --	1982 --	1983 --
						1984 --	1985 --

Sources: Personal Interviews

after terminating with MCC. Apart from the 'retirees,' Lois and Chris, not one volunteer arrived in Barano over 30 years of age. Indeed, four of the five younger couples either started their families or added a second child during their terms in Barano.

Chapter Seven continues the description of the experiences of MCC volunteers. The separation of the descriptive account into two chapters is based upon the fieldwork period. The ten volunteers discussed in Chapter Seven were all active in Barano in January 1987.

## Chapter Seven

### EXPERIENCES OF VOLUNTEERS ACTIVE IN BARANO, JANUARY 1987

#### 7.1 INTRODUCTION

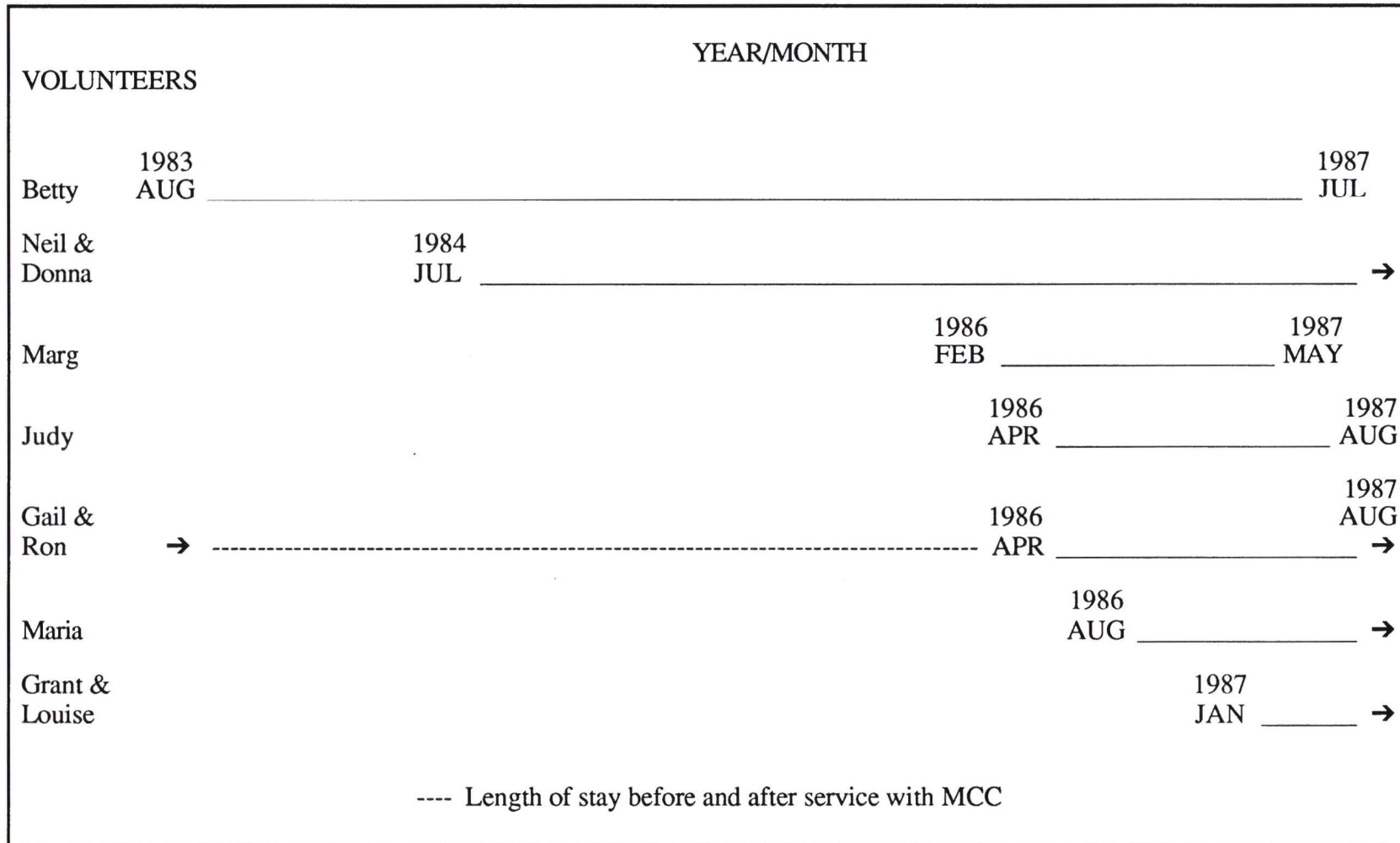
The fieldwork period was part of the span in which MCC's activity in Barano reached its highest volume (Figure 7.1). The ten volunteers constituted the largest contingent in a Canadian community outside of Winnipeg. However, the situation for one of the volunteers was altogether different when she joined MCC three and a half years earlier in 1983. Indeed, her first year in Barano represents the only time a volunteer was the sole MCC representative in the community.

#### 7.2 BETTY

##### 7.2.1 Pre-Service Experience

Betty (1987b) began to think seriously about Christian service in 1982 when she was employed as an assistant teacher at a special needs preschool in Vancouver. The process of deciding on a service organization and a specific assignment started to evolve when she contacted InterChristo, a computer referral service for people interested in Christian service. InterChristo generated a list of organizations whose programs included her interest in elementary/special needs education. Although MCC was on that list and she had heard vague favourable comments regarding its work, as a non-Mennonite (Table 7.1), Betty was not predisposed to the organization. Nevertheless, she informed InterChristo that MCC and the other organizations listed could contact her. MCC responded by presenting Betty with a brief description of an opening in a daycare in Montreal. Her fondness for the French language attracted her to the assignment's location, but she initially dismissed the

Figure 7.1 - Length of Stay of Volunteers Active in Barano in 1987



Sources: Personal Interviews

Table 7.1 - Personal Information: Betty	
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	29
EDUCATION:	B.Ed. (Special Education) (1981) Early Childhood Education (Incomplete)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Baptist
MARITAL STATUS: BEGINNING	Single Married (March 1987)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Vancouver, B.C.
DATES IN BARANO WITH MCC: BEGINNING	August 1983
END	July 1987
Sources: Betty 1988, 1987b, 1983	

idea. She felt she was not ready to live “in the slums” or become a volunteer. However, as she thought about the assignment, she sensed that she had been somewhat hasty in her dismissal. She wrote to MCC for more information, and in the reply the organization included an application form.

I prayed and thought about it, and talked about it to other people, and I came to the decision that I would apply and see what would happen. Meanwhile, some other material [from different organizations] had come via InterChristo, but there was nothing I was interested in (Betty 1987b).

By the time MCC received her application, the Montreal daycare position had been filled. MCC, however, mentioned several other openings that caught her interest, and hence she decided to continue with the application process.

In the interview at the MCC B.C. office in June 1983, Betty disclosed her desire to serve in eastern Canada (Quebec or the Maritimes), in the North, or in Europe, but not in British Columbia. She had worked and studied in Vancouver for several years and so she was eager to travel outside the province as part of an assignment. The interviewer stated that there was nothing for her right then within any of those regions.

So then out of curiosity, even though I wasn't really interested because I wanted to go farther away, I asked about what was available in B.C. He told me about Barano and the more I heard about it, the more I became interested. Then I told him, 'Don't count me out' (Betty 1987b).

Denise was at the end of her three years as the La'malis nursery class instructor, and the preschool society had asked MCC B.C. for a replacement volunteer. The society received Betty's application from MCC B.C. and agreed she was suited for the position. But Betty (1987b) wanted to see La'malis before making a two-year commitment.

I had a little visit with Ruth, and Ed and Karen. I just bumped into them up there. Talking to them really encouraged me. They said something like, 'If you're looking for a new cultural experience, you don't have to go very far. It's right here.'

Erica also met with Betty (1988) and talked to her briefly about the program and showed her the preschool building. Several days after that one-day visit, she accepted the assignment. The short trip played an important role in her decision.

I know a lot of the volunteers, most of them, maybe even all of them, arrived site unseen. I would have found that hard. Even when I was considering the Montreal option, I was trying to think of a way to see the place first, so that I could know more or less what I was going to get myself into. It takes me a long time to make a decision. I want to know everything about it first (Betty 1987b).

She also had the support of her pastor, Bible study group, other church friends and her family, particularly her father.

When I was first considering it I was afraid to tell him because I thought he would think in very practical terms like, 'Why give up a job for two years? You may not get one again.' But instead he said, 'Of course there is that chance, but I think it's worth the risk because it will be a such a good experience, and you can do something worthwhile.' ... And I think I showed him MCC's policy, and he

thought it was very reasonable the way they support volunteers. ... No one in my family ever expressed concern for what I was planning to do (Betty 1987b).

I also thought my Mom would be upset about me wanting to leave Vancouver, but she understood that I wanted new experiences (Betty 1988).

Although she had had no personal experience in the field, another positive factor influencing her decision was that the assignment was in Native education.

I had always wanted to work with Native people. Through some of my studies at University of B.C., I had done a fair bit of looking into education in Native communities. So I had had that in the back of my mind for a long time (Betty 1987b).

She did, however, have a degree in education and three years experience working in preschools. The combination of her training and work experience made Betty more qualified than either Ruth or Denise had been upon their arrival in Barano.<sup>1</sup>

### 7.2.2 Assignments

Unlike Denise, Betty was pleased that it was a two-year assignment, for she expected it would take her a long time to feel comfortable in Barano. Indeed, the initial period away from home was more of an adjustment than she had expected. Without a telephone for two weeks, Betty felt isolated from her family. Although she was the sole MCC volunteer there for almost a year, she was not without moral support. Ed and Karen were her neighbours, and she became close friends with Ruth.

They were like family to me from the start. I also soon grew to love the people of La'malis, who accepted me and made me feel welcome right away (Betty 1988).

I think more than one volunteer is good because then there's support. ... Ruth introduced me to a lot of people that I probably wouldn't have met for a long time. ... There was a lot of support from Kaarsemaker and head office. Certainly, I don't think I would ever come into a situation like this on my own, for I would be

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<sup>1</sup> Despite her qualifications, had the preschool been licensed, she would not have been able to be its supervisor. She had not completed the course work, nor had she undertaken a practicum of 500 hours under supervision as required for certification.

too scared, not knowing anybody. But knowing the support is there, a family so to speak, makes all the difference (Betty 1987b).

Betty was not uneasy with the situation in the preschool.

I really enjoyed the work with the kids. I had worked in a regular preschool as well as a special needs one, but I had always been an assistant. So it was my first time as the organizer and person in charge, and I felt I had a lot of ideas from which to draw upon. There were about eleven kids in the morning class, and six or seven in the afternoon; so it was fun to have that small number at the start (Betty 1987b).

Betty's arrival coincided with the first year that the preschool was in operation a full day. The afternoon nursery class remained as it had been under Ruth and Denise, and a morning class had been added for children from Walith and Paukumaht. The arrangement did not continue beyond that year, for kindergarten was separated from the primary class (kindergarten, grades 1-3) of the Band school, and moved down to the preschool for the 1984-85 school year. The relocation of kindergarten to the preschool necessitated the elimination of one nursery class. The morning class was replaced by kindergarten, and the afternoon nursery class expanded to include Walith and Paukumaht children. The restructuring effort did not include an additional instructor, and so Betty's responsibilities grew to include kindergarten. Since she had never taught the class, Betty's main concern that first summer was the preparation of material for the five year-olds. Part of the preparation included her attendance at a week-long orientation to the new B.C. kindergarten curriculum in Richmond.

That summer, aside from preschool related work and the hosting of friends and relatives, Betty visited a small aboriginal community at the request of Kaarsemaker. Kaarsemaker was interested in Betty's opinion of a mission organization and its work in several isolated aboriginal communities. Betty spent several days of the one and a half week-long trip visiting one of the organization's workers.

The two years "seemed to fly by," and that helped make Betty's decision to extend the assignment another year a relatively easy one. The second summer was similar to the first,

except that Betty's second trip to the small aboriginal community was cancelled at the last moment. Instead, she served as a counsellor for several weeks at the camp associated with her Baptist church in Vancouver. While on the Lower Mainland she also received an introduction to the Child Abuse Research and Education kit, and attended additional courses based on the new kindergarten curriculum.

Classes in the Band school were reorganized again that summer, but the arrangement at the preschool remained the same. However, while the routine was the same, the increased size of the nursery class (26 children) made the year more strenuous. Preferring the one-to-one approach, Betty found the large class draining. At the end of year, she "was ready for a change."

I think I was getting tired. I was still enjoying it but I felt that if I stayed another year I might not, and then I wouldn't have been as effective. ... I was very much torn, thinking it was maybe time to move on (Betty 1987b).

However, she wanted to stay on because she was just beginning to build relationships in Barano. After "many months of prayer, soul-searching and seeking the counsel of others," Betty (1988) solved the dilemma by accepting the newly created position at the Band school.<sup>2</sup>

When I told Neil that I was having second thoughts about leaving Barano, but that I felt I needed a change from preschool, he told me that he felt that there was a need for a support teacher. He said they were hoping to obtain funding for a language

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<sup>2</sup> Neil was already education coordinator at the time, and so his salary was used to cover Betty's expenses.

Neil's salary is kind of split between him and Betty because the Band didn't have enough money in their budget to pay for a special education teacher. ... The reason we're doing this is that the Band would like to have more land for a bigger school. At that time, they will need to hire a fully qualified education coordinator/principal, and they will also have built up a track record so they can justify the need for a special needs teacher. They will then have the statistical information to receive an increase in their budget. So in a sense, we're helping the Band with job creation (Kaarsemaker 1986).

The salary breakdown was \$20,500 for Neil's position, and \$15,000 for Betty (MCC 1986d:3).

specialist but needed to provide data to prove the need first, hence the need for testing. He felt I could help with that, as well as work with individual children who needed extra help, until such time as a specialist could be hired (or I could apply for that position when it came up – he felt my background in special education, knowing the kids and community, were an asset) (Betty 1988).

As the school's 'support teacher,' she was able to pursue her interest in special needs education, work with students on a more individual basis and continue to build relationships with many of the children, and their families, who had been her students in preschool and kindergarten. Moreover, like Ed and Karen, Betty (1987b) did not experience hardship living on a volunteer's income.

I was never used to making any great sums of money. But I've had a lot of support from my home church as far as sending me gifts, and from my family, which is well-off. It hasn't been that I've had to live off \$50 a month, which probably would have been good. ... So it's not like I've been suffering.

The decision to continue for a fourth year provided Betty with a third summer in Barano. After spending two weeks cleaning up the preschool in preparation for her replacement volunteer, it worked out for her to return to the small community she had visited her first summer, this time as a cook. Betty's primary task for the two weeks there was to provide relief for the recently placed MCC volunteer, and in the process provide her peer with much needed outside contact. Again, she was able to attend a week-long course, this time an introduction to the 'whole language' reading program.

As the support teacher at the Band school, Betty spent most of her time improving the language skills of the students (see her time diary for February 9 to 13 in Appendix A).

There's a lot that can be done. Like Ruth told me last year, even if I did nothing more than just read to them every day, that would give them a positive experience. So I've taken that to heart because I don't have the expertise to plan a specific remediation program for a child. I don't know where to begin with that. But that was known before they hired me. Basically I give individual attention, focusing a lot on the work the classes are doing (Betty 1987b).

Assessing her impact as the support teacher, Betty (1987b) remarked it was difficult to gauge, not having worked with the same children the year before.

But I had heard last year about a lot of these kids being really frustrated and acting up because of it. I think that is now less a problem. I see a lot of excitement and enthusiasm about learning. I'm sure I could do a lot more.

She senses confidence and self-esteem building within the children. She concludes that she is thankful for the opportunity to know and learn from the La'malis people.

Betty's efforts over the four years did not go unnoticed. Wayne (1986) claims villagers regard her as a very conscientious person. Indeed, Russ (1987) cites Betty as an example of a volunteer who missed social gatherings because of her work. Kate (1986), who had been an aide for Betty, describes her as she does Denise, a "patient, kind and really loving teacher." And Peter (1986) notes that when Betty decided to renew for a fourth year, children "were pleased they hadn't lost her along with Ruth."<sup>3</sup>

Nearing the end of her time with MCC, Betty (1987b) recommended that MCC "encourage whatever can be done to equip local people to be able to fill all" Band staff positions. She believed some of the teacher's aides had shown teaching ability, and hence felt they should be encouraged along those lines. Furthermore,

one area that is still a big puzzle to me is discipleship, or spiritual matters. With so many different groups involved already, it's hard to know how to be a help in that way. But there is a lack of discipleship (Betty 1987b).

Betty had planned to terminate with MCC in July 1987 and remain in Barano as the support teacher paid by the Band, but only half the plan came to fruition. One of the relationships she had been building became more than a friendship. In March 1987, she married a man from the local Baptist church she had been attending. Due to unforeseen family considerations, in July the couple substituted the east for the west coast and moved to his home area in Nova Scotia. Four years later than she had originally hoped, Betty left for the Maritimes.

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<sup>3</sup> Nelson (1987) also cited Betty as one of the teachers who had become a good dancer.

In Betty's four years with MCC she witnessed the birth of the Barano group home and the resultant influx of volunteers into the town. The arrival of Neil and Donna shortly after Russ and Lynn completed MCC's staffing of the group home and increased the volunteers in Barano to five.

### 7.3 NEIL AND DONNA

#### 7.3.1 Pre-Service Experience

Neil and Donna, the second American volunteer couple to arrive in Barano (Table 7.2), were raised in Christian homes that did not have contact with any Mennonite church or group. Neil's (1984) parents, 'pillars' in a Baptist church in Oregon, were such a strong influence on him that he cannot recall a period in his life when he did not believe in Jesus Christ. However, their zeal for the local church did not include an emphasis on the social responsibility of Christians for those less fortunate.

I'm not sure what I can attribute it [concern for the poor] to in my upbringing. I don't think my parents had a particularly strong social conscience, and being raised a Baptist, it wasn't ingrained in me. But by the time I had reached college, ... I had a concern about my possessions and the money I had and the money I would be making, and what I should be doing with it, and the needs of other people (Neil 1987c).

Donna's parents were active in a Presbyterian church in northern California. Similar to Neil's upbringing, neither her parents nor the church expounded a gospel that embodied social action.

There were those churches that did social action, and then there were the good churches. That's what I was led to believe (Donna 1984c).

An enlightening experience with Christians from varied denominational backgrounds while she was attending college in Oregon helped increase Donna's social conscience. But it was

Table 7.2 - Personal Information: Neil and Donna		
	DONNA	NEIL
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	33	35
EDUCATION:	M.L.S. [Library Science] (1978)	B.S. (Elementary Education) (1971)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Presbyterian Lutheran	Baptist Lutheran Presbyterian
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM	11	
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Coos Bay, Oregon (American Citizens)	
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM	1	
END OF TERM	2 (May 1987)	
DATES IN BARANO:		
BEGINNING	July 1984	
(Expected Termination)	July 1989	
Sources: Donna 1987b, 1978; Neil 1987c, 1978		

not until she and Neil married that they both were profoundly influenced by the social gospel.

Donna spent the academic year immediately following their marriage at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, California. There she and Neil met a couple who probably had the greatest influence on them. Their friends' strong feelings regarding the wealthy North American Church and those less fortunate convinced Neil and Donna that Christianity is not solely a personal, vertical relationship with God, but that it encompasses a social responsibility, particularly for the underprivileged.

The only concrete way we lived that out at the time was a real decision to try and live as simply as we could, and to give away as much money as we could. Another way that I tried to express that was through an involvement with my students in the classroom. I tried to be more than just a teacher to them, working with them on a friendship basis (Neil 1984).

After one year in Pasadena, Neil and Donna returned to Oregon. Over time, they began to doubt whether their interpretation of Christian living was correct, for few people in their church seemed to agree with them.

But Donna had a real interest in Latin America (she speaks Spanish fluently), and so we decided we wanted to go there to work **with** the people, not for me to teach in a school for missionary children. We didn't feel we were the type to go out and hit people for money, so we wanted to go with an organization that worked with the poor people of countries, and that didn't require us to raise our own support. We plugged into the InterChristo computer system and it spit out some different possibilities, and MCC, which we had never heard of, was one of them. So we contacted MCC and they sent us information on themselves and a couple of booklets on what Mennonites believe in. Sitting down and reading that we thought, 'We've been closet Mennonites all along.' ... We did look into a couple of other organizations, but I don't recall any of them working overseas. There was a kind of group/foster home organization somewhere in Minnesota or Wisconsin that we looked into, but MCC matched us so perfectly, that once we had discovered them, we quickly narrowed our search down to them (emphasis in original) (Neil 1987c).

They contacted MCC in spring 1979, and the search for a placement focused on Bolivia.

They quickly decided on an assignment as teachers in a village school, and by summer they were in Bolivia.

When I say 'village,' it's rather misleading. MCC provides teachers for schools where the government won't provide one. ... But MCC had never worked in the area in which we were to teach. Because of that, it meant the community had to prove its commitment to having a teacher, which meant they would have to build a school and a teacher's house. ... We didn't get to our assignment until six months after orientation because it took the community a long time to build the school and house, simply because ... it was almost impossible for them to have any free time. Plus it wasn't like a village where the people live gathered around a square. It was a dirt road in the jungle and most of the houses were back on the river several miles from the road. ... People had to travel some distance to get together and build the school, which was basically a grass roof supported by poles, not walls, and the house was sticks chinked with mud (Donna 1987b).

The initial period in Bolivia was both "a real spiritual high" (Neil 1984) and culture shock. In Coos Bay they had felt alone, but in Bolivia they were part of a large contingent

of MCC volunteers who shared their perspective regarding Christianity. However, Neil and Donna's inner joy was tempered by the realities of jungle living.

We arrived [in Bolivia] and the next day we were taken out to the Campo, out to the countryside to a village where MCC was working. The three days out there were quite an abrupt culture shock. You just get off the plane and the next day you're in the boonies eating armadillo on a dirt floor. ... It was quite an adjustment (Donna 1987b).

As it turned out, they could not make the adjustment to living in isolation and terminated after seven months in the country. Donna suffered a mild nervous breakdown, and so they returned to Coos Bay in spring of 1980.

I think it [nervous breakdown] was a combination of factors. It was partly the emotional isolation, ... for the closest MCCers were six to eight hours away, ... and there were just no other people around. Also, I signed up for a job I was not trained to do. I signed up to teach with Neil, and I'm not a teacher. I don't like teaching very much. As the time got closer to doing what we said we would do, I became more and more nervous even though I was fluent in Spanish (Donna 1987b).

The early termination was "a deep psychological blow," because they had talked about helping the poor, and when the time came, they could not "hack it" (Neil 1984).

Paradoxically, it was the experience of ending their Bolivian term early that helped forge Neil and Donna's strong commitment to MCC.<sup>4</sup> But they were in Coos Bay two years before they began to think seriously about another assignment with MCC. Their "phobia of middle-class American lifestyle" (Neil 1987c) directed them back to the organization.

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<sup>4</sup> Donna (1987b) recalls that MCC had been "very supportive" upon her need to return home from Bolivia.

When we came home, they offered to pay for counselling if need be. ... They were very, very encouraging.

Neil (1987c) considers Bolivia to be "one of the most important and positive experiences" of their lives "simply for the fact it turned out as badly as it did." The ordeal produced "deeply committed MCC people," in Neil and Donna because of the way MCC responded to them when they could not fulfill their duties.

We talked about it a lot off and on and we were open to going back with MCC. I was concerned about just settling in and being in Coos Bay for the rest of my life, and I didn't want that. Certainly, there were ways in which we could have stayed in Coos Bay and not have had that happen to us. But it is difficult to live around a lot of other middle-class Christians who have the values of the culture and not be slowly dragged into that (Neil 1987c).

Hence, they wrote to MCC and because they did not want to set themselves up for a second failure, they emphasized that they would not accept an overseas assignment. Individuals in both personnel departments in Akron and Winnipeg had been with them in Bolivia, and so they helped screen out inappropriate assignments. Nevertheless, Neil and Donna rejected several options presented to them. After some time, they were offered a two-year position as houseparents in the Barano group home.

We had seen the listing but we really hadn't paid any attention to it because we had no idea what a group home was. ... But [the woman in personnel] who had been in Bolivia with us wrote us a letter about the group home suggesting that it would be a good place. Her understanding was that it was a home for elementary-age children. On that basis, we made our decision (Donna 1987b).

### 7.3.2 Assignments

Neil and Donna's commitment to MCC was tested when they arrived in Barano in July 1984 and very quickly realized their assignment was not what they had anticipated.

We thought we had asked MCC a lot of good questions about its nature and we thought we received a lot of good answers. But when we got here the job turned out to be very different than we expected (Neil 1984).

Our situation at the group home typifies a lot of what I was saying earlier about MCC not knowing what they were talking about. A lot of the information we received regarding the group home was bad information. We were told things that were flat out wrong. We came here and tried to operate the group home on some of those misconceptions for a while, and it caused some real misunderstandings with Social Services. It took six months to a year to sort all those things out. A major factor for us was that we wanted to work with elementary-age kids, and we assumed that would be the case (Neil 1987c).

Kaarsemaker suggested they spend time at the same group home Russ and Lynn had visited prior to beginning their assignment in Barano (Russ 1987). But that experience did nothing to alter the Barano group home situation.

The biggest blow was that we were expected to work with teenagers. Teenagers and Donna and I are kind of like oil and water – we don't go together well. ... If MCC had said it was a job working as foster parents for foster teenagers, without hesitation we would have said, 'No' (Neil 1984).

However, they had said 'Yes' and Kaarsemaker encouraged them to persevere.

The first several months at the group home tested their perseverance.

As the summer evolved we discovered that we had been misinformed to a large extent concerning the nature of our job. We had been told the home was on La'malis, that the upper age limit was to be set by us (we had decided on 15) and we had not been informed that we would be involved in respite care of the handicapped. ... Thus in August we found ourselves for 1 month caring for a **difficult** retarded 14 yr. old in addition to two 16 yr. olds, a 14 yr. old, a 7 yr. old, a 6 yr. old and our own 3 yr. old (emphasis in original) (Donna 1984a).

The summer was particularly hard for us because we had a child [three year-old firstborn] who still got up every night in the middle of the night, and awoke early in the mornings. On the other hand, the teenagers slept in and stayed up late. So for us it was kind of like burning a candle at both ends (Donna 1987b).

Neil had taught 'problem' teenagers at an alternate high school in Coos Bay, but working with that age-group was foreign to Donna. But the most difficult aspect of their work in the group home centred on their son.

We had a few particularly rough teenagers, and so our main concern was how our child was being affected by what was going on (Donna 1987b).

If Jacob hadn't been there, the job would have been a lot easier. We just spent so much time worrying about what was happening to him. And we had to spend time and energy on him as well (Neil 1987c).

Compounding matters was that Neil and Donna and Russ and Lynn found they disagreed regarding how to operate the home. After three months at the group home, Donna (1984a) reported:

Until now Neil and I have basically 'given in' to Russ and Lynn's wishes on how to run the home, but our frustration level is mounting as we find ourselves doing things we don't feel good about.

Donna was also uncomfortable with Social Services' practice of returning Native children to their homes. In principle, the policy was good, but with respect to many La'malis children, Donna (1984a) viewed the practice as ill-advised.

Six months into the assignment Neil and Donna were on the verge of ending their term. Their great reluctance to terminate early again, and a timely visit with words of encouragement from Kaarsemaker impelled them to continue. Some of the more difficult teenagers later left the group home and Neil and Donna felt more comfortable in dealing with the other children.

Now as we look back at those two years we're glad we did it. It was a positive experience in many ways. But I'd never do it again in my life, no thank you [laughter]. I'm glad we stuck it out. I think we discovered we could do something we thought we couldn't do, and that was good (Neil 1987c).

Although the couple did not enjoy much of the group home work, they along with Russ and Lynn, are commended by Meredith (1986), the Barano Social Services district supervisor, for an admirable effort trying to involve group home children in cultural events of their respective Bands. Neil (1987d) though, is disappointed the cultural activities at the group home "never really got off the ground" while he was there.

Near the end of the two years, Neil and Donna had to make a decision on their future in Barano. If their only option had been to remain at the group home, they would not have stayed.

I think it was pretty much my decision that Donna agreed to. We weren't staying on because there was something specifically she wanted to do. ... She was willing to stay on because I wanted to (Neil 1987c).

Neil desired to remain in Barano because of his leadership role in the Mennonite church group, and more significantly, because he had an opportunity to work as an administrator in education.

In February 1986, the three Band school teachers asked Neil if he would act in a support capacity at the school, advising them on classroom management<sup>5</sup> (Neil 1986b). With the approval of the education coordinator, Neil began visiting the classrooms whenever the group home schedule permitted. The matter gained greater importance once he became aware that the education coordinator was planning to leave his position in March. Band Council did not approach MCC for a volunteer, yet it was reluctant to advertise the position. Therefore, Neil's interest in the vacancy intrigued Council, and a meeting was arranged. Council hired him, and he and Donna committed themselves to another two years in Barano under MCC.<sup>6</sup>

Initially, Neil's focus as education coordinator was that of being a resource person for the teachers. Although he was still in tune with the day-to-day concerns at the school,<sup>7</sup> less than a year into his job he found himself devoting most of his energies to the broader education program in the village<sup>8</sup> (see his time diary for the week from January 28 to February 3 in Appendix A).

I feel okay, not comfortable, with my lack of involvement in the school because I do have confidence in all the teachers up there. I think they're all doing really good

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<sup>5</sup> The education coordinator at the time did not participate in the daily affairs of the school. The stress in his personal life, and almost a decade of continuous involvement in education on the reserve, had left him emotionally and mentally fatigued (Ruth 1986).

<sup>6</sup> They ended their work at the group home with Neil's (1987c) hiring in March 1986.

<sup>7</sup> The agendas of the four staff meetings I attended included such topics as evaluations (teachers of students, teachers of their aides, principal of teachers), basic skills testing, school budget, school newspaper, cultural program, Christmas program, parent visitation, and specific student behaviour problems.

<sup>8</sup> Neil was responsible for the program's budget, which in the 1986-87 fiscal year totaled in excess of \$300,000. For several years there had been a substantial surplus in the budget at fiscal year-end. Neil (1986c) argued it was morally correct to use that surplus outside the education program to avoid simply spending the funds on school supplies for which there was no great need. He believed the surplus could have been put to better use elsewhere on the reserve.

jobs. ... In that respect, I'm really fortunate to be able to devote a lot of time and energy to other things and not have to worry about the school (Neil 1987a).

At one point, he had to reduce his involvement with some projects because the workload was becoming too demanding.

It seemed I was working on between six and ten different projects. I just can't keep them all going at the same time, especially because a lot of them result in meetings. ... Going from one meeting to the next, you end up with all these notes sitting on your desk and thoughts going through your mind, knowing you need to do something. For me, that's kind of overwhelming. I need to have time after a meeting to come into my office, sit down and look at my notes, and try to figure out what I need to do next (Neil 1987a).

Planning for the construction of a new school<sup>9</sup> was one of the projects absorbing his time.

Neil's active participation in renewing the effort to obtain a new school building project brought him up against Indian Affairs bureaucracy.<sup>10</sup>

My experience with the majority of the Indian Affairs people working out of [the local district office] is that they're competent, reasonably caring people who want to do their jobs properly and who see their work as doing positive things for the Bands within their mandate. I think the problems, when they come up, are often ones of policy that the people at this level have nothing to do with. They are made by people far removed from what's going on and they therefore don't necessarily work. With the new school, I've got a list of ten or eleven names, most of whom I've contacted personally, and with the exception of one or two, they've all been very positive about what we're trying to do ... and they're willing to support us. But there are a couple of people who don't support us, for policy reasons, and so we need to get those policies changed or get to someone on a level who can say, 'Hang the policy.' In any bureaucracy, you've got people who can make that kind of an exception (Neil 1987c).

Unexpectedly, Neil was given the opportunity to present the project in person to an Indian Affairs high-level bureaucrat. While attending a group home advisory committee

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<sup>9</sup> The present structure consists of three portables linked together by a common storage area.

<sup>10</sup> Neil (1988) explains the situation:

The desire and work for a new school began several years before my arrival. The push for the school was tied to more land and housing. When the new housing started coming on-line, ... Band staff became heavily involved with the housing and did not pursue the school and land goals actively. As education coordinator, I felt some responsibility to try to get things going again for the new school.

meeting,<sup>11</sup> he was informed by a Walith Band member about the impending visit of the Indian Affairs regional supervisor.

We were supposed to go over there [Walith] and get a quick five or ten minutes with the guy, and then [the Walith Band member] shows up here yesterday and we get to sit down with him and show him what we're talking about. You can't buy that kind of input. ... Maybe I'm being naive here, but I think it was a godsend (Neil 1987c).

After the meeting, Neil heeded a local Indian Affairs worker's advice regarding the next step in the matter.

I really trust him, and his feeling is that we just cool it for a while. We've stirred things up and got people running around wondering what's going on, and so we need to give them a chance to respond. ... So we're waiting for a response now and there's really not much more we can do without getting nasty and being rude to them. I certainly don't want to get into that (Neil 1987a).

The need for a response from Indian Affairs also affected the process of soliciting the community's input on the project.

Now that we've run into this roadblock where Indian Affairs is saying, 'We're not going to put out money for a feasibility study and pre-design work,' I want to step back. I don't want to keep bringing the issue before the community and get them stirred up and not be able to do anything for two or three years. ... If the money comes, then I think we're in a position to enter into a business agreement with an architectural firm. ... I was talking to Russ about this and his suggestion was, because it's difficult for most people to work out of a vacuum, to produce five or six rough drawings of how the outside of the school might look, post them, and then let the people respond to them. That way they can say that they like this or don't like this. But we have to be in a position to spend some money first in order to do the planning in a meaningful way (Neil 1987a).

The community had had an opportunity to discuss the new school as well as other future developments at an all Band members' meeting held earlier in January.<sup>12</sup> Neil arranged the

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<sup>11</sup> Kaarsemaker, unable to attend the meeting, asked Neil to take his place.

<sup>12</sup> The 50 or so Band members present seemed confused regarding the meeting's purpose. None of them commented on what the school should or should not look like, prompting Russ to suggest later to Neil that five or six drawings be posted for them to examine. Furthermore, Neil (1987a) sensed that if he ceased "agitating" Indian Affairs over the community having input on the new school, Band Council would not pursue the

January meeting so that Russ and his friend could briefly present development options and then listen to the people's response.<sup>13</sup>

Neil's energies also were devoted to the work of the Indian Education Advisory Committee (IEAC), comprising representatives from five Bands and the local school district. The mandate of the IEAC (1987:1) was "to improve the education of and for Native children." Neil and Cathy, the home-school coordinator, were the Committee members for La'malis. However, the Committee was not the first attempt to address the problems faced by Native children in the local provincial schools.

This isn't the first time they've gone through this process. People who have been through it before, like Samantha [assistant Band manager], have a different attitude about it than I have. I can look at it and say, 'Looks like we're addressing certain issues and we're making progress.' But Samantha can look at it and say, 'We've been through this before and the process has always broken down.' ... In fact this morning, I spent probably an hour or so sitting in Samantha's office just talking about her and my feelings about the high school. We have very different perceptions for a variety of reasons. I'm White, she's Native, and I come from a teaching background and I have sympathy for high-school teachers and what they're dealing with. She's a Native who has been through the system. She was failing at this high school [she attended the only high school in the area at the time, located in a neighbouring community (Samantha, 1986)] and went elsewhere and was very successful. So I have a real job ahead of me to see the high school the way the community sees it. It's a challenge to overcome my own cultural view of what's going on, which includes being sympathetic to teachers. Odds are that the truth lies somewhere in the middle of the way the high school and community see things. ...

There are some things that need to change on both sides, and there needs to be an understanding of each other's views. ... I don't know how you resolve that, to break the cycle of animosity – this negative attitude and feeling that exists. From the educator's point of view, ... I do think there is almost a feeling that, 'We've had this problem and we're always going to have this problem. There's just no solution because of the problems the Indian community has.' And Natives feel, 'We have

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issue. Russ, his associate, and Neil felt their morning session with several Councillors had been much more constructive than the all Band members' meeting.

<sup>13</sup> The origin of Russ' participation in the project can be traced back to his design work on the Band school playground while he and Lynn were working at the Barano group home. Before they left Barano, he informed Band Council that if he was with an architectural firm, he would be very interested in designing the new school.

this problem and we'll always have this problem because of the White educational system.' I don't think either side sees it as resolvable. They're willing to attack certain aspects of it but I really wonder if they have any confidence in dealing with those issues, whether in the end it will make any overall difference (Neil 1987a).

Generally speaking, in working with other organizations like the school district, ... relations are not very smooth. Indian people feel, with some justification, that they have been shafted many times and continue to be shafted by different organizations. Sitting down and talking to people in a friendly way, working things out, does not occur. On the Indian side, they don't want to get taken again, and so they're a little aggressive and demanding. On the other side, they're wondering, 'What's going to happen here? What's going to be demanded of us? What unreasonable thing are we going to have to deal with?' ... It's an adversarial situation. But I think it doesn't have to be. There are people who want to work reasonably (Neil 1987c).

Beyond learning firsthand about Indian Affairs bureaucracy and the adversarial relationships between the Band and other non-aboriginal organizations, Neil made attempts to promote on-reserve education among the village leaders. One such endeavour was a trip he planned for several La'malis women to view the preschool program and facilities of another First Nation. Shortly after the women returned, Neil arranged a meeting so they could share their experience with Council. The laughter-filled gathering went on for over two hours and touched on matters apart from the trip, including stories of the past.

I like to take every opportunity to do that kind of thing because I think that's what needs to happen. That kind of getting community people together and talking – some really valuable things happen and a groundwork gets laid. ... Even more important than that is the whole getting together and sharing of emotional feelings; the sharing of the past. The more that can be done, the better. I think it really builds up the community (Neil 1987a).

Neil also arranged for Councillors to visit the Band school.<sup>14</sup>

I'm a Band employee who happens to be an MCC volunteer, that's the way I see myself. On a day-to-day basis I'm responsible to Council like any other employee. ... In light of that, I asked Council to go to the school. I feel as the education

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<sup>14</sup> I discussed the visit with one Councillor (Peter 1986), and he seemed to have been impressed by the classroom projects students had been working on (e.g., letters written to Prime Minister Mulroney asking for world peace (grades 3, 4); the collection of cans for a 'Pencils for Peace' campaign (grades 5-7)). He had been pleased that the teachers and aides had not stopped their work to acknowledge Council's presence in the classrooms. It seemed to him that only he and the other Councillors had been nervous during the visit.

administrator that Council has to have a better understanding of what's going on at the school in order to make good decisions. It's my responsibility as administrator to inform Council and not wait for them to ask to be informed. ... My tendency is to come on to things head-on (Neil 1987c).

And when the senior alcohol counsellor resigned, Neil (1987e) encouraged several village women to approach Councillors face-to-face, rather than with a petition, to express their support for the woman. Neil feels her resignation was a serious blow because she was just beginning to awaken a sense of community among village women.

Neil has had to deal with the contrast between his and the dominant Native personality.

In this community, the people appear to deal with problems in a more indirect manner. I am a 'meet problems head-on' person. As a result, this causes me frustration, but I have also learned from my work here a lot about the benefits of waiting and being more indirect (Neil 1988).

Although Neil (1987a) discusses problems with those Band members with whom he has developed "trust relationships," most notably with Samantha, his assertive personality has made his work with Band Council frustrating at times.<sup>15</sup>

Sometimes when you go in and ask Council to make a decision ... no one wants to say or do anything until one or two key people take a position and everyone basically falls into place. That can be really frustrating because it's difficult for me, a 'let's get it done' type person, to not manipulate that. ... For if you present your information right and push it in the right direction, quite often you can get what you want. I don't want to use the word 'railroading,' but sometimes it comes down to that – as opposed to my having the patience to lay things out and sit back and say, 'What do you want?' and then be patient enough to sit there and keep my mouth shut and let them work it out. That's a dilemma for me, for as an MCCer, that's probably the attitude I should have. This is their community and their decision, and my job is to present the information and then sit quietly as they decide.

The problem is that I'm a very opinionated person and I have my thoughts on what I would like to see happen here. I think I certainly have to battle that and I am becoming more aware of it the longer I'm here. There are times when it just doesn't make any difference what I think or want. Yet, balancing that with the fact

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<sup>15</sup> At one weekly evening meeting of the Mennonite church group, Neil shared that he had been "feeling down" about his work. He stated he was not the "right kind of person" for the job (mainly in regard to his personality), and that thought was depressing him.

I'm the education coordinator and that I need to defend or make known concerns – ... I'm not sure where the line is or that it's even a clear one. I think I need to work more on letting them do what they want to do and be less pushy for what I want. Because even if I get what I want, it probably won't work out because I'll build up resentment, or if difficulties come up, Council won't support it because they didn't want it in the first place. Or it may look very beautiful now, but when I walk away from here in two or four years, it's going to fall apart if it's just my creation and something the community doesn't want (Neil 1987a).

Specifically, Neil believes he was directing Council on a policy matter that arose because of problems in the school's cultural program. The elder who had been hired to teach the program had missed several sessions, and so Neil fired him. Neil (1986b) then drafted a policy which stated that any school employee who missed work because of alcohol abuse would be fired. Council passed the policy, but since then, Neil has sensed that Councillors have regretted adopting the measure.

Concerning Neil's position as education coordinator, Wayne (1986) asserts the Band is "fortunate" to have him, for "he's picking things up really well in the administrative end, and of course, he's knowledgeable in the educational field." Deanne (1986) characterizes Neil as a "caring, uncorruptable" man, who is "extremely good at his job." Sherry (1987) adds:

He's there to go to bat for us, and you need that. Even though I've been fortunate, there are so many schools where I've talked to teachers and they say the principal is not there when you need him. He'll shrug it off or let the teacher take care of the problem. Whereas Neil wants to know what's going on. He's on top of everything and he takes action right away. ... He's there to help us out.

Burl (1986) contends Neil "has been a very positive influence in the school compared to his predecessor, who was burnt-out and refused to get involved in the day-to-day, nitty-gritty aspects of the school." Even while he was still at the group home, Neil is credited with helping Burl (1987) get through the fall of 1985, when Burl had been exhausted and ready to quit his teaching position. Burl also commends Neil for his emphasis on informing village parents of their need to become more involved in the cultural program.

Betty (1987b) agrees with Burl that Neil “has given more continuous direct support” to the teaching staff than did his predecessor. She also notes Neil is trying to find profitable work for those villagers interested in education. In particular, Maria (1987d), the volunteer who replaced Betty, supports his efforts at employing village women enrolled in the early childhood education program in the La'malis preschool.<sup>16</sup> Furthermore, Maria describes Neil as “phenomenal, just wonderful,” declaring, “I’m so spoiled now that I never want to work for uncaring administrators again.”<sup>17</sup>

Ron (1986a) believes Neil has a “good name” in La'malis. However, Ron alleges that because Neil sees things more in political terms, he has come under some “fire.” In the 1986 Band Council elections, Ron and, in his opinion, several villagers, disapproved of Neil’s “campaigning” for one of the Councillors seeking re-election. Another time, Ron heard complaints from several Councillors who were upset Neil had spent hours in a Council meeting talking about the school.<sup>18</sup> On the other hand, Peter (1986), a Councillor, commends Neil for taking time to sit in on meetings, sometimes chairing them, when they

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<sup>16</sup> At the time, it was anticipated that in 1988 the nursery class would be operated by some of these La'malis women.

<sup>17</sup> Maria highly respected Neil early in her assignment.

<sup>18</sup> Several months after that incident, Neil (1987a) talked about a more recent Council meeting in which he had reported.

I have a problem with talking too much, ... and so I feel I take up too much of Council’s time. Part of that is my fault and I think part of it is how they deal with things. To try and cut down time, I went into the meeting with eleven things on my list. For each item I wrote a short paragraph. I had the list typed up, copies made, and then handed them to Council when I came in. Then, I basically read each paragraph. ... I purposely wrote the paragraphs to eliminate comments, by not making them open-ended questions and just stating facts and information. ... In effect, I was saying, ‘This is going on, and this is what I am doing. If you have any problems with it, or want to comment, then that’s fine, but otherwise I’m just informing you.’ ... It took me a half hour to get through those eleven things, which is great compared to past experiences. I think it worked well and I’ll try to keep doing it.

do not directly relate to education.<sup>19</sup> Peter thinks Neil is doing a ‘number one job, giving it his best shot.’<sup>20</sup>

Although Donna (1987b) has not had to contend directly with the frustrations of working with Council, she has had to cope with staying in the home. When asked how she felt about being an unassigned spouse, particularly in light of her previous work in the group home, she replied, “You’re putting me on the spot” (see her time diary for the week from January 30 to February 5 in Appendix A).

I really miss my library job. I did not miss it a great deal at the group home because I was so busy and I felt good about what I was doing and that it was something worthwhile. ... But I miss my library work a lot now, because I don’t really have anything that has replaced that. I will in five months though [smiling and looking a her stomach – she gave birth to their second child in May 1987] (Donna 1987b).

Donna had been assisting with the set-up of the preschool library in a room in the Band Office but she yearned to be able to work or volunteer part-time in a library. However, she cannot pursue that desire in Barano, for as an American citizen without landed immigrant status, she is unable to work in Canada and the clerks’ union does not allow volunteers.

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<sup>19</sup> Noting his involvement in activities somewhat removed from education, I asked Neil (1987c) if he felt Council was taking advantage of his services.

No, I haven’t particularly felt that. ... I guess when you asked the question, ... I first thought, ‘Is the Band using MCC because they’re getting qualified people for a cheap price?’ That certainly **might** exist, but I doubt it’s a conscious attitude. ... I would say that probably the vast majority of the people on the reserve don’t even know we’re here. But for the people in leadership positions who know about MCC, they know they’ve got quality people. ... MCCers are not going to cheat the Band and they’re not here for their own agenda. ... They’re going to do what the Band wants and not force them to do something else. That would describe me, in that I hold a lot of very strong feelings about what should be done, but I know that if Council says, ‘Do this and do it that way,’ I’ll do it, because that’s why I’m here. ... If I have a sense of anybody being used here, sometimes I worry about my using the Band. This is a tremendous opportunity for me, and if anything, maybe I’m using the Band. Certainly, someone could say, ‘You’re not qualified to do this job.’ So I feel fortunate to be in this position (emphasis in original).

<sup>20</sup> Peter’s initial impression of Neil was favourable, for the first several times he saw Neil come on to the reserve, Peter waved at him and he waved back.

MCC appears to be in the long-range future for Neil and Donna. Neil has been contacted about the possibility of working in MCC's administration. The couple is very open to being 'lifers' with the organization. They do not view voluntary service as a financial sacrifice (Neil 1987f), and they strongly identify with MCC's philosophy of service and the support provided to those people who wish to be a part of it.

## 7.4 MARG

### 7.4.1 Pre-Service Experience

The support MCC affords its volunteers was a key factor in Marg's (1986) decision to apply to the organization. As a Mennonite (Table 7.3), she had been exposed to MCC through her home church in southern Manitoba (Marg 1985). However, her knowledge of the type of work done by the organization was limited. She first became aware of the service possibilities in the fall of 1980 when she approached MCC about becoming a volunteer.

When I went to the office in Winnipeg, they said that because I didn't want to do secretarial work, which I was doing then, I should try MDS because I liked working outdoors (Marg 1986).

Marg did apply to go with MDS and in January 1981 she began a six-month term in Alabama working with underprivileged Black people. A year after the term had ended she went with MDS again, this time for five months in Texas. Three years after the second term had ended she had the desire to be a volunteer again.

I wanted to do some volunteer work again, where I could do something other than office work. I knew of other organizations I could have gone to, but I'm not the kind of person who could go to a friend and say, 'I want to go into volunteer work. Would you support me while I'm gone?' I would hate to do that to my friends. One of my friends did that to me onetime and I was so turned off. So I thought if I could go under MCC I wouldn't have to bug my friends (Marg 1986).

Table 7.3 - Personal Information: Marg	
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	29
EDUCATION:	Grade 11 (1974) Certified Nurses' Assistant
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite
MARITAL STATUS:	Single
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Altona, Manitoba
DATES IN BARANO:	
BEGINNING	February 1986
END	May 1987
Sources: Marg 1986, 1985	

MCC accepted Marg's application and presented her with two placement options. She had been interested in another position with the mission association Betty had visited, but MCC had wanted a male for the assignment. The option she did not choose was working in MCC's SELFHELP warehouse in Ephrata, Pennsylvania.

I love Pennsylvania and I would have loved to go there, but they told me that the job opening there was something **anybody** could do; there were no special skills needed. But they said that it was a little harder to find someone to come out here to work. And since they thought I was suitable for the position from looking at my application form, I decided I would come here (emphasis in original) (Marg 1986).

On her application form, Marg (1985) had indicated that she was a certified nurse's assistant, that she had been a homemaker for a man, whose wife had died of cancer, and his three young children. In addition, she had taught the primary class (kindergarten - grade 3) at a Mennonite private school for three months. Marg thought about the assignment options for two months, and at the end of January 1986 she informed MCC that she had decided on the group home position.

### 7.4.2 Assignment

Although the terms of Russ, Lynn, Neil and Donna were not scheduled to end until June, Marg arrived in February to begin working at the group home. Several factors combined to hasten her departure for Barano. Kaarsemaker was eager to stagger the arrival, and hence the departure, of the replacement volunteers so that there would be an overlap of personnel and hence a smooth transition of group home staff. A more compelling reason for Marg's arrival in February rather than in May was Lynn's expectant condition. Kaarsemaker had not secured a worker to assist Russ during Lynn's impending maternity leave, and so Marg's willingness to begin the assignment immediately solved his problem. The arrangement was somewhat unusual though, for Marg headed for Barano without first attending an MCC orientation session. It was not until April that she traveled back across the continent to a session in Akron.

Marg welcomed the two-week break from the group home because of the stress of the previous weeks. In addition, orientation heralded the beginning of Judy's term as her co-worker.

Well, my first while [at the group home] wasn't the greatest. I really appreciated how Neil and Donna and Russ and Lynn worked with me and told me about how things are run, but the part I didn't like was when I was by myself. At the time, there was this one boy, whose day started at bedtime, the time Russ would go home to his wife and baby. So to get that guy to go to sleep – oh my goodness! Also, thank goodness no one [police or social workers] ever called at night to say they were bringing someone over, because if the phone would have rang I would have flipped. I couldn't relax at night because I was always listening for the kids, if they were going to call for me, and I knew nobody else had worked alone. I was also alone a lot during the day because there were no little kids, but, because it was such a completely strange place, I was not happy working alone at night. So when Judy came, things improved a lot (Marg 1986).

Despite the large gap in their ages, Marg and Judy (1986) "hit it off" well right from the start.

Marg had worked Monday to Friday and had the weekends free prior to Judy's arrival. After orientation, she and Judy, along with Gail and Ron, the other new set of

MCC houseparents, began using the schedule implemented by their predecessors. With the change in scheduling, Marg thought, "What am I going to do with five days off?"

Boredom, however, was not usually a problem. The summer, particularly, was a busy time for them. Marg entertained several guests from southern Manitoba, and together with Judy she accepted the responsibilities of securing an apartment for Maria, the incoming MCC preschool teacher, as well as collecting the mail, watering the plants and regularly checking the residences of vacationing Mennonite church group attenders.

Kaarsemaker had suggested that they use their days off to become involved in the community. The specific suggestions either did not interest them, such as taking part in the gardening program, or they were such that the two felt they never had the time to participate. Part of the problem was that they found the five-day shifts confusing when they tried to plan future activities.

Even when we decided we would do something we would end up working because our schedules were so confusing. We never knew when we were going to be on (Judy 1986).

Once the initiators of the five-day shift had left the group home, their replacements experimented with different lengths of time. A week-long shift was decided on because it made scheduling simple. The new schedule made it easier for both Marg and Judy to join a ladies Bible study, and for Marg to help organize an interdenominational young adults group<sup>21</sup> (see the week of February 2 to 8 in their time diary (Judy & Marg 1987) in Appendix A).

While on shift, Marg and Judy organized several outings during the summer. Those excursions geared more to the Native children in care included visiting a Holat'in cultural

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<sup>21</sup> Marg organized an evening of 'wallyball' for the group at the local racquet club and an informal gathering over refreshments afterwards at her apartment. Most of the group members were from the Pentecostal Church, which both Marg and Judy began attending with greater regularity in February.

centre in Naskitlo, attending a potlatch in that community, and joining the welcome for a ceremonial canoe as it halted at Walith. On or off shift, Marg and Judy went to regular meetings with the Social Services staff. There they submitted short, written reports on the children in care, at times adding special reports when required. Further, they attended various workshops as well as meetings of the group home and foster parents associations to which they belonged.<sup>22</sup>

I guess they're [workshops, meetings] okay, but so much of the talk is about the problems, which we know about. I know the answer is different for every situation, but we would like to know how to handle all these situations better. They constantly talk about the symptoms, and we've had our fill of that. We're looking for practical advice (Marg 1986).

The unique problems of each group home child left Marg and Judy seeking practical advice on how to cope with the difficult situations that arose. Although each child had suffered the emotional trauma of being apprehended by Social Services, several children arrived with added handicaps. Teenage girls with alcohol and drug abuse problems, a mentally disabled Native teenage girl, and emotionally unstable preteens, were among the more difficult children at the group home.<sup>23</sup> Contrary to their expectations, Marg and Judy had fewer confrontations with teenage children than with the younger ones. A common occurrence was that the older children would run away from the group home to be with their friends.<sup>24</sup> But the younger children would not leave as readily, providing more

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<sup>22</sup> Relief staff was usually available if they were scheduled to work at the group home and they wished to participate in a workshop or meeting.

<sup>23</sup> The following discussion on several 'problem' children should not be interpreted as a representative sample of the group home population. Along with the more difficult children were those who seldom created problems. Indeed, Marg and Judy became so attached to a beautiful, affectionate, three year-old Native girl that they were notably saddened by her adoption.

<sup>24</sup> Late one evening, Marg asked me to accompany her to check a popular 'hangout' for two teenage girls who had ran away from the group home.

opportunities for direct confrontation. However, on one occasion, the flight of three younger girls caused Marg and Judy considerable anguish (see Monday, February 10 in the time diary in Appendix A).

The ordeal began on a school day when Marg and Judy were informed that the two recently placed La'malis girls had been truants that afternoon. When the girls arrived at the group home, they were told they could not play or watch television. They responded by trying to run away, but only one of them succeeded. Several hours later Deanne, the La'malis social worker, found her on the reserve and brought her back to the group home. Undeterred, both girls managed to sneak away later that night, persuading Rose, who had been at the group home for several months, to go with them. Marg and Judy called the police and then began a night of sitting by the telephone. There were twenty telephone calls that night, including seven crank calls from the two Native girls between 3:00 and 5:00 am. (Judy 1987), and so Marg and Judy experienced only two hours of sleep. But the worst was yet to come.

Rose was located safe the next day, but she was not brought back to the group home.

Rose's social worker called to say Rose had told him Marg had shook her, and that he wasn't going to bring her back here till he could have time to sort things out. He took her to Gail's house for the night. It seems she's embarrassed about coming back, so this was her way out. Now Marg's in trouble and an investigation will automatically follow (Judy in Judy & Marg 1987).

Marg did not deny the charge. Shortly after Rose's arrival, Marg had shook her because she was in a hysterical state.<sup>25</sup> During her stay at the group home, Rose directed several such emotional outbursts at Marg and Judy.

She's got a great deal of anger inside her. I had dealt with that with one of my own children and so I realize the importance of letting her get rid of it with no repercussions. We didn't punish her. She would explode, and afterwards she was

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<sup>25</sup> Corporal measures are not to be used on children under Social Services care.

altogether different. ... But we've never had one like the first time. That was quite an experience (Judy 1986).

The news of an impending investigation concerning that experience upset both Marg and Judy. They tried to relax, but Marg cried most of that evening.

Earlier in their work together, Marg and Judy suffered through an anxious incident with another preteen. The 11 year-old boy had been a constant source of trouble at the group home. One evening, he went out of control. He had seized a butcher knife from the kitchen and threatened to stab himself in the stomach. It took both Marg and Judy to disarm him and hold him down.

That was one of those times when you act and then react. When it was over we reacted by falling to pieces [laughing] (Judy 1986).

At the time, Marg (1986) thought that she might have to quit because she "couldn't handle it." Afterward, the social workers asked Marg and Judy to take the boy back.

But we told them we had been giving him a lot of chances, and if we didn't follow through with what we had been saying, then we would have lost the battle. We felt really bad at the time ... because we thought the social workers didn't support us. But when they realized how bad it was with him, they could see our side too. We felt much better then (Marg 1986).

We felt afterwards that we had failed. When an 11 year-old boy gets the best of you, you feel, 'Where did I go wrong?' But we realized later that we had done the right thing (Judy 1986).

Only months following the incident, the boy had to be placed in a special home in Vancouver after he had been in and out of three different foster homes.

Ron (1986a) contends that Marg and Judy were involved in more confrontations with group home children than he and Gail because Native children respect the female less than the male figure. The pairing of the women concerned him, for ideally it should be a male and female. Moreover, Ron points to Marg's age and that she did not have her own children as having created some difficulties. On the other hand, Gail (1986a) notes that

Marg's youth and energy coupled with Judy's experience of having raised a family as well as her grandmother-like image, make a good combination.

Marg (1986) probably would not have taken the assignment had she been able to foresee the problems. The "great support" of the other volunteers and attenders of the church group helped her and Judy get through the difficult situations.<sup>26</sup> After the incident with Rose, both Marg and Judy were convinced that the type of children in the group home needed the authoritative presence of a male. At that point Kaarsemaker agreed (Judy 1987), and he began his search for new placements for them. Ironically, Marg accepted a position similar to the one she had passed over in favour of the group home assignment. She left Barano on May 26, 1987, for Pennsylvania to complete her two-year term working in the SELFHELP warehouse.

## 7.5 JUDY

### 7.5.1 Pre-Service Experience

Whereas SELFHELP work provided the opportunity for Marg to leave Barano, Judy's work in a SELFHELP Gift and Thrift shop influenced her eventual arrival in Barano. Raised in the United Church, Judy (1985) did not become immersed in Mennonite culture until her marriage to a Mennonite (Table 7.4). After rearing their six children, she began to seek activities outside the home. Living in an area of southern Ontario that has a

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<sup>26</sup> Marg and Judy regularly brought the group home children to the Sunday morning service, which helped the people in the church group become sensitive to the two women's struggles as houseparents. Judy (1986) viewed bringing the children to church as an important part of their work.

Most of the time the younger ones want to come to church. In fact, they've been asking ... if we could come and get them on our days off too. ... I feel that that's an important part of our work. I feel that it's a part of our work even if it's our Sunday off.

Table 7.4 - Personal Information: Judy

AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	56
EDUCATION:	Grade 10 (1945)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	United Mennonite
MARITAL STATUS:	Widowed (1984)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	St. Jacobs, Ontario
DATES IN BARANO:	
BEGINNING	April 1986
END	July 1987

Sources: Judy 1988, 1986, 1985

significant Mennonite presence, Judy was able to volunteer her services one day a week at a nearby SELFHELP Gift and Thrift store in 1982.

I enjoyed working for MCC, and because of my involvement with the store I went to a lot of meetings and became exposed to the work of MCC. Deep down inside I thought, 'I wish I could get involved some day.' But the closest I came was working as a volunteer at the store one day a week. But to do a term with MCC was always at the back of my mind (Judy 1986).

The thought of joining MCC stayed at the back of her mind until the tragic death of her husband two years later.

When my husband died suddenly, I found myself needing something, but I didn't know what. I was running around doing a lot of things but not accomplishing anything. I began to pray about it and asked God to give me guidance in my life. I guess at that point I recommitted my life to God again [on her application form, she had indicated that she had rededicated her life to following Christ in 1973 (Judy 1985)], and asked Him, since I was free, if there was some way I could serve. I wanted Him to show me (Judy 1986).

During that time she continued to work at the MCC store, but she was not considering full-time service with the organization. That changed when she attended another MCC Ontario meeting.

I guess MCC was so far in the back of my mind that I hadn't thought of it much, and when I did, I wondered, 'What would I do in MCC?' Then the couple from the store took me again to another MCC meeting, and all of a sudden something clicked. I thought that just maybe there was a possibility of me getting in with MCC. But I was still unsure about whether this was the right route to take, and so I once again began to pray about it and asked for God's guidance. And it started to stir up inside me that somehow MCC was the answer (Judy 1986).

Still somewhat unsure, Judy sought confirmation of her positive feeling about becoming a MCC volunteer.

I went to my pastor and he thought it was an excellent idea. ... And while I was in his office, he phoned up the head office [MCC Ontario] in Kitchener and put me on the phone. ... The next morning I got an application in the mailbox. They didn't waste any time (Judy 1988).

But when she examined the application form more closely, her optimism sagged.

When I saw the application, I thought, 'No way, I'll never be able to qualify for MCC.' So I put it aside. But it just kept haunting me. So one morning I got up and said, 'Lord, if you want me to go, if this is the answer, then you're going to have to help me fill out the application,' because it was Greek to me. I got up the next morning and filled it out and put it in the mailbox. Sometimes when you mail something you think, 'Oh, why did I do that?' or you have a peace about it. I had a peace about it (Judy 1986).

Judy mailed the application form in June 1985, and in October she received notification of her acceptance. At first, MCC asked her to consider a position in Clearbrook, but that arrangement did not work out. Several other placement options were presented but Judy did not even consider them. As time wore on, she began to doubt whether MCC would be able to place her.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Judy (1985) indicated on her application form that she would only consider North American placements.

I felt a big problem was that there wouldn't be anything I would be qualified for, because I never worked outside the home. I was concerned MCC would never find anything for me (Judy 1986).

By Christmas she began to question whether she had correctly interpreted God's guidance in the matter. But at that point, she was determined to do some type of service. Had the MCC placement not materialized, she would have pursued another route.

Then in January [1986] Kaarsemaker phoned me about this position [Barano group home] and right away it clicked somehow. But he wouldn't let me give an answer right then. He told me I should spend some time in prayer, for he wanted me to be absolutely sure this was what I wanted. But I really felt this was the place where I could serve (Judy 1986).

The feeling did not change, and once she informed Kaarsemaker of her decision, he asked her to be prepared to leave Ontario by late March.

### 7.5.2 Assignment

Judy traveled to Akron for an orientation session one week into April. By the last week of that month, she was working in the group home. She accompanied Kaarsemaker on the trip from Clearbrook to Barano, since he had planned a quarterly visit at that time.

When I got here things were in a state of confusion. First of all, he dropped me off at the group home [laughing]. ... He told me on the way up that he had no idea where I was going to live. I was supposed to be living in the [MCC] trailer with Marg, but he told me that the other couple [Neil and Donna] was going to stay on. Then he said there was an apartment but he wasn't sure if Betty was leaving, and so he didn't know where we were going to live. So he put me in the group home [she and Marg ended up living with Betty for the first six months and then moving in with Gail and Ron]. I went there and started working right away because Marg was alone. It took a little while to get into the swing of things but I liked it because it was interesting. I felt Marg and I hit it off pretty well right away, and I felt very comfortable working with her (Judy 1986).

Despite the rapport with Marg, Judy was also confused by the group home situation.

Well I was under the impression that I was just going to be working with younger children, and that there would be no teenagers. So that was one thing that kind of threw me at first because I didn't really know if I wanted to work with teenagers. I've had my fill of them, you know, their moods and temperaments. But I thought I would take one day at a time (Judy 1986).

Once Judy realized there were teenagers living in the group home and that Marg had worked some nights alone, she informed Kaarsemaker that she would not be there alone at night.

I wouldn't want to be there alone, I really wouldn't, because I know what could happen with kids and drugs, and it's pretty scary. ... I wouldn't even want to be there all alone at night because you never know who might be brought in. We've had some kids come in between 2:00 and 3:00 am., and they were just left there with us. They're basically older kids then, and you never know what condition they're in (Judy 1986).

But her fear of dangerous situations arising with teenagers was not actualized. Instead, the relating to the younger children proved most challenging.

Marvin was one of the preteens who created many difficulties.<sup>28</sup> The day after the two La'malis girls had run away with Rose, Marvin had been keyed up, trying to anger Judy and Marg (Judy & Marg 1987). Two days later he "became very obnoxious."

He tried everything he could to get us to do something to him. I tried to talk to him quietly, but he said that I was threatening him and that he would report me (Judy in Judy & Marg 1987).

Marvin called his social worker and accused Judy and Marg of being hostile toward him. The social worker discounted the veracity of his accusation and asked to speak to Judy. Marvin then became very loud and unruly, claiming he would report Judy.

I called Neil about it. He had asked me to phone anytime. Marvin realized I had called someone and was scared that they were coming for him. He settled down then (Judy in Judy & Marg 1987).

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<sup>28</sup> On several occasions I was able to witness firsthand Marvin's behaviour. Once, when I was over for supper with Judy and Marg at the group home, Marvin jumped out of his bedroom window and ran away. Minutes later, he was picked up by Ron and returned to the group home. Another time, Judy and Marg asked me to accompany them on their regular swimming night so that there would be someone to watch over Marvin in the changing room. Although there were no major incidents, I was becoming annoyed with his general conduct by the end of the evening.

Although the accusations stopped, Marvin did manage to bring the police to the group home concerning a different matter the next day. After school, he and Bert, a Native boy in the group home, asked if they could go outside to play. Within minutes they “returned screaming” that a neighbour had pulled Marvin by the hair and had told them not to play in the ditch. Marg went to talk to the neighbour, who asked her to bring the boys back after supper so that he could apologize to them. Marg did that, and shortly after they left, Judy received a call from the police. Marvin had not accepted the neighbour’s apology and had called the police. The police informed Judy that they would investigate, and two hours later an officer came by. After his brief visit, Marvin calmed down until it was time for bed.

Marvin tried to give us a hard time but he didn’t get anywhere. We took away his radio and batteries and he soon quieted down. I hope we can keep the upper hand with him. I really tried talking to him but it’s not easy (Judy in Judy & Marg 1987).

Notwithstanding Marvin’s annoying behaviour, of greater concern for both Marg and Judy was the earlier episode with Rose. Later that evening, Marg received a call with regard to the incident.

Marg got a call about the investigation and she really feels she can’t do anything right. I know how she feels. I sure lose my self-confidence at times (Judy in Judy & Marg 1987).

Two days before, a social worker had come to the group home to talk to Judy and Marg about the investigation.

She decided we may as well have our interview. It went very well. The outcome, I believe, will depend on the kids. One of them lied and said we hadn’t given her any supper (Judy in Judy & Marg 1987).

The whole affair distressed Judy.

I know I’m going to find it very hard to work with Rose after what she’s done. It really hurts. There’s a good possibility they may not bring her back (Judy & Marg 1987).

Frustrated, Judy (Judy & Marg 1987) remarked to Gail:

We always seem to do everything wrong. It seems no matter what we do, it's not right.

Judy (1987) perceives herself to be "very unqualified" for the assignment, admitting "MCC makes mistakes too."<sup>29</sup> Even two months earlier when the group home situation had been more calm, she did not know if, with the benefit of foresight, she would still have chosen the position.

It's like becoming a parent. If you knew what was ahead, you would never become one. ... I know I've said to Marg often times, 'I really don't need this hassle in my life. I've raised my kids already.' But the next day you start over again and don't think about the day before anymore (Judy 1986).

The trouble with Rose helped convince Judy that two women working together as houseparents was not good for the children.<sup>30</sup> She believed that the group home children needed "the male figure of authority." In the months following the incident, she and Kaarsemaker explored other assignments in which she could complete her two-year term. At the end of July 1987, Judy moved to the Fraser Valley to continue as an MCC volunteer, working in a home for mentally disabled adults.

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<sup>29</sup> In a telephone conversation after the Rose incident led to Marg's investigation by Social Services, Judy (1987) and Kaarsemaker agreed to admit the "experiment" had not worked out, adding it would be best if a husband and wife replaced her and Marg.

<sup>30</sup> Judy's view on this matter had changed significantly in two months. Early in December, she commented:

Marg and I worry about whether we can give that home/family atmosphere because we're not a married couple. We've wondered if that image of a father in the home makes a difference. But I don't think it does (Judy 1986).

## 7.6 GAIL AND RON

### 7.6.1 Pre-Service Experience

The departure of Judy and Marg left Gail and Ron as the only MCC volunteers managing the group home. The couple started working there at the end of April 1986, just prior to the official beginning of their two-year term in May. Unlike the previous volunteers, Gail and Ron's acceptance of an assignment in Barano did not represent a major upheaval for them or their three children, for they were the first local people to volunteer with MCC (Table 7.5). Indeed, Ron is one of the few residents of Barano who can state that he was born in the area.

Even more uncommon is that Ron once lived at one of the old villages of the La'malis people. Born into a prominent family in the local Seventh Day Adventist Church, at a young age he moved with his parents to the village site of the Samaltan people (Aaron 1985). His parents had made the move so that they could form a church there for the Band. Hence, as a boy, Ron became friends with many of the Native boys in that village. He attended potlatches and helped his friends collect food, and on occasion he went hunting with Les, who is now the Chief of La'malis. Ron's (1986b) love for the Holat'in cultural heritage and his desire to see it maintained<sup>31</sup> are rooted in the childhood experiences he had living in that old village.

Gail though, did not become acquainted with the La'malis people until after she met Ron. Born an American citizen,<sup>32</sup> she did not live in Barano until after their marriage. In

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<sup>31</sup> One example of his efforts to keep the Holat'in cultural heritage alive occurred on a Saturday evening in February 1987. Ron had invited La'malis villagers to view some old films in which Walith people had been actors.

<sup>32</sup> Gail (1986b) has been able to work in Barano because she has acquired landed immigrant status.

Table 7.5 - Personal Information: Gail and Ron

	GAIL	RON
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	35	33
EDUCATION:	Grade 12 (1969)	LPN (1976) B.Th. (Incomplete)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:		Seventh Day Adventist
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM:		7
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Barano, B.C.	
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM		3
END OF TERM		3
DATES IN BARANO WITH MCC:		
BEGINNING		April 1986
END		August 1987
Sources: Gail 1986a, 1986b; Ron 1986a, 1986c; Kaarsemaker 1987c		

the time around their marriage date, Gail and Ron became involved with MCC for the first time.

Our first involvement with MCC was on a part-time basis at the [La'malis] receiving home. ... It was the last six months or so of Rick and Val's stay here, when Chris and Lois were here, and they needed some part-time help. ... Chris and Lois got us involved ... and they actually shared our trailer for a while when ... Val was having a baby. ... Chris and Lois lived in our trailer, which was right next to the MCC trailer, when we were on shift. It worked out quite well (Ron 1986a).

Gail and Ron had had the opportunity to replace Rick and Val (1979b) as full-time houseparents at the receiving home but they declined the offer. However, at the end of Lois and Chris' stay, Gail and Ron agreed to operate the foster home until Ed and Karen's arrival, two months later.

We came to know the people that worked for MCC, basically because we lived next door. We got to know Ed and Karen when they first came up. We really didn't know Russ and Lynn until the last six or eight months they were here. The reason we got to know them is because we were looking around for things we could do to help and become more involved in the community. And because of our involvement on the reserve, we got to know the MCC people through the Mennonite church group. We went to church with them one Sunday, and then we were invited over to Russ and Lynn's place, where they asked us if we would be interested in being part-time workers at the group home. We said we were interested and we applied. Shortly thereafter, they asked us if we would be interested in a full-time position (Ron 1986a).

Gail and Ron accepted MCC's offer to become volunteers and several months later they joined Marg and Judy as the other set of houseparents at the group home.

### 7.6.2 Assignment

Prior to the group home assignment and before she gave birth to their daughter, Gail (1986b) worked as a cashier and factory worker, and had owned and operated a wool and craft shop in town. Ron, on the other hand, once operated a gill-net fishing boat for a local Native man, and at the time they applied to MCC was a self-employed fisher. In a unique arrangement, Ron continued fishing even after they started working at the group home. Kaarsemaker agreed to the arrangement so that MCC would not have to furnish all the living expenses for the family. Ron's fishing income was to provide the additional costs of raising three children.<sup>33</sup> The financial aspect of the arrangement worked out well for the couple, but Ron's fishing that summer created some problems.

The summer fishing season did not proceed as smoothly as Ron had hoped.

This summer, my fishing did take me away a lot longer than it normally would have. It was a long season. We had some five-day weeks this year, which is **extremely** rare. So I was gone away from the group home more than I would have liked (emphasis in original) (Ron 1986a).

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<sup>33</sup> Aside from their preschool daughter, Gail and Ron have two boys who were attending private schools. The eldest boy attended a Seventh Day Adventist boarding school in a distant community. Ron's fishing income was expected to cover these and other child-related expenses. MCC agreed to supply an average of \$1200 per month for such items as rent, food, B.C. medical and hydro.

The lengthy outings necessitated the cancellation of several group home staff meetings. Compounding matters, there was a period in August when Ron experienced a series of mechanical difficulties with his boat (Judy 1986). To expedite the repairs, Gail ran errands for her husband. Because she preferred to work alone at the group home in Ron's absence,<sup>34</sup> her workload became almost unmanageable.

Gail sort of resented the fact we had help [summer workers] and she didn't. She even admitted she was reluctant to work with somebody else. So a lot of it was her own fault, for she could have had help (Judy 1986).

Gail and Ron also had to respond to the concerns expressed by their local Seventh Day Adventist Church.

There was a misunderstanding, at first, with our church. I think our church had the wrong concept, that we were working for the Mennonite church. We had to explain to our church, 'Listen, we're working for their missionary board called MCC.' We explained what they do and how they do it – that MCC is a service organization (Ron 1986a).

The clarification satisfied many of the church people, but others still suspected that Gail (1986a) and Ron were "becoming Mennonites." Although those unfounded suspicions annoyed the couple, they were more disturbed with the church's response to their work with local Native peoples.

Because of our involvement with the reserves, we are seen as kind of outcasts in our local church. It's not that the Seventh Day Adventist people are against working with Indians, but this particular church has tried working with this Band [La'malis] in years past, and has not met with much success. ... Church people have bad tastes in their mouths from working with La'malis people. After a short time, they wouldn't see much happening and so they would quit. That made it so much more difficult to get something going the next time they tried (Ron 1986a).

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<sup>34</sup> She could have received assistance from the two MCC summer workers who had been made available to group home staff.

Gail and Ron's efforts in La'malis had alienated themselves from many of their church friends.<sup>35</sup>

A large portion of the couple's efforts on the reserve focused on Saturday, their Sabbath day. After Ron's work in fall of 1985 as an evangelist's helper in a Seventh Day Adventist crusade for local Native people, he began serving as the pastor for a small group of La'malis people.<sup>36</sup> While Ron concentrated on preaching, Gail's contribution centred on teaching a Bible class for children aged two to eight. Ron believes the villagers are more willing to accept the Gospel from him than from most others because they have known him for years and they know he identifies with their struggles. Indeed, he points out that they 'adopted' him and gave him a Native name, and that his family will also receive that honour (Ron 1987a).

As an extension of his Saturday pastoral functions, Ron agreed to assist with the La'malis alcohol rehabilitation program.

I was asked to help them spiritually with their alcohol program. They're using the format of the Alcoholics Anonymous program, which is extremely good. All I do is backup the spiritual emphasis. ... I was asked to come one night a week, but the La'malis junior alcohol counselor told me that every three weeks was going to be sufficient. They want to run it themselves, and they seem to be doing a very good job. ... I've tried to push all along for the government to realize that 'job creation' is in fact part of rehabilitation. They look at that as two separate jobs, but I think the two are very closely tied. Not everybody is going to take God to fill the void formerly taken by drinking, and we can't expect everybody to take God in that place. So we've got to give them other alternatives such as productive jobs, and not these make-work programs (Ron 1986a).

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<sup>35</sup> Not all the local Seventh Adventist Church people avoided the reserve. For example, one woman in the church, who lived in the next town, continued to sponsor a quilting program for interested La'malis women after two years.

<sup>36</sup> For a period, the group home schedule was such that they always had Saturdays free. Once the weekly schedule was adopted, they would arrange for relief staff to work until mid afternoon on Saturdays. Only rarely did Gail and Ron bring group home children with them to the reserve (Judy 1986).

Ron's fishing experience led him to take the role of economic advisor for the La'malis men fishing on the five Band operated boats.

I'm trying to make them realize that they need to pay for those boats. The whole Band is looking to them to pay for the boats and then make money for the Band, because the whole concept isn't for personal gain, but for the Band. I had been trying to get them to sell to a company at the beginning of the year, but they wanted to sell cash. Last year they sold cash all year long. When I talk about 'selling cash,' that's not very good. Sure the money might be better, but the service is no good, and bookkeeping is the pits because you end up with just a bunch of cash slips. ... And those guys don't have any idea when it comes to bookkeeping. ... Whereas myself, I sold to the same company all year long, and at the end of the year I got back a record of all my sales. In turn, I charged my debts to them, and so my statement told me exactly what happened (Ron 1986a).

Ron also acted as their purchaser and arranged such things as sending mechanics to work on their boats. He even went so far as to use his own credit to purchase nets for the aboriginal fishers. Further, Ron taught a net-mending course through the Seventh Day Adventist organization, Native Indian New Start.<sup>37</sup> Twenty-one Native men signed up for the course and all of them completed it at the end of the three weeks. The response was such that the course was offered again in January 1987, led by a La'malis man with Ron acting as his helper. At the same time, Ron was attempting to secure a location for a float so that village fishers would have a place to repair their nets.

I've applied to the town for a spot. What I want to do is use the Indian boys to build the floats, ... and it would become another much-needed moorage spot for the town. We would build it because we want to put our nets there. And I want to put a service facility for boats there too (Ron 1986a).

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<sup>37</sup> The organization was started by an aboriginal member of the Seventh Day Adventist Church in Oklahoma.

He came up here to British Columbia with this dream he had for a long time of starting a separate agency to deal specifically with Native Indian needs. He sees the Native Indian problem differently than any church has. ... This program is supposed to be an educational process where we go in and run seminars and training programs, such as the net-mending course we did (Ron 1986a).

Ron's concern for the Band-owned and operated boats directly effectuated a new MCC assignment in La'malis. The position of boat and house manager emerged from his uneasiness with the financial status of several of the boats.

Ron's close ties with the Barano Native communities prompted Kaarsemaker to contact him when a land dispute arose between a logger and the Walith people. Kaarsemaker sought information and advice so that MCC could intelligently alter its noncommittal stance in the disagreement. Ron responded by soliciting the opinions of Native leaders throughout the day, and then later updated Kaarsemaker on the situation.

It was Ron's personal bonds with local Native persons that aroused his interest in working at the Barano group home. Once he realized that he was friends with many of the parents of the Native children there, he was willing to accept MCC's offer to become a full-time houseparent. Gail gravitated toward the assignment because it was an opportunity for her to work outside their home and not have to place their daughter with a baby sitter.<sup>38</sup> Moreover, the challenge of helping troubled teenagers attracted Ron. He believes that one of the main problems with teenagers today is that they do not have to do physical work. He hoped to have a woodstove installed at the group home so that the teenagers could chop wood.

On the whole, Gail and Ron operated the group home as did Marg and Judy. There were variations on certain rules, such as the one for television viewing, but Ron (1986c) considered the minor differences good for the children. Gail and Ron were more strict, not allowing the children to play wildly in the basement (Judy & Marg 1987). At times they would have preferred to use corporal disciplinary measures, but they were frustrated by Social Services guidelines that prohibited any form of physical punishment. Nevertheless,

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<sup>38</sup> Gail was eager to rejoin the workforce and planned to do so once their daughter entered elementary school.

in December 1986, Ron (1986a) described their time with MCC as “an enlightening experience,” and added that he and Gail would accept another term if it could be arranged.<sup>39</sup> They continued working at the group home until the end of August 1987, when MCC ceased to be the operating society. At that point, Gail and Ron applied to Social Services for the one-year contract to operate the group home, but they did not receive it (Kaarsemaker 1987c).

While acknowledging Gail and Ron provided a family atmosphere in the group home, Marg and Judy observed that the couple’s ties to the community limited their group home involvement.

Being LVSers [local voluntary service workers], they’re a lot more involved in the community than we are, and so they don’t have as much time to spend doing special things with the kids. ... It seems that because we have a little more time to spend with them, they can be more open with us and feel a bit safer in venting some of their feelings. I’ve noticed that Rose has had a couple of real tantrums with us, and Gail has never experienced that. Rose told us that she didn’t feel very comfortable talking to Gail about it (Marg 1986).

I know Gail has often said that we have more time to take the kids on outings. They look after their home, their kids, and so they don’t have time for the extra things that Marg and I do (Judy 1986).

Neil (1986a) wondered whether Gail and Ron had too many commitments outside the group home (i.e., fishing, church, family) which prevented their assignment from receiving priority.

MCC’s efforts in Barano altered significantly with the organization’s withdrawal from the group home. Five of the ten MCC volunteers active in the community were no longer so in August 1987. Another volunteer, Maria, had planned to be back in Saskatchewan at that time as well, but she decided to extend her stay in Barano with MCC an additional year.

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<sup>39</sup> Ron (1986a) indicated he would be willing to move and give up fishing if he and Gail could work with troubled teenagers.

## 7.7 MARIA

### 7.7.1 Pre-Service Experience

Voluntary service with MCC was a natural outgrowth of Maria's (1987d) upbringing in a Mennonite home and church<sup>40</sup> (Table 7.6). One of her older brothers had taken an assignment with MCC and she fully expected that she too would "do a term" with the organization. At the time, there was never any question about which organization she would approach, for she was not particularly interested in mission work. As a child, Maria (1988) suffered through a "large dose" of missionary speakers, and as a teenager in a summer volunteer program among the Hopi people in Arizona, she "was totally put off by the missionary zeal of the Whites."

I remember driving among the adobe homes feeling like I had stepped back in time, enjoying the uniqueness of the culture. But the repeated phrase from our missionary host and guide was, 'I saved him, and I saved her, and I saved that whole family.' ... I vowed never to do the same (Maria 1988).

MCC, however, was pushed to the back of her mind after she became married.

My thoughts of MCC had faded quite a bit after several years of marriage and I realized my husband was not into that. When I became separated, well then it was something I just didn't think about (I had other things to think about). Then when I wanted to go somewhere else and teach, I applied to some other organizations [such as CUSO]. But somebody said to me, 'Why don't you apply to MCC? They've got teaching positions.' But I said, 'Well, MCC won't take me, I'm divorced.' And she said, 'What?! Get serious! Of course they'll take you. That doesn't matter.' And I said, 'C'mon, that goes against what the Mennonite church believes in.' But this particular friend inquired for me and said, 'I think you're wrong. I think MCC will take you. There have been other divorcees who have been placed.' That was really good for me to hear (Maria 1987d).

Once she discovered that MCC was still an option, Maria was more confident of the direction she was heading.

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<sup>40</sup> Maria was one of six church members to volunteer with MCC within a period of a year.

Table 7.6 - Personal Information: Maria

AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	37
EDUCATION	Teaching Certificate (1969) B.Ed. (1982)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite
MARITAL STATUS:	Married (14 years) Separated (4 years) Divorced (October 1986)
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:	Rosthern, Saskatchewan
CHILDREN AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	2
DATES IN BARANO:	
BEGINNING	August 1986
(Expected Termination)	July 1988

Sources: Maria 1988, 1987d, 1986c

Maria never sensed her marital separation was a major issue with MCC.

The person who interviewed me in Saskatoon is a person I've known for a long time, and he also knows my husband. But we had not been in touch for a while, so he asked me where things were at and explained that MCC is not to be used as an escape to get away from a spouse or a bad situation. But he and his wife are friends of mine, and I had coffee with them quite often, so they knew that I was past that escape stage. ... Part of my reason for turning to MCC was a chance for change, not escape. I wanted to teach somewhere else and get away from our community, far away, not just move to the next town. ... I have a teaching job back home, and I had been in the same school for four years. I felt really comfortable there, but I'm the kind of person that thrives on change. I guess it's almost a fear of getting too rooted and stale. I was in the same school four years, and the same town eight years, and so I was ready to move. ... I was looking for something that would be good for my kids and myself, and hopefully we could be good for somebody else (Maria 1987d).

Maria (1988) applied to MCC in March 1986 with stipulations that she teach elementary-aged children in North America for one year only. The first assignment

presented her was a teaching position in Kentucky. That option, however, was ruled out because MCC found there was a significant amount of red tape involved for her and her two daughters to be placed there. Instead, MCC offered her the La'malis preschool position, and in May she agreed to become Betty's replacement for the 1986-87 school year.

The prospect of teaching on a reserve did not trouble Maria.

Neither the job nor the situation was new to me. I have had several years teaching experience (this is my seventh year), and this is the third reserve I've worked on (Maria 1987d).

In the early 1970s, she and her husband were hired by Indian Affairs to teach in the remote Native community of Cross Lake, Manitoba.

I went into my first job on a reserve as the great White helper, the old missionary-type. I was going to go in and really help because finally someone had come who was really going to do the job (Maria 1987d).

When I realized they really would rather not have my patronizing help, I became angry feeling they were ungrateful. Out of that, more correctly, beyond that, I came to know people as people, friends as friends. ... It's a hard lesson to learn growing up in small-town Mennonite Saskatchewan (Maria 1986c).

The three years in Cross Lake helped Maria (1986b) realize how sheltered and protected it could be growing up in a small Mennonite town. It was at Cross Lake that she first spoke to a Native person despite having lived close to a large reserve all her life. She is amazed that that could have happened and saddened by how that reflects upon the Mennonite community.

### **7.7.2 Assignment**

Maria arrived in Barano in mid August confident that she had the experience to handle the assignment. She was somewhat apprehensive, though, of how she would fit in with the other volunteers. The welcome she received allayed many of her concerns.

The night we rolled in (they knew we were coming), within five minutes of our arrival, there was a whole crew of people helping carry stuff in. There was a tuna casserole in the oven, hot and ready to eat, and a carrot cake on the table. We felt **so warmly welcomed**. ... I thought, 'I can't believe this! This is what it's like to move to a new place?!' It was obviously not what you expect moving to a new place would be like. We just fit into this family ... and it just helped to minimize the moving trauma so much (emphasis in original) (Maria 1987d).

The situation at the preschool also proved to be beyond her expectations.

I looked at the outside of the building that was to be my classroom and I thought, 'Oh, no,' because it doesn't look very impressive from the outside. But then I thought, 'This is what MCC is all about. You didn't come to work in a plush, modern school.' So I was all ready for really roughing it. Then when I stepped inside. I was so shocked again, that it was so neat, bright and cozy, and had phenomenal equipment. It's everything you want plus more (Maria 1987a).

I think all my surprises were positive. I had better equipment, more aide time, less hours in the classroom than back in Saskatchewan. And I had more staff support than I could have imagined. You come to a new place and hope you can find at least one staff member you can really plug in with. But here they're all great! I couldn't wish for a better bunch of people to work for. ... I think before Christmas I was still feeling my way because it was a new class for me. I had taught first grade but not kindergarten nor four year-olds, and so anytime you step into a new grade you always spend the first part readjusting your thinking, language, talking, and whole method of planning. But that's been my pattern. I know how long it takes me to settle in and feel comfortable. [Initially], I felt like it was still Betty's class and Betty's job, and I had Betty's aide, who told me what Betty did. It took me until Christmas to feel that it was my job. ... That was right about how I anticipated it would be (Maria 1987d).

However, Maria had not anticipated that she would have to deal with a personal matter in the fall.

I was dealing with things I hadn't planned on dealing with this year. That set me back for a little while. It affected my output for a while because I was trying to sort through too many things at once. It peaked in early December when my husband came to visit. But it was good that he came because we settled a lot of things (Maria 1987a).

The 'things' that Maria was forced to settle were the final details of a divorce she had never wanted.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The divorce became final in October 1986.

In addition to personal matters distracting her at work, Maria was frustrated with the aide situation in the nursery class. Although she welcomed the amount of aide time available to her, because of the frequent turnover, she “was constantly training a new aide”<sup>42</sup> (Maria 1987a).

I find it hard to give a person too many directions, because I start to feel authoritative and domineering. Yet if the person doesn't see what to do, then you have to say, 'Would you please do this.' After a while of doing that you start to feel like an ogre or something (Maria 1987a).

A solution could have been the hiring of a non-aboriginal aide from Barano, but Maria agreed with Neil that the aide position should be filled by a Native woman.

Another facet of the preschool work, for which she was not directly responsible, disturbed Maria.

First of all, I want to say that the cultural program is very important and I support it 100 percent. I also want to say that because of the teacher that I am, the control I like to have in the classroom, it's very difficult for me to see behaviour going in a direction I'm not comfortable with. ... I talked to Neil about it and he said that it's not a problem if she's [cultural program instructor] comfortable with it, and if she's not comfortable with it, it's a problem she has to deal with. My problem is that I can't deal with it. The options are staying at the back of the class and trying to handle my feelings of frustration and not butt in, or removing myself. Both have positive and negative aspects to them. The negative aspect to removing myself would be that the kids would see that the teacher doesn't think learning about Indian stuff is important.

So I talked to Cathy about it on Monday, and I asked her what she would recommend, because I'm feeling that the kids are kind of torn between two bosses when I'm there. She said that if I feel comfortable about leaving, it would be good for [the instructor] to be the sole teacher until she felt really comfortable. Then I could come back in. She felt my leaving and the kids seeing that as not respecting Indian ways was not as big an issue as [the instructor] having control over the kids (Maria 1987a).

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<sup>42</sup> The aide for the kindergarten class was the only one who did not quit her position. In mid November, Maria (1986a) half-seriously considered taking several sick days so that the Walith woman could earn extra pay. The woman's husband had been on strike since the summer and she had been able to work only one day the week Maria and the Band school teachers attended a reading conference in Lethbridge. The woman's family was relying on her income from the preschool.

Undergirding Maria's desire to maintain classroom discipline is her belief that a teacher should be a genuine, caring person.

My philosophy of education is that you need to be a good person first, and then you can become a good teacher. ... I mean that you can have all the teaching techniques down, but first of all you have to be able to hug that dirty, filthy kid who comes to school and say, 'I'm glad you came to school' (Maria 1987d).

As a teacher who enjoys hugging her students, Maria has had to struggle with the issue of sexual abuse in schools.

I think about it [sexual abuse] because I know my kids like to get very physical in school. When it's story-time, they are all trying to sit on my lap, pulling my legs out. And once with a boy, I had to stroke his back and his arms to calm him down. When you think about it, this kid needs a lot of physical contact, good physical contact, because he's had bad physical contact. But you don't ever want it to be interpreted wrongly because of what's happening. There are situations where people are being falsely accused, for it's such a thing to jump on now. However, being a mother to them is still my philosophy (Maria 1987d).

Maria believes that if she were to fail to respond in kind to a child's affectionate touch, the classroom atmosphere would become very impersonal. Kate (1986) includes her with the other "patient, kind and really loving" preschool teachers. She thinks Maria has a "great personality," adding that they "hit it off well" right from the time they met.

Maria had not delineated for herself a clear distinction in learning styles between Native and non-Native children.

I think there may be learning differences, but I have not ever cultivated any specific techniques for teaching Indian kids that are that different from those I've used with White kids. Because their language is poor they cannot respond to me, and I assume that very often my input is lost too because the language doesn't make a whole lot of sense to them. There is a real need for a lot of visuals, a lot of hands-on stuff. You can't talk too long before you have to get to concrete things (Maria 1987d).

Maria's approach to correcting the Native children's severe language deficiencies centred on a 'whole language program.'<sup>43</sup> She had used the program the previous year with her

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<sup>43</sup> A whole language program places the initial emphasis on the rhythm of natural speech. Upon that foundation, students are directed to the symbols of written language. In

grade one class, and so she suggested that Sherry, the primary teacher at the Band school, try it as well. Sherry adopted the program and the grade three and four teacher did likewise. Maria and the other teachers hoped that through the program the children would be able to develop reading comprehension skills more quickly, rather than just reading skills with no comprehension, a major problem cited by special education instructors (Maria 1987d).

Maria, Sherry and their two aides, used a professional development day to attend a session on the whole language program in a neighbouring community's school (see January 30 in Maria's time diary in Appendix A).

The presentation itself was something I wanted and needed to attend. Nothing new was presented, but it reinforced the philosophy behind whole language. There's a lot of thinking that goes on to make a philosophy work. You need to hear it, read it, and hear of people's experiences over and over again, and bit by bit it starts to come together. And so the presentation was a good step for me (Maria 1987a).

The out-of-town trip for the morning session benefitted Maria in other ways.

First of all, I spent the day with my aide and Sherry's aide in kind of a social setting, and I got to know them better. We had a good time. It was also good for me to see the school and meet other teachers from around the area. I enjoy making those kinds of contacts. I like to pick their brains as to what they're doing, and to me that's a large part of professional development (Maria 1987a).

One of the Naskitlo Band school teachers encouraged her to contact the school's kindergarten teacher to arrange a visit of her kindergarten class to the school. Maria welcomed the invitation to observe another Band operated classroom. Whether or not the Naskitlo trip could be arranged, Maria planned to take her five year-olds to a kindergarten class in Barano. The visit would help prepare those of her pupils who would attend the school in the future.

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contrast, phonics first stresses the sounds of individual letters and the simple phonetic rules (and their exceptions).

As the education coordinator, Neil encouraged Maria to take the children on as many fieldtrips as possible. In the four-day week at the end of January (see her time diary in Appendix A), Maria conducted expeditions to the town's airport and firehall apart from the regular trips to the ice arena and library.

That week was a little bit heavy, ... but there's money and bus time. The kids need the opportunity to explore as much out there as they can, and so any fieldtrip we can take is encouraged. We didn't do a lot of fieldtrips before Christmas. We did the regular ones (skating, swimming, library) and a couple of small ones to places like the grocery store, but not many simply because I was still getting them into a routine (especially the four year-olds). I didn't feel they were ready to go out on a bus because they were just getting used to a routine before Christmas. ... But the four year-olds are much more ready to handle fieldtrips now, ... so I'm planning a lot of excursions around the community (Maria 1987a).

Numerous fieldtrips were easily absorbed into the preschool curriculum because of Maria's flexible approach to lesson planning.

I don't do my planning in summer. I work at planning in themes, and so for two weeks I'll cover a certain theme. During the last week of a theme, I do more detailed planning for the next one, plotting the emotional, social and intellectual development objectives. Then I write it out so I have a format. Each day I take that format and make a plan looking at what was covered the previous day (sometimes I don't cover nearly what I plan to). At the end of each day I make a new plan for the next day. So I can't do that any faster than one day at a time. I really capitalize on teachable moments, and if it's a good moment to grab on to something that I had not planned on, I do it. My plan is there as a backup (Maria 1987a).

A basic aim of every one of Maria's lesson plans is that the children enjoy the activities.

The best thing to happen here is for them to experience school as the most pleasant part of the day. There was a speaker at one of our teachers' conventions early in my career who worked on a reserve. It was great to hear her because she said, 'You know, you see all these broken children coming to school and you want to take everyone of them home and take care of them. But you can't be their social worker. The only thing you can do is make their time at school the happiest that you can make it, so that they feel good about coming to school.' A lot of their parents were in boarding schools, and they did not have good experiences there. They lost that whole excitement about education. So for their kids, such a floundering generation, I want school to be pleasant and warm, a place of growth and where they can test out some of their feelings and think it's all right to be in school. Then maybe they'll go a little further than their parents (to grade ten or eleven), and some of them might even become grade twelve graduates. If they have a positive experience, then they'll be able to send their kids through school. It's going to take time, but it can happen (Maria 1987d).

Apart from her preschool related duties, Maria centred her energies on her two daughters. Indeed, she stated clearly on her MCC application form that her primary concern is “raising her children the best way she can” (Maria 1986c). To assist her to that end she joined a STEPteen (‘Systematic Training for Effective Parenting’ for parents of teenagers) program in January (see January 27 in her time diary).

By coming here I had some of my support systems pulled out. Then all of a sudden I have a blossoming teenager in a lot of new situations with new boys. I was somewhat at a loss because my acquaintances here do not include any parents of teenagers. So when I heard about the program, I thought that if nothing else, at least I’ll get to know other parents. Then when Jo says, ‘But everyone else can,’ I can phone another parent and check it out (Maria 1987a).

Maria had been unsure, at first, whether she would feel comfortable in the group, but by the third week she was enjoying the hour-long meetings.

Previous to her involvement in the STEPteen program, Maria’s social contacts had been with attenders of the Mennonite church group and other MCC volunteers. In mid February, she organized and hosted a potluck supper for all the volunteers and after the meal she encouraged everyone to contribute to the production of a whimsical ‘Quarterly Report’ for Kaarsemaker. Two weeks earlier, she and Burl had planned and led the Sunday morning worship service (see her time diary). The week prior to the church service also marked Maria’s personal deadline for deciding her future in Barano. The agreement with MCC was that she teach one year with the option to renew for a second. In early February, Maria had been almost certain that she and her two daughters would return to Saskatchewan.

The main deciding factor is that I’m on a one-year leave from my school district and they’ve never given a two-year leave. But I think there are also some fairly strong personal reasons for going back to Saskatchewan. The age of my children is one of them. They’ve coped very well with building new friendships. I’ve been really pleased how well they’ve adjusted, for I anticipated a lot more struggles with them. But they’re at such a volatile age and these teenage years are so important, and I think that Barano does not have a really good base for Christian growth for kids. The Mennonite church group has no other teenagers, and so Jo went to the Baptist youth group twice but she said she felt so uncomfortable there. Everyone had their

best friends and she felt out of it. So she's been unable to plug into any kind of church group.

Back home our church family is very large with a lot of teenagers, and I felt good about their social life. I don't think it's been hard for us to be here for a year, but I question whether I want to do this for two years. Also my parents and two sets of cousins are very important to my kids. I'm a single parent, and so, to a large degree, that is definitely a factor. ... If I weigh the disadvantages and advantages, maybe it would be better to plug into these support systems now. MCC will be here for many years yet. When the kids are up and gone, then I can apply for a ten-year term if I want (Maria 1987d).

However, as far as the preschool situation was concerned, Maria sensed that it would be best if she exercised her option.

I feel quite strongly that I would like to do another year with MCC in this position. The way they're phasing it out, it would be really valuable to have the same person two years in a row. It would be hard to put a new person in if you're in the process of phasing out the program (Maria 1987d).

Moreover, good friends, staff and working environment combined with a poor job offer from Saskatchewan, made another year an attractive prospect (Maria 1988). Less than half a year into her assignment, Maria (1987c) described her Barano experience as a "super time of growth." She is certain that she has gained much more from the experience than she has given. In particular, Maria (1987d) appreciates how MCC accommodated her specific situation and needs, such as the extra cost associated with her two daughters (Table 7.7).<sup>44</sup> The financial security of being a volunteer also appeals to her. However, Maria asserts that a volunteer cannot afford to be with MCC indefinitely, and should have money saved prior to joining the organization.

Ultimately, she chose to continue for a second year because there had been a key change to her determining factor. She had been granted a one-year extension to her leave.

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<sup>44</sup> One of the problems was the additional cost of supporting three people as opposed to a single person or a couple without children (Table 7.7). The extra \$400-500 a month it costs to support a third person often makes it difficult for MCC to place families. For Maria's position, MCC (1986d:3) received a salary of \$22,000 from the Band, which was considered to be slightly below the market rate (Kaarsemaker 1986).

Table 7.7 - Maria's Expenses for January 1987

<b>EXPENSES</b>		
Housing (rent)	\$410.00	
Food	369.14	(food allowance equals \$300)
Medical Expenses	129.34	(\$100.00 of total for Jo's teeth [braces])
Personal Allowance	110.00	(\$30 each for the girls and \$50 for Maria - portions used to help pay for braces and piano lessons for both girls [\$70.00/month for both piano lessons])
Travel	68.71	
Educational Enrichment	24.00	(\$8 each – used to help pay for braces and piano lessons)
Telephone	21.57	
Volunteer Enrichment	18.00	(\$6 each - intended for social gatherings, but used to help pay for braces and piano lessons)
Miscellaneous	30.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1180.76</b>	
Source: Maria 1987a		

Eventually, she would like to return to university and pursue her interest in female-oriented counseling (e.g., unwed mothers, battered women).

I love teaching and I love the job I'm doing, but I see too many burnt-out teachers who, after twenty years of teaching, spend the last ten just hanging on for superannuation. I don't ever want to be in that position. Because of the way I am, I like to change and try new things. I get frustrated if I keep doing the same thing over and over. I hope that isn't an indication I'm an unstable kind of person, but that's the way I've always been (Maria 1987d).

## 7.8 GRANT AND LOUISE

### 7.8.1 Pre-Service Experience

Maria's status as the most recent MCC volunteer in Barano ended when Grant and Louise arrived in late January 1987 (Table 7.8). The couple's assignment signaled the beginning of what they hoped would be a long-term involvement in Christian service (Grant 1986). However, MCC was not the organization with which they would have preferred to begin that involvement.

We were basically looking at working in missions somewhere. Some people say that they've always wanted to work for MCC, but that they're not quite sure where. With us, while we wanted to work in missions, we were not sure with which mission society. MCC was not our first choice. But that doesn't mean we didn't want to work for them (Louise 1987).

Their first choice had been to go to Brazil to work in an independent school for mainly missionary children. The couple, however, decided the assignment would not suit their impending situation.

They desperately needed library help (Louise), and they also might have been able to use me in administration. As Louise was to fill the greater need, yet was pregnant at the time, we didn't feel right about going without me filling a definite need as well (Grant 1988).

Louise was particularly attracted to the position because it would have been her third journey to Brazil.<sup>45</sup>

Louise traces her gravitation toward Christian service at Bible school to her home life.

My mother was adopted by her uncle, who was a minister. She had planned on going into full-time Christian service but it never worked out. Because of that and whatever other reasons, mother was very hospitable and we often had missionaries over. If they needed to be billeted, we were the first ones to volunteer (Louise 1988).

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<sup>45</sup> Louise (1986) spent the summers (May to August) of 1975 and 1980 in Brazil with the mission agency of the Mennonite Brethren Church.

Table 7.8 - Personal Information: Grant and Louise		
	LOUISE	GRANT
AGE AT BEGINNING OF TERM:	30	25
EDUCATION:	Diploma (Bible/Music/ Christian Education) (1977) Diploma (Library Technician) (1982)	Diploma (Technical Operations Management) (1982) Certificate (Bible) (1986)
CHURCH BACKGROUND:	Mennonite	Pentecostal
YEARS MARRIED AT BEGINNING OF TERM:		2.5
PLACE OF RESIDENCE PRIOR TO TERM:		Vancouver, B.C.
CHILDREN AT:		
BEGINNING OF TERM		1
END OF TERM:		1
DATES IN BARANO:		
BEGINNING		January 1987
(Expected Termination)		January 1988
Sources: Louise 1988, 1987, 1986; Grant 1987, 1986		

Grant, on the other hand, did not have the strong familial support for missionaries to spark his eventual interest in Christian service, for his parents did not attend church. Nor did he find inspiration from the Mennonite Brethren church he began attending in 1980.

Our church wasn't much of an influence at all. We got very frustrated with our church the last year and a half (Grant 1987).

It's not very missions oriented, not at all. So we were very disappointed. There were some individuals who were really interested in what we were planning to do, but the church as a whole was not (Louise 1987).

Once he met Louise, Grant realized that his disinterest in striving to “get ahead” in life was compatible with her yearning to re-enter Christian service.

There are definitely people in the world who need help, and if I can help, why not? Money is not much of a motivator for me. ... I’ve never had the goal of earning a million. I think I get along fairly well with different people, races and cultures. ... So it’s that noble thought of helping other people that motivates me. ... And I’m not a church planter, and I don’t think I ever want to be one. ... That is not where my gifts are (Grant 1987).

His motivation to help and her actual service experiences prompted Grant and Louise to send letters of inquiry to various organizations. They filled out several applications, but only MCC had accepted them by the beginning of September 1986. Within three weeks, MCC offered Grant a full-time position as warehouseman for SELFHELP Crafts in Ephrata.

What I’m looking for is more administrative and computer work. So I phoned the fellow down there [Ephrata], and after talking to him for a half-hour, it became clear that it was just a warehouse worker position. That’s not really what we want to do (Grant 1987).

Further, MCC wanted Louise to work half-time, which she did not wish to do while caring for their infant firstborn.<sup>46</sup> Approximately two weeks later, Kaarsemaker sent Grant the job description (Table 7.9) for a one-year position as boat and house manager for the La'malis Band.<sup>47</sup>

We looked at it and decided we would accept it. Then Wayne [Band manager] quit and Kaarsemaker said there may not be a position open anymore. So we were half-ready in October, and then we had to wait around for two months (Grant 1987).

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<sup>46</sup> Louise (1986) stated clearly in her application form that her primary concern was to be a mother and wife. If time remained for other pursuits, she would prefer to work in a library, office, or in domestic services.

<sup>47</sup> The position was initiated by Wayne, the Band manager, and Kaarsemaker (1987a) had Band Council process the request. On November 21, 1986, Council agreed to fund the position, although, according to Neil (1987c), they had to “scrape up the \$10,000” needed to cover volunteer expenses for the year.

Table 7.9 - MCC Job Description for Boat and House Manager, La'malis

### Qualifications

There is a great need for someone with financial and accounting and business experience to instill financial order and discipline in the maintenance of the new fishing boats and new houses. Particular skills required are Business Management and Accounting or Bookkeeping. Several years of practical experience in running a business would be extremely valuable.

A person gifted with diplomacy and a firm friendly manner are the required personal characteristics. An added plus would be to find someone with knowledge of fishing boats, the fishing industry and/or housing maintenance.

### Job Description

#### 1. Fish Boat Project (May to November)

act as:

- liaison between Band and northern Native fishing corporation (the mortgage holders of Band fishing boats); and
- purchasing agent for Band fishing boats (5 boats).

be responsible for:

- accurately reporting and depositing in the Band account all fishing income;
- the disbursement of all payables for fish boats and fishing crews;
- regular marine surveying of boats by Canadian Fisheries and insurance companies;
- regular payments of insurance, mortgage and fishing licences; and
- the filing of UIC and record of employment for Band fishermen.

#### 2. Housing Project (year round)

- record rents and issue receipts on 30 new homes;
- issue mortgage cheques to the lending institution monthly;
- coordinate chimney cleaning with occupants and contractor; and
- be responsible for the contracting of maintenance and repair work with local trades people.

**Supervision** is to be given by the Band manager and Band Council. Ultimate responsibility for enforcing Band policies rests with Band Council.

Source: MCC 1986b

One evening during that waiting period, Russ and Lynn shared their knowledge of La'malis and Barano with Grant and Louise.

I guess that was one good thing that Kaarsemaker encouraged us to get together with Russ and Lynn and talk about La'malis and see some slides. ... It was really

good to have some idea about where we would be going and what we would be dealing with (Louise 1987).

Grant and Louise had been somewhat apprehensive about working with Native people.<sup>48</sup> Grant wondered whether “they want the White man’s help after he’s screwed them up so bad for the last couple of hundred of years.”

But we didn’t have nearly the same kind of apprehension that one of my friends expressed. She said, ‘You’re going to work with Native Indians?! Oh no!’ She used to work as an x-ray technician at Vancouver General Hospital. The only Indians she knew were drunk, abusive ones (Louise 1987).

Grant and Louise had planned to enter the assignment with a relaxed attitude so as to avoid any “hassles” with the Natives.

### 7.8.2 Assignment

Upon their arrival in Barano late January 1987, the couple encountered a similar welcome to the one that had greeted Maria five months earlier.

The day we moved in we were at Neil and Donna’s place for supper. The next day Ed and Karen had us over. So we had a couple days where we didn’t have to worry about food too much (Grant 1987).

Well, Fred Kaarsemaker asked me if I was homesick yet, and I said, ‘No.’ The MCCers, past MCCers, and the church group have really made us feel at home – especially Ed and Karen, and Maria (Louise 1987).

In the first two weeks after they arrived, Louise, as an unassigned spouse and mother of their infant girl, concentrated her efforts on completing the move into their apartment.

Well, right now I’m basically at the point where I feel like this house is finally liveable, and I can start looking for things to do. I think I will have time to do something besides look after our baby. I’ll be looking around in the next few weeks to see what there is. I’ve worked in a library for quite a few years. They’re starting up a preschool library, so that’s the kind of thing I’d be interested in. I like children and libraries (Louise 1987).

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<sup>48</sup> Grant (1986) had no working experience with other cultures prior to the assignment.

A week into his job, Grant claimed there had not been any serious difficulties.<sup>49</sup>

Luckily the Band manager had some ideas of what he wanted me to do right away. With a brand new position it's easy to get kind of lost. So he's given me some direction and suggestions. ... I guess it's been a little frustrating this past week because I've had to say to the Band manager, 'What do you want done first?' because he keeps saying to me, 'Do this, do this, do this [laughing], and have you done this yet?' Everything is coming up at once and it's just rushed. ... I hauled Neil in one day and we sat and talked for about half an hour. The hardest thing on the reserve is knowing about the politics. I don't want to say the wrong thing to anyone. I don't want to alienate anyone before I'm even accepted. So I tend to talk to Neil quite a bit. In passing I ask him what's going on (Grant 1987).

The situation with the Band-owned fishing boats was creating the hectic activity. It was Grant's responsibility to see that each of the five Native men operating the boats completed an application for a federal/provincial grant.<sup>50</sup> However, the application forms arrived only four days before the deadline. Two weeks elapsed before all the necessary information was gathered, at which point it still needed to be typed. With the deadline passed, the pressure was on Grant to get the forms sent off.

The purpose in having the men apply for the grants was to assist them in acquiring full ownership of the boats.

I guess the Band manager wants a setup where the Band can buy half a dozen boats, put a skipper on each, and run them for two years on the Band books. This way, the Band runs the business side of it and the men can get back into fishing and retrain themselves because they've been out of it for ten years now. After two years, they would carry the mortgage and the boats would go into their names. Then the process is repeated. ... So it's a slow process but it's starting. These guys have had two seasons now, and I'm just finishing off these grants, and if they come through, they'll be on their own this year (Grant 1987).

A key element of the 'setup' is to have the five fishers sign agreements with the Band.

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<sup>49</sup> At that point in the assignment, Grant's (1987) only complaint with MCC was that he felt its life insurance policy was inadequate.

<sup>50</sup> The grants were provided through a resource development association and were only available to Native people. The grants covered up to 50 percent of the cost of a fishing vessel, to a maximum of \$30,000.

Some of the fishermen are under the impression the boats are theirs, but the Band manager's point of view is that they belong to the Band. But when you have the fellows who run the boats also on Band Council, it becomes a very touchy situation (Grant 1987).

Indeed, the situation was such that three of the five operators were on Council, including the Chief, and the Band's fishing company is accountable to Council. Further, the Band manager's job is to serve the best interests of the Band, which is determined by Council.

Compounding matters were the ledgers for the operations.

We just did T4s [statements of remuneration paid, for income tax calculations] ... and their income showed really low. They were upset because they can't collect unemployment insurance now. But the reason it's showing so low is because they sold to cash-buyers. ... You can't run a business if you only show half of your sales, and that's what's happening. On our books, they're all losing money, and the Band has to pick up the tab (Grant 1987).

As, essentially, an assistant to the Band manager, Grant was in the midst of the controversy. Nevertheless, he viewed himself as an impartial data supplier.

I'm not the enforcer. ... Council has decided that they want this position filled, and they've decided what they want me to do. So if they decide they don't want me to do it anymore, that's fine. I can go somewhere else. It will be too bad for them in the long run. It's their loss not mine. But some of the other people in the village are pushing for this type of accountability (Grant 1987).

Although he and the Band manager were to receive direction from Council, Grant understood their ultimate responsibility was to the entire village.

Our jobs are to look out for the best interests of the Band. If worse comes to worst, I guess the boats will be removed from these men. If they're not willing to fish for a company [as opposed to cash-buyers], then we'll find those who will, but that's not the idea. The idea is to get them on their own and be responsible for their own finances (Grant 1987).

However, most villagers were not concerned with the financial status of the boats.

They can't see the boats from the village. The people aren't personally going to get money from those boats, whereas the Band as a group might and should. I guess because of the way they've become used to being treated, they're not willing to associate income from the boats with improved conditions on the reserve. Maybe it's because they see the reserve needing so many dollars and the boats generating so little that it will never make a difference. Yet over time, there are some very expensive fishing licences available. If we save our few dollars every year and buy

four or five and rent them out, that's a little more money. So I guess it's a real question of what they want to do in the future with the boats, because they are a fishing people (Grant 1987).

The issue foremost on many villagers' minds pertained to the other half of Grant's duties.

The new reserve housing was also in urgent need of attention. The Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation was seeking the records it had requested some time earlier.

Grant's responsibility as the housing manager was to record the rents paid by those people occupying the new homes. If a family was not paying their rent, he was to inform Council of that fact.

The key to Grant's assignment was that he was to train a villager to assume his duties in a year.

My job is to design and implement two business systems, and then train someone to carry on with them. I think it might take longer, ... and if they want to extend it because the job isn't quite finished and they think it might take four months more, that would be okay. But if they want me to stay because they don't want to start paying a Native person, that would be dumb. The guy they've got in mind [one of the Councillors not operating a boat], who has been working with me, is really on top of things (Grant 1987).

If the assignment were to end in a year's time, Grant and Louise anticipated that they would be open to other avenues of service with MCC.

## 7.9 SUMMARY

Three and a half years after a short period in the summer of 1983 when there were no MCC volunteers active in Barano, the number reached an all-time high of ten. The ten volunteers active in January 1987 account for approximately 17 person-years of labour<sup>51</sup> for the four-year period beginning August 1983 (Figure 7.1). Over half of the total figure

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<sup>51</sup> This figure includes Donna's one year and Louise's half year as unassigned spouses.

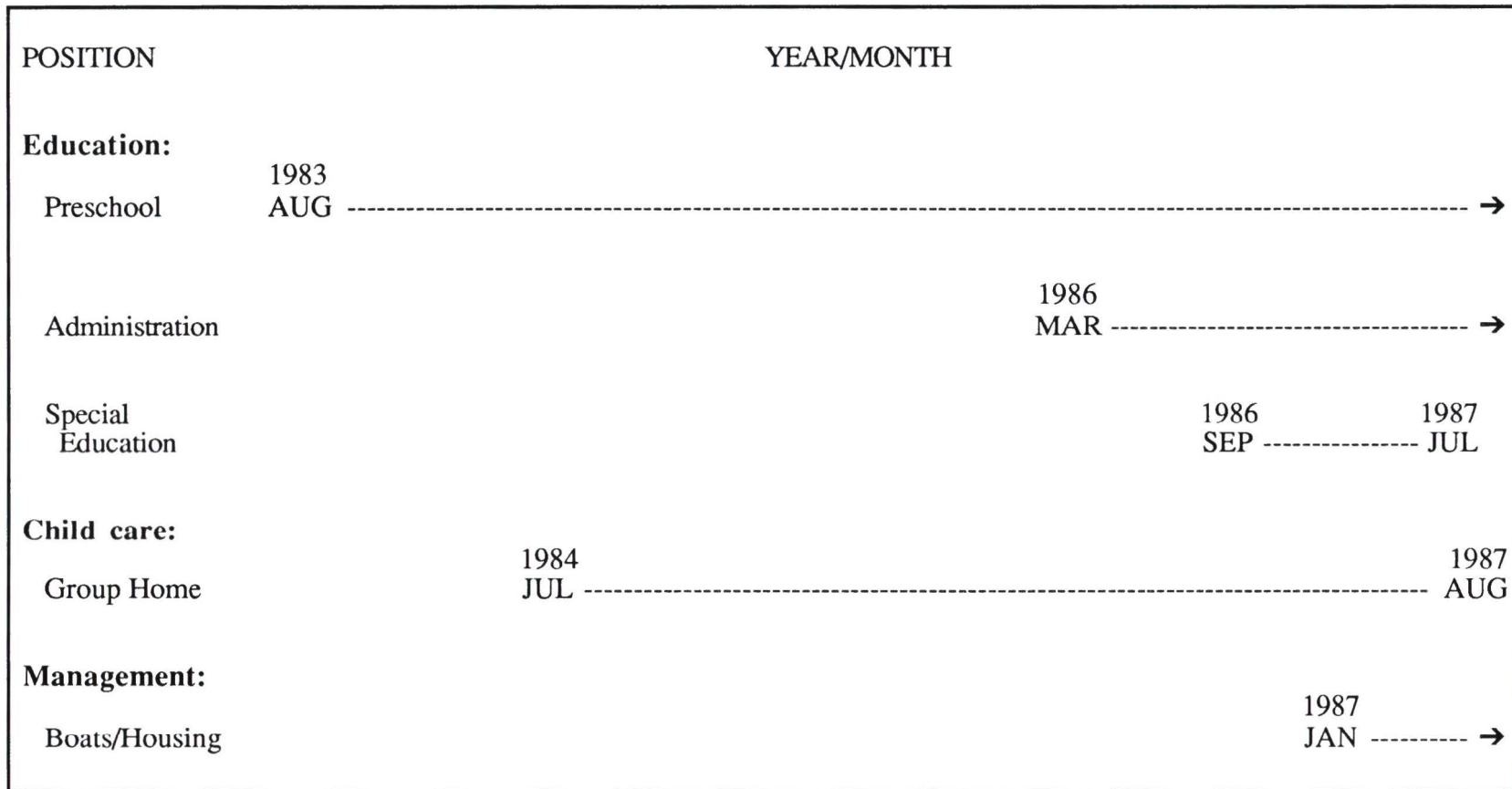
was absorbed by the group home, and with the exception of Grant's work, the remainder of the volunteers' efforts focused on the La'malis education program (Figure 7.2).

The position that began MCC's direct involvement with the reserve's education program continued to be filled by a volunteer for an eighth consecutive year. Betty, then Maria, arrived to carry on the instruction of the village's preschool children, much as Ruth and Denise had done before them. Supplying teachers, however, did not become a regular practice at the Band school. Ruth's termination with MCC marked the end of a volunteer teaching a class there. It was not until Betty accepted the newly created position of support teacher that another volunteer became a part of the school's teaching staff. Further, every education assignment involved teaching except the one that materialized when Band Council hired Neil as its education coordinator.

Neil was also a part of another significant change in MCC's efforts in Barano. He and Donna formed one-half of the original set of houseparents at the group home. Although their work did not differ markedly from that done by earlier volunteers in the receiving and foster homes, the group home represents the first time MCC workers were not involved exclusively with the La'malis people. The provincially funded group home was located off the reserve, and more importantly, open to all Native and non-Native children in the surrounding area. The group home did not, however, begin a trend toward more off-reserve assignments. On the contrary, MCC became more deeply enmeshed in Band affairs. Grant's arrival as the La'malis boat and housing manager involved MCC directly with the Band's economic development for the first time.

Grant's assignment was also anomalous because of its length. It became only the second Barano assignment to be based on a one rather than a two-year basis. Half a year earlier, Maria had begun the first one-year assignment. And although the other seven volunteers accepted two-year terms, none of their stays in Barano matched that length of

Figure 7.2 - Positions Held by Volunteers Active in Barano in 1987



Sources: Personal Interviews

time. The final four group home volunteers were unable to complete their original assignments, and Betty, Neil and Donna extended their association with MCC beyond two years (Maria also extended her term).

Other differences in addition to the greater variation in term length exist between the group of 14 previous volunteers and the ten active in January 1987. Nine of the ten volunteers began their assignments age 29 or older, with Grant representing the exception at age 26. Moreover, whereas only two of the other fourteen volunteers do not have a Mennonite upbringing, six of the ten volunteers did not grow up in a Mennonite church.

Two of those six are Gail and Ron, who became the first local volunteers in Barano, and hence the first MCC workers to live in the community prior to beginning their assignment. Although Gail and Ron had been relief staff for volunteers who had worked at the receiving and foster homes, only Neil and Donna had been MCC volunteers before their Barano assignment. Further, apart from Gail and Ron, only Maria's pre-service experience included working with Native people. Marg, Judy, Neil and Donna arrived at the group home with no training as houseparents, and Neil does not have the academic qualifications to be a principal outside the reserve.

This and the previous Chapter focus on the experiences of the 24 MCC volunteers who began their Barano assignments prior to February 1987. Comments on the volunteers in general, MCC's staff and the organization's method of operations, including specific programs, are contained in the following Chapter. Together, the three Chapters form the basis for the conclusions reached in the final Chapter.

## Chapter Eight

### VOLUNTEERS AS A GROUP, STAFF, PROGRAMS, AND MCC'S GENERAL OPERATIONS IN BARANO

#### 8.1 INTRODUCTION

Throughout the numerous sources that were used to discuss the volunteers in Chapters Six and Seven are important statements that do not pertain specifically to any one volunteer. Topically, these comments from MCC volunteers and staff, La'malis villagers and other interested persons (e.g., social work people) can be placed into four categories: volunteers, staff, programs and general operations. For example, Samantha's generalization on the personality-type of the volunteers falls into the first category. Furthermore, statements on Kaarsemaker's manner in dealing with the volunteers, remarks on the effectiveness of the group home program, and commentaries on MCC's approach to working with the Band are included in the second, third and fourth categories respectively. Although the categories are not mutually exclusive, they provide a simple, rational structure for a presentation of the diverse material contained in this Chapter. Beginning with the general references to volunteers, the Chapter is organized according to the four-fold categorization cited above.

#### 8.2 VOLUNTEERS

The topic of MCC's presence on the reserve was discussed with seven La'malis residents. Linda (1986), a member of one of the original families to move to La'malis,<sup>1</sup> mentioned three former volunteers when asked about MCC. An assistant to the Band's

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<sup>1</sup> Linda did not live in La'malis continuously from the time of her arrival in the fall of 1964. She completed high school in Vancouver and remained in that city a total of twelve years.

social worker and a former member of the Band's child welfare and housing committees, Linda stated that she had heard of MCC and believed that most everyone in education on the reserve was a Mennonite. However, she did not know why the Mennonites had "come all the way to Barano from the Prairies." Kate (1986), an aide for Betty, Denise and Maria, also did not know why MCC volunteers were in La'malis. She thought perhaps they desired "a change of scenery." Regardless, she described the volunteers as being "really nice people." A villager since 1969, Kate first became aware of MCC through Maria while on a trip they took together to a conference in Vancouver, and through an article in the local newspaper.

Similar to Linda's experience, Cathy (1986) attended school and lived in Vancouver. Prior to her return to La'malis in July 1983, she had been unaware of an organization being active on the reserve. Although she stated she could name the volunteers working in the village, she could not give any reason why or how they would have come to La'malis. Nevertheless, as did Kate, she believed they were doing good work. Cathy suggested that most villagers had never heard of MCC, and that only 40 percent of them knew about Neil being employed by the Band. She added that perhaps 30 percent knew of Betty's employment, and that even fewer villagers were aware she was a special needs teacher. A member of the housing and child welfare committees, Cathy feels it is important the villagers understand why MCC is there.

One of the Councillors also was uncertain as to why MCC had workers in La'malis. Peter (1986) had not realized the organization existed until his election to Council in 1985. In the initial stages of his study into the relocation of the two First Nations to La'malis, Peter was made aware of MCC's existence through talking to the education coordinator. Of the volunteers he was aware of, Peter felt they were doing a "good job." He added that former volunteers would return to visit and villagers would go out to greet them.

Erica, the Band's health care representative, a position she began a year before the arrival of Jean and Martin, is one of the first villagers to have had contact with MCC. She noted that volunteers are not in La'malis for the money, stating that, for example, the Band pays only half the salary of the teachers. Moreover, Erica felt the Band had been very fortunate to have those teachers. She was impressed that the volunteers were "great believers of God," yet they did not push the Mennonite religion "down anyone's throat." She viewed the volunteers as "very dedicated and honest people, who are right there to help."

Samantha, who grew up in Walith and moved to La'malis in 1978, expressed views similar to those of Erica. The assistant Band manager had had no knowledge of MCC prior to taking up residence in La'malis. She knew that the organization works in LICs, helping communities develop, and that MCC is in La'malis "to help villagers progress and develop so they can survive in Canadian society." Samantha (1986) characterized the volunteers as

quiet-types, who don't push their own religion. They only bring it up if someone asks them about it. They don't act as professionals do, who talk at you rather than with you.

Pleased with all the volunteers, she found they appear to adapt easily to working on the reserve.

It seems they can just slip in and appear like they've been here for years. It's easy to forget that they haven't been here all the time (Samantha 1986).

With respect to past and present MCC teachers, Samantha appreciated that they are on a first-name basis with the children.<sup>2</sup> She has heard village children use 'teacher' as a 'dirty' word, but not when they were talking to or about MCC teachers. Concluding her

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<sup>2</sup> She prefers to be called by her first name and considers the use of 'Mr.' and 'Mrs.' too formal and an unnecessary social barrier.

comments, Samantha offered no criticism of MCC, but added the Band could manage without its workers.<sup>3</sup>

Chief Les (1986b) claimed his “people feel very comfortable around MCCers.” Volunteers have communicated with ‘outside’ groups (e.g., government) on behalf of the villagers, many of whom are uneasy in the presence of non-aboriginal professionals. It was through the volunteers “that the people awoke to the fact that they had the right to keep their kids in La'malis.” He commended the volunteers for not limiting themselves to their job descriptions. They have helped both in large and small ways, in contrast to some other Band employees, who have seen their work as just a means to earn income and have projected a negative view of the village to townspeople. Nelson (1987), a Councillor and Chief Les’ brother, remarked that the Band has had “beautiful” MCC workers.

Apart from the MCC volunteers, several ‘outsiders’ are employed by the Band. One of these workers is the Band’s social worker, Deanne (1986). The La'malis position, which she began in September 1986, is her first job working exclusively with Native people in 23 years as a social worker. It is very important to her that the Band have competent professionals on staff. In that respect, the Band is fortunate to have MCC volunteers. Deanne believed the volunteers are not creating a dependency, for they are only in those positions until the Band is capable of filling them from within. The volunteers are providing a service to the Band as long as they do not insist the people accept the Mennonite faith. Burl (1986), a Mennonite teacher at the Band school since 1984, claimed that if MCC was to pull out,

there would be a definite sense of loss in La'malis because of the volunteers themselves. I think MCC has had a very good reputation on the reserve. Everyone who has come up under MCC has been someone the Band has been happy with. The Natives have shown real acceptance and warmth toward MCCers.

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<sup>3</sup> She mentioned Wayne, the Band manager, as an example of an employee who was doing exceptional work for the Band.

Wiebe had noticed that “warmth and acceptance” before Burl’s arrival in Barano. In 1983, Wiebe (1983) reported that the volunteers had “won the embrace” of the La'malis people, “an unusual achievement when considering the growing anti-white sentiment in most Indian communities across Canada.” Kaarsemaker (1986) pointed out that “the Band has always been free to hire people themselves,” but “has felt confident that they could get, through MCC, a kind of people they would be happy with.” Reviewing the work in La'malis, Wiebe (1987b) noted that volunteers

have been involved in welfare, the receiving home, education program, and now in fishing, etc., ... and informally, also in a religious sense. Our people have done pastoral work without being called pastors and without establishing our church, which is the way I like to see it work. So we have had a substantial influence.

However, with the increase of volunteers to ten in 1987, the issues of dominance and cliquishness took on greater significance.

If all the volunteers were directly related to La'malis, I would think we would be top-heavy. We may even be, and we need to be alert that we do not let that numerical strength become social prominence. I have been an advocate for spreading out to Paukumaht and Walith. ... When a MCC unit enjoys itself too much, watch out. It’s like a church enclave where there is wonderful fellowship, but try as an outsider to get in on it and you’re left in the cold. It’s a valid point deserving further discussion and reflection (Wiebe 1987b).

Every five or six years, MCC staff assess the organization’s involvement in a project or community. In 1984, Kaarsemaker (1986) was part of such a review of the work in La'malis. Concerned that MCC might be in a “rut” there, the question arose, “Should we be encouraging the Band to assess if it needs MCCers?”

I would have asked the volunteers there to assess the strengths of the Band in terms of community development, and if there were no MCCers, what the Band would do. It was a subjective assessment, and in summary they said, ‘It is worthwhile for us to be here. We don’t think we’re handicapping the Band. Now that they’ve got the school running, there are other things they would like to do, and we think MCC can and should help with that. It’s still worthwhile.’

Within the context of the volunteer work done in B.C., particularly in La'malis, Kaarsemaker (1987b) claimed “that it is loving and **caring** about people, old and young,

and listening to and respecting parents, elders, chief and council, which has given the V.S. workers and MCC a place of trust in Native communities” (emphasis in original).

Including several Band workers with the volunteers, Val (1986) believed

the energy that has gone into the village from the outside is wonderful. It has shown the people a different way. A lot of situations perpetuate themselves for a lack of a view of something different. But these people coming from the outside have shown that there are alternatives.

### 8.3 MCC STAFF: WIEBE AND KAARSEMAKER

When volunteers refer to MCC, Wiebe, and more recently Kaarsemaker, are the names of staff members frequently mentioned. Wiebe is one of Denise’s (1987) heroes for he is “an absolutely wonderful man.” Ruth (1986) has noticed that when Wiebe visits La'malis, he is very talkative and the villagers are attracted to him. Partly because of Wiebe’s (1981:1) participation in the initiation of MCC’s presence in Barano, the work there “tugs deeply at [his] interests.”<sup>4</sup> Russ (1987) respects MCC because it is comprised of “people like Kaarsemaker and Wiebe,” who both, for example, considered it important to conduct a critical evaluation of MCC’s group home involvement.

Ed (1986) believes Kaarsemaker has very good skills for his job. Karen (1986) does not think she would do anything differently if she were in Kaarsemaker’s position.

I just admire him for doing the job that he does because he goes slowly and he’s responsive to the Band. If there’s a position he’s approached on, he considers it and is open-minded about it. I think he generally consults Wiebe on it to get a feeling from him, and he probably consults the VSers that are already here. I find he’s communicative and he sounds people out.

Comparing her and Ed’s experience with how Kaarsemaker works with the volunteers, Karen feels there was a lack of sensitivity prior to his arrival. As Social Services

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<sup>4</sup> In discussing a possible assessment of the first seven years of that work, he admitted his bias toward its continuation (Wiebe 1981:2).

supervisor for the Barano area, Meredith (1986) communicated frequently with Kaarsemaker. She appreciated his openness regarding group home issues, as well as his supportiveness toward the home's staff. Indeed, Neil (1987c) praises Kaarsemaker for his support during the difficult two years at the group home.

The upside of MCC came through, for every MCC administrator we've dealt with is in some ways out of the same mold, that is, caring, gracious and one who listens. Fred Kaarsemaker certainly turned out to be that way, and he was tremendously helpful to us.

## 8.4 PROGRAMS

### 8.4.1 Receiving Home

When Kaarsemaker took up his MCC B.C. position, the organization's involvement in Barano was limited to the La'malis education program. Until 1980, however, MCC's focus had been largely on the receiving home. Although Martin (1987b) did not work in the receiving home as a houseparent, he did participate in the construction of the building.

I was making sure the contractors were doing their work and getting volunteers from the village to help. ... It was a lot of work to get volunteers to go up there. Needless to say, there were not a lot of volunteer hours put into that building. People said they would be glad to help, but when it came down to it, it never worked out that way.

Jean (1987) claims the structure is "inappropriate for that setting and the people it was supposed to serve." Martin (1987b) agrees, stating:

I still think to this day that it was not a very good idea building that type of castle on the reserve. ... I guess, as so often happens, an architect got hold of this thing and seeing it was going to be government money, just built this huge building. It was beyond what anyone had originally intended it to be, ... a humongous castle up on the hill overlooking the poorer hovels. ... The kids would look out of their windows and look down on their parents, and the parents would look out and up at this monstrosity.

Russ (1987), with his architectural training, supports Jean and Martin's contention that the building, situated on the highest point of the reserve, is both badly designed and in a bad location. Russ contends that its architecture makes poor use of space and is foreign to the Holat'in. He believes that some villagers still refuse to go to the receiving home either because of the climb or because of its alien shape.<sup>5</sup>

At times, the two volunteer couples who first worked at the facility expressed concern about the way in which the government operated it. Rick (1978b) and Val approached Social Services regarding the basic purpose of the receiving home after two boys, awaiting judicial hearings on charges of theft and the possession of deadly weapons, were placed with them. Likewise, Lois and Chris (1987a) did not agree with Social Services placing teenagers in the home with infants.

#### **8.4.2 Education**

Rick and Val, the first set of MCC houseparents to work at the receiving home, did not limit their reserve involvement to child care. Indeed, Rick's willingness to chair the Band's education committee contributed greatly to MCC being asked to provide a preschool teacher. Ruth filled the position and heralded MCC's continued presence in the Band's education program. That presence was limited to teachers until Neil became education coordinator in 1986. Although the program is Band operated and controlled, Neil (1987c) admits the preschool and school are run by non-aboriginal people and are modelled after public schools.

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<sup>5</sup> Designed by a California architect, the building is more suited to the climate of southern California. In the winter of 1982, heating bills were approximately \$800 a month for the two-storey structure (Meredith 1986). Shoddy construction contributed to the enormous maintenance costs, and has left the Band with a building that has visible spaces in the walls and a cracked foundation. Estimates as high as \$100,000 are cited for the repair work needed on the foundation and the walls (Ron 1986c).

You can make a strong argument that the school is not Band operated or controlled because the Band has almost no say in what's going on (i.e., White education coordinator, White teachers). ... The answer to the question, 'Is there a way to make the school more Indian?' is only now being worked out here. ...

We feel that a significant factor why Indian children are failing to graduate from high school is that they are, generally speaking, poor readers. So we have taken on as our major goal to improve the reading ability of the kids using the 'whole language' approach. ... It's my belief that Band schools should almost universally use this approach. ... That's one small step in teaching Native children that may not be the way you teach White kids. I think that could be the case in other aspects of the school. Should the school operate in the same way? ... In ten or 20 years from now, if Band schools survive, maybe we'll see real Indian schools, where the curriculum, teachers, classroom, everything is markedly different and reflects Indian culture. That may never happen, but even if doesn't, there is still an argument for having schools on reserves. ... Having a significant presentation of cultural things, almost inevitable in a Band school, is itself a valid reason for a Band-operated school.

Wiebe (1987b) adds that

a few things need to be remembered. They have always educated their children within the clan system, so the structure of school is a White imposition. The grade system where children are kept in these lateral slices based on age is a White imposition. Having a young teacher in control on a bell-ringing basis and learning from books rather than the influence of people are impositions. Then when you suddenly force an Indian person into that White structure, an awful lot of violence occurs, particularly to the teacher, who usually doesn't last long.

Noting the 'violence' faced by teachers, Wiebe (1982) commended Ruth, Ed and Denise for generating the "unusual combination of good, culturally relevant pedagogy" and "a very acceptable degree of congeniality." Further, he advised Ruth and Ed upon the completion of their MCC terms:

'Stay on if they ask you. But open your door to the community. Do not become like a secret society that intimidates the parents. Let them come in and circulate, and do public meetings as often as you can. If you get invited to their homes for a cup of coffee, do not say no.' That openness over time will naturally lead to local teachers taking over. Maybe then the school will be revamped considerably. ... Who knows, in a few years half the school year might take place on the boats. Kids will learn how to put out the hemlock branches for herring eggs (Wiebe 1987b).

He concludes that "the beginning of a Holat'in school right within La'malis village and MCC's thorough participation in that school represents an MCC commitment to serve the

community under their terms of reference and in agreement with their aspiration” (Wiebe 1988).<sup>6</sup>

Many parents have told Ruth (1986) that they place their children in the Band school because of the cultural program.<sup>7</sup> Burl, and others (e.g., Cathy (1986)), believe there is a sense of desperation surrounding the program.

Parents see the elders growing older and dying, and hence their language and ways dying with them. They’re looking to the school to provide that continuance once provided by potlatches (Burl 1986).

But Burl notes that the teachers must also grapple with preparing the children for high school, where most of them drop out. James (1986) would like to see an easier transition for the Native children entering high school, but he views that as the high school’s responsibility. Neil (1987c) agrees that the magnitude of failure at the high-school level demands radical changes,

but a lot of those changes have nothing to do with the Band school. The vast majority of the kids in the community could do well across the bridge if you changed things occurring outside of school. ... They’re failing because they are not emotionally or mentally able to be in the classroom. To talk about homework or even have them think about math or learning to read is ridiculous when you consider some of the things happening to the kids. Then it doesn’t matter what schools you send them to or what teaching methods you use, they’re still going to

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<sup>6</sup> In the beginning, the school was considered an alternative for those children who would not ‘fit’ into the public elementary school in Barano.

Many children from the worst homes came to the school because it was more convenient, or their behaviour problems could be better dealt with in a smaller class. However, there were some very **good** children from **good** homes in the school. ... Some parents’ attitudes were that Indians should not mix with whites. The reason they came to the school had nothing to do with whether the children were ‘good’ or ‘bad.’ There were some children on the reserve not attending school at all because it was too inconvenient to get driven into town, or get up on time for the bus. ...

Therefore, these children from the less stable homes would all sooner attend and fit in better at the Band school – thus the reputation (emphasis in original) (Ruth 1988).

The reputation was also a carryover from when there was an alternate school on the reserve for high-school students who had dropped-out of the public high school.

<sup>7</sup> Ruth was surprised to learn that many parents allow their children, even at the kindergarten level, to decide which school they would like to attend.

have big problems. The school is not in isolation from what's happening in the community. ...

I want to be involved in having programs (e.g., preschool library, daycare) available that will increase children's chances of making it. ... We want to offer these programs but not kid ourselves into thinking that through these alone we're going to solve the problem. Actually, it is more important that the community does not kid itself, believing everything will be better because they have their own school and teachers. If they do, they will become disillusioned because it won't happen that way.

Several parents believe that the best chance for their children to 'make it' is for them to be in one of the Barano elementary schools. Kate (1986) wants her children and grandchildren to attend public school if possible. There they can meet people of other nationalities and become better prepared for the adult world. She considers the Band school to be one for slow learners, truants and those who misbehave. Of Samantha's (1986) three children, two of them have attended public school. For her, the issue is not that she perceives the Band school to be inferior, but that she realizes her children will have to deal with non-Native society as adults. The earlier they are exposed to that society, the easier it will be for them when they are older.

On the other hand, Linda (1986) removed her children from the Band school because she believes it was there they picked up their vulgar language. She feels her eldest daughter is doing better at the public school because the teachers there are more strict. Cathy (1986) contends that children are switched from the Band to a public school mainly because of disciplinary problems. She believes their parents are tired of having to face her as the home/school coordinator. Cathy's children attend the Band school, which she feels can cater better to the special needs of her learning disabled child. All of Chief Les' children also attend the village school, simply because it is Band-operated (Ruth 1986). James (1986) concludes that because he has not heard from the school, that is an indication of how well it is functioning. In general, Ruth (1986) has sensed a definite positive change in the villagers' attitudes toward the Band school.

However, James (1986) suspects the educational standards at the Band school are lower than in the public system because of the number of learning disabled children on the reserve. Burl (1986) acknowledges that several of his students would not be in a regular class in one of the Barano schools. However, he notes that with three aides, one support teacher and small classes (45 students in three classes), the Band teachers are better able to give individual attention. In addition, he views the school as providing an environment where the children's 'Nativeness' is not threatened, as it often is in the public schools.

#### 8.4.3 Gardening

The summer before Ruth arrived as the first MCC preschool teacher, MCC had hoped to initiate an annual gardening program on La'malis and the neighbouring reserves. However, Lois and Chris' extensive commitments and a lack of interest among La'malis residents combined to thwart the effort. Once the program started a year later, it continued for a total of six summers (Figure 6.1). The last summer volunteers to work in the program had been, at the outset, confused and unsure of what to encourage "because so many people told [them] different things regarding La'malis" (Scott & Ella 1985:1). Scott and Ella were told that the previous gardener had become "terribly discouraged" and had ended up doing most of the work himself. However, they had made it clear to villagers that they would not do that, and as a result, there was little activity.<sup>8</sup> In the end, most of their efforts at working the soil centred on helping a few villagers seed lawns in front of their new houses. Overall, Wiebe (1987b) admits the gardening program in the area did not meet with much success because of the poor soil and climate. Burl (1986) agrees,

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<sup>8</sup> Lucy (1989), a Walith resident, told Wiebe that she had wanted the couple to do some gardening for her, but "they never did any work" on the reserve. Wiebe explained that they had been hesitant because they had been afraid to do the wrong things.

adding that the program is too short for working with La'malis people, who tend to be cautious in opening up to outsiders.

#### 8.4.4 Group Home

MCC's gardening program did not receive funding from the La'malis Band. The same is true of MCC's group home program, the only local program in which the organization's efforts did not focus on La'malis. Although the provincial government supplied the group home's budget,<sup>9</sup> Meredith (1986), claims Social Services did not supervise MCC's operation of the home.

This Ministry is very much into an arm's length relationship with the societies we contract with. We set out the contract and they operate the program. If we become unhappy with how they're running it, we can always withdraw the contract. That's all we can do.

But Meredith had no intention of withdrawing MCC's contract.

They certainly provided an invaluable service to us, one that we were unable to have in this community. There is a tremendous need for a group home here, ... but we were unable to open one in this location due to funding restrictions, lack of available staff and so on. MCC sent in a proposal we were able to accept and they have done an excellent job since then of running the group home. So I feel, and everyone in this office feels, quite a bit of gratitude to them.

Furthermore, Meredith points out that the Ministry will contract out with very few religious organizations because of the element of proselytism. James (1986), the Social Services social worker responsible for La'malis, did not perceive MCC's Christian orientation to be a source of problems at the group home.

When I'm there, I don't get the sense that it's associated with any religion at all. ... I don't think the kids are all that surprised when they're in care and they wind up with people who ask them to go to church. Historically, the religious community has always had a big share of foster and group home beds because they have that drive and desire to do good for their fellow citizens. Mennonites, it seems to me,

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<sup>9</sup> MCC's (1986e) proposed budget for the 1987 fiscal year totaled \$53,389. MCC anticipated a Social Services payment of \$53,900, and hence a surplus of \$511.

are not really a problem. Jehovah Witnesses are a problem, and Seventh Day Adventists can be difficult because their religion is so strict that very often the kids don't have a choice. If the kids have a choice, they usually go for it. It's not usually a big deal for them.

Meredith also had considerable confidence in MCC's preparation of the group home workers and she appreciated the support given them by MCC staff once they began their assignments. Karen (1986), who came to Barano as a foster parent, envies the group home arrangement.

When I think about our relationship with the kids, it wasn't parent-to-child and it wasn't very close. ... With older children like we had, that is something almost impossible to establish. They've hardened themselves in so many ways that they don't let people get close to them because they don't want to be hurt again. I think it's realistic to say, 'We'll give good care, but we won't pretend we're their parents.' The group home lets you do that and gives you a certain detachment. You're then able to put more energy into the children since you have time to regenerate yourself.

Looking back at the two years he worked at the group home, Russ (1987) believes

the program and situation was stable. The kids could count on this and this happening, which was a good breather, so to speak, for a lot of the kids. It gave those younger ones with a lot of pressure on them the chance to act their age and enjoy it.

Burl (1986) contends that because it had been staffed by MCC volunteers rather than government employees, the group home "had a good effect on a lot of kids."

I've taught some of the kids who have been in the group home. Knowing what they were like previously, I can say the influence MCCers have had on those kids has been extremely positive.

Deanne (1986), the Band's social worker, adds that MCC's involvement in the group home was the "best solution to a bad situation."

Meredith's (1986) gratitude to MCC for operating the group home did not prevent her from later becoming concerned about the organization's recruiting difficulties.

Kaarsemaker has been telling me that they've got a number of situations that require child care or social workers for which they haven't been able to find anyone. And so it was dicey this year, the year staff changed, whether they could find people to continue to operate the group home. ... I think they feel frustrated at not being able

to recruit people with experience required for the position [in its proposal, MCC (1983:7) states it will recruit couples possessing “education and experience appropriate to deal with the responsibilities of the home”].

James (1986) believes “volunteers shouldn’t be running group homes because you need to have qualified staff.”

The fundamental difference between this group home and others I’ve dealt with, and I think it’s a detriment, is that it’s staffed by volunteers and there is no boss on the premises. ... I think they’ve been able to get away with it because they’ve lucked out with quality volunteers and because the kids they get here, generally speaking, do not have heavy-duty problems. ... Even if you’re a professional and expecting it, it’s difficult to cope, for example, with a kid strung out on PCP [powerful hallucinogenic drug]. If you’re a volunteer and your main claim to fame is that you’re a nice person and you like kids, you’re just out of your league. You need that training.

At the beginning of the program, Wiebe’s concern about MCC volunteers working in the group home centred on the fear local Native people would view them as Social Services employees (Russ 1987). Indeed, the manner in which MCC became the group home’s operating society troubled Wiebe. More specifically, Wiebe (1984) noted the Ministry decided on the need and location for the home, and holds ultimate accountability for its operation.

Where in this entire process is the community decision? How will the native communities ... find any meaningful decision-making in this venture?

Kaarsemaker (1986) points out that he had met with Chief Les beforehand, and had told him MCC would only participate in the group home if the Band approved. Kaarsemaker noted the Chief’s response and quoted him in the group home proposal submitted to the provincial government:

So long as MCC personnel are involved in the group home, the people of La'malis will feel that their point of view will be sought and listened to. Therefore, we will find the courage to come out of our withdrawl [sic] and depression to seek to understand how the Ministry of Human Resources works and how we can in the future provide more of our own social and family services (MCC 1983:3).

With these words, Kaarsemaker sensed he had the blessing to pursue the issue further.

Two years after the opening, Wiebe was still asking questions about the program:

To what extent does MCC pick up the social fallout linked to the forced relocation of the two clans now residing in La'malis? Should MCC in fact do the grimy work for a government (i.e., make a bad situation look reasonably good), which forms the policies? In the end, the integrationist policies which the La'malis people rejected in education might become operative within the group home. Is MCC standing in the way of self-determination? Does Social Services' integrationist policy allow for Native input shaping the group home program? That is, is there room within the present policy for the wisdom of Holat'in elders and family members? (Wiebe 1986a, 1986b)

Wiebe (1986b) believes "the highly regimented relationship to the children" became workable because of the volunteers' "unusual congenial qualities." However, he wonders whether the volunteers' efforts simply contributed "to the masking of an oppressive system." He also wonders about the group home's "suave facilities,"<sup>10</sup> and "what happens to children as they return to their homes, which are not at all like the rather plush group homes." James (1986) contends that many La'malis people perceive the group home as not suiting their needs and being more complicated than necessary.<sup>11</sup>

Two La'malis residents, however, commented favourably on the group home. Linda (1986), an original member of the Band's child welfare committee, felt the group home was "good for teenagers, who seem to settle down there and attend school regularly."

When asked about the group home, Peter (1986), a Councillor, first replied, "That's none

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<sup>10</sup> James (1986) had been impressed with the Barano facility.

Because of my experience with group homes in Greater Vancouver and Prince George, I look at this one and think it's a wonderful, clean, well-constructed and well-maintained home. The group homes I'm used to dealing with usually have at least three or four holes in the walls. But this one has a computer, a colour T.V. and a trampoline in the backyard. So I think it's really a nice place in that respect.

<sup>11</sup> James indicates that a child placed into the group home has been apprehended by the Ministry, and is therefore separated from his/her family for an extended period. Often parents of the child do not understand this, and shortly after things have calmed down, they ask for their child back. But Ministry guidelines dictate that the request must be denied.

of my business.” Nevertheless, he thought it was a “good place,” because several Band teenagers who had returned from there had told him so.

Half a year into MCC’s operation of the home, Russ (1985:1-2) maintained that until the aboriginal

communities can manage all their child welfare concerns, the group home will function as a much needed resource. ... The long run goal is a withdrawal of MCC as administrative society of the group home in favor of greater local native self-government and community self-determination.

But two years later, Neil (1987c) began to sense the program might not play a significant role in local Native self-determination.

MCC wanted to become involved in the group home so they could help local Natives get better control over what happens to their children. But it isn’t working out that way. My understanding is that the group home was to be a means by which, first of all, Native children would get sensitive care. Even though the organization and staff were sensitive, there was no real Native influence. Some attempts were made but nothing really happened. ... Now it appears the Natives are moving to take care of their kids on their own reserves, ... and so I see MCC beginning to drop out of the picture. I think that if a viable organization asked for the contract, MCC would be open to that, as long as the Native communities were comfortable with the take-over. ... In a few years, though, they may not care who takes over because they won’t have enough of their kids going through for it to matter to them.

MCC had hoped local Native people would learn how to gain control of their child welfare problems through the group home’s advisory committee.

Wiebe’s (1987b) uneasiness with MCC’s involvement in the group home led him to propose the formation of an advisory committee. However, Russ and Lynn were doubtful about the utility of the committee.

We were hesitant in even starting the group home advisory committee. It made sense for us to contact the people in the social development fields on the various reserves to let them know who we were [they emphasized that they were not government workers, but MCC volunteers]. If we did get a child from one of the reserves, we could go to these contacts and explain the situation. If the parents of that child had any questions, they could go to the contact and not have to face us as strangers. If they wanted to visit their child, arrangements could be made through the contact (Russ 1987).

There was concern that the Native representatives from the four area reserves would be made to feel they had input when in reality, there was not much they could contribute to the development of the program in its initial stages. Once contacts were established, Russ and Lynn realized potential representatives were also in short supply and without much extra time because of numerous commitments on their own reserves. Nevertheless, the committee formed in December 1984, but very few of the Native representatives attended the early meetings<sup>12</sup> (Russ 1987). Attendance improved, however, to the point where Ron (1987b), as chairperson of a committee meeting, could ask the Band representatives whether MCC, through the group home, had done justice to Native concerns. Responses to the question did not contain any complaints. The discussion focused more on the decline of Native children entering the group home, a fact attributed to the Bands experiencing greater success at keeping their children on the reserves. Mainly because of this development, did MCC not renew the group home contract, and therefore ceased to be the operating society on September 1, 1987.

#### **8.4.5 Boat and House Management**

MCC's withdrawal from the group home once again narrowed the organization's involvement to La'malis. The only position not connected to the Band's education program was Grant's one-year assignment as boat and house manager. Karen (1986) supports MCC's venture into the Band's fishing operation because sea-harvesting is such a large part of the people's cultural heritage. Neil (1987c) views Grant's position as a sensitive one, and Wiebe (1987b) has communicated similar concerns to Kaarsemaker.

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<sup>12</sup> In his summer visit to Barano in 1985, Kaarsemaker expressed concern for the lack of awareness La'malis residents conveyed regarding the group home (Scott & Ella 1985:3).

Kaarsemaker and I and other staff people have had a discussion on the issues surrounding Grant's assignment. A bottom-line premise with MCC Canada staff is that Native people have access to their resources and that MCC, by way of technology or special managerial skills, help create that access whenever possible. ... We think that fishing falls into that category, so in principle we endorse the assignment. What we have to guard against is that we do not make our managerial service a managerial lordship, which is an ever present danger. There is a tradition of Whites doing that.

## 8.5 GENERAL OPERATIONS

MCC's concept of service, where it seeks to be more like a servant than a master, combined with its support of volunteers, keep Neil and Donna (1987b) committed to the organization. Ruth (1986) and Betty (1987b) continue to be "impressed" with MCC in that regard. Indeed, Ruth could think of only one negative comment about MCC, that from those volunteers who arrived and found their assignments not to be what they expected. Marg (1986) and Judy (1986) think MCC's policies and programs are "great," and Ron (1986a) sees the agency as being "very versatile" and "doing a fantastic job."

Maria (1987d) also is very positive about MCC, contrasting it with the Department of Indian Affairs. The federal agency had been "unsympathetic" and impersonal to her and her husband, whereas "MCC is just the opposite." Lynn (1987) "respects" MCC and believes its workers are "doing their best wherever they are." Grant (1987) remarks that he has no fear of working with MCC because of its good reputation. And Maria (1987a) has a deep sense that MCC is highly respected on the reserve. Hence, she does not wish to be doing anything to destroy that respect. She hopes she can be true to herself, do what is right and carry on MCC's good reputation.

With respect to the organization's involvement in La'malis, both Kaarsemaker and Wiebe believe MCC has earned the Band's respect. Wiebe (1983) claims that unique development is a result of MCC operating on the reserve's, and not the government's

terms. However, Wiebe (1983) is wary that MCC's efforts, in addressing social problems, may simply be a "mop-up operation."<sup>13</sup>

I am concerned that we don't give La'malis an artificial remedy. The community doesn't have its roots there. So there is even a point where we shouldn't make it as nice as possible. We should try to make it survivable, but we should not do that without asking the basic questions about the forced relocation (i.e., do they have access to resources that are culturally meaningful to them?). That's the reason why I keep asking that question. MCC should keep an open eye and ear to if and when the people ask us about their ancestral lands, so we won't be doing a teflon covering over a bad situation (Wiebe 1987b).

Ed (1986) thinks "MCC is still careful to solicit the Band's wishes and be responsive to what the Band is saying," and hence continues to be servant-oriented. Russ (1987) too, commends MCC for consciously limiting itself to advisory positions within the Band's administration. But "the hardest thing to evaluate is if MCC is successful in training local people to fill those positions." He sees MCC as doing its best in that regard in light of the extent to which La'malis residents are ready and willing to take over positions. Burl (1986) also feels MCC is not detracting from the Band's self-determination and he appreciates the organization's focus of meeting people in their needs as opposed to an emphasis on church planting.

In addition, Russ (1987) claims

there's a real danger in thinking, 'Here's a need, let's respond.' I'm impressed with MCC in that sense, for they don't feel that they have to be somewhere to respond to a need, or create needs to respond to. But if there's a call from the Natives for something, they're willing to help.

Echoing Russ' opinion, Karen (1986) emphasizes that

it's fraught with danger when you become too aggressive, when you start building your own agenda. I really like the fact MCC waits to be approached, especially with Native people. So much has been done to Natives and so many people have

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<sup>13</sup> Wiebe (1987b) has observed that Chief Les always talks to him, but not to Kaarsemaker, about the relocation of the two First Nations. Wiebe predicts that in a few years the Chief will ask MCC to assist in a relocation effort back to the original villages. He hopes MCC will be open to the request.

said, 'This is the way you should do things,' that it's refreshing to have an organization that takes a supporting role, not a leading one. I see that as one of their real strong suits. There might be one or two examples where it might be appropriate to say, 'Let's do this,' but generally speaking, it's good to wait for their initiative.

Sherry (1987) has also noticed MCC's "non-threatening" approach.

So many people want to make changes and they want to make them now. They want to take the hard line and do things in a certain way. I think MCC's approach is very supportive. ... They're not here with the attitude, 'Hi, my name is so and so, and I'm here to help you clean up your act.' MCC is here in a non-aggressive way.

Indeed, Russ (1987) anticipates that

if you talk to the villagers, they probably don't even realize that these people are from MCC, which is probably good. It's an indication of how they're doing their work.

For Russ (1987), a key to why MCC remains responsive is because "it's grass-roots oriented, small enough, and with no illusions of becoming a major development organization." Indeed,

if an executive of a corporation looked at how MCC is organized, he would say, 'It shouldn't work for there's no chain of command. It's a poorly-organized organization.' Yet I think that's part of the magic of why it does work. There's a lot of creativity allowed (Russ 1987).

Ed (1986) claims

all the VSers who have been here have felt really good about MCC the organization, the people who are their immediate supervisors. To illustrate that, we get periodic visits from Kaarsemaker, and people from Winnipeg, and with all of them one feels that they are interested in you personally. We really felt good about our relationship with the people at the top. ... It's not a top-heavy administration.

Furthermore, Neil (1987c) thinks

one of MCC's strengths is that they're willing to go with the flow. They don't get locked into a program and then try to make it work one way or another.

Nevertheless, Ed (1986) admits

there are gaps between what happens in Akron or Winnipeg and in the field. ... Personalities, people's failings, strengths and weaknesses are involved, and

sometimes things that should be done aren't, such as MCC preparing its personnel properly. Maybe in some cases they don't really know what is happening, thinking specifically of the personnel people in Winnipeg. Because it's not profit-oriented, these kinds of things happen and you need to accept that.

Neil (1987c) also sees drawbacks to MCC's lack of professionalism.

Some of MCC's shortcomings are tradeoffs, and the only way to correct them is to change some attitudes and philosophies which they're not willing to change. For example, I don't think MCC is as efficient as it could be. Some things happen that shouldn't because of poor management. But an alternative is to have a bunch of professional managers, and I don't think MCC wants that, nor do I, for then they would lose something.

In addition, He believes

that MCC often does not do a very good job of putting people in the field. The information that people are given about their assignment and what their assignment turns out to be is often light-years apart [laughter]. At one level, I find that inexcusable. I have seen the consternation that has caused when volunteers arrive and find that what they thought they were coming to was vastly different from the case. I think that's unfortunate and that it should be minimized. But again, I'm not sure that if you cured the problem you wouldn't be creating others. ...

I see part of the problem being how the administration is structured, in that the people doing the jobs are there only a few years. I haven't thought it through completely, but I do think that some of the inefficiency and breakdown has to do with even us out here in the field not getting the picture back clearly enough to the office. ... If the organization was more professional, they would say, 'Look, you're our employee and you have this report to do. If you don't get it done by this date, you're in trouble.' But MCC doesn't work like that with its volunteers, or at least I haven't experienced that (Neil 1987c).

Ed (1986) supports Neil's claim, stating that

VSers often times don't know about the job they've agreed to do. The job is inaccurately portrayed to them, they don't know what the place is like and who they'll be working with. We've suggested to MCC that they sharpen that up a bit. I think that if they had the resources and personnel, they probably would.

Ed (1986) adds that MCC takes the risk of placing inexperienced personnel "in the hope that the whole experience doesn't make mincemeat out of the volunteers or out of the relationship between MCC and the people they're trying to serve."

Burl (1986) and his wife, Darlaine (1986), members of the Mennonite church group, also view MCC as not being well-organized, particularly concerning job descriptions. It

has been their experience that MCC job descriptions and the actual situations are usually worlds apart.<sup>14</sup> Wiebe (1987b) admits MCC

sometimes, often times, gets criticized for having ill-defined job descriptions. But because we show some fluidity, MCC has contributed very substantially to the creation of very many jobs in areas where we work. Take La'malis for example, ... many of the jobs there were advocated by MCC people. It's not that we hold them all, for others now have the jobs. I think if we wanted to recast our story of La'malis, we could trace those jobs to MCC without unduly giving it the credit.

Furthermore, Kaarsemaker (1986) notes "there is a lot of cost and risk involved in hiring somebody from far away, and so MCC is of help by doing the screening, interviewing and recommending."

Having attended two MCC orientation sessions, Neil contends that the sessions are not very helpful in orienting volunteers to their specific assignments. Whenever possible, MCC should use the occasion to put volunteers in contact with people living in the community who are knowledgeable of the assignment.<sup>15</sup> Nevertheless, at these sessions

MCC does a good job, probably a better job than a lot of organizations, trying to prepare people for what is going to happen by discussing real issues. The amount of self-analysis and self-criticism they do in order to find better ways of doing things impresses me. I certainly think MCC has shortcomings, but they make an honest attempt to deal with them. Often they don't succeed, but they try, and that counts for something (Neil 1987c).

Over time, Ed (1986) has come to realize that MCC is not perfect.

In the past, I might have thought of MCC as all-knowing and covering all the bases, making no mistakes or doing things improperly. Now I see that it's made up of human beings that have their failings.

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<sup>14</sup> Upon completion of their post-secondary studies, Burl and Darlaine applied to MCC. However, a suitable placement could not be arranged.

<sup>15</sup> Erica's (1986) participation in the operations of the receiving home and preschool has had her involved in the process of placing volunteers. A member of the preschool society and child welfare committee, she is impressed that MCC requires its volunteers to submit an extensive application, rather than just a one-page form.

Although volunteers and staff have their failings, he adds that that does not diminish the high-level of their commitment to serving others.

Sherry (1987) perceives there has been a positive change on the reserve since MCC's arrival. A long-time witness of MCC's work in La'malis, Karen (1986) hopes the future has the organization active in the community in some capacity.

When you think of the years MCC has been involved in La'malis and you try to imagine La'malis without that presence, it's hard to do. Yet, maybe it wouldn't be any different.

## 8.6 SUMMARY

The seven La'malis people interviewed focused their discussion of MCC on the volunteers. All seven villagers used only favourable terms such as 'caring' and 'honest' to describe the volunteers. However, four of those active community members indicated that they did not know why or how any of the volunteers had chosen to work in La'malis. Non-Band members employed in La'malis also supported the volunteer effort on the reserve. Similarly, Wiebe and Kaarsemaker have sensed the Band has been pleased with the character and work of each volunteer sent to the village. And several volunteers expressed their appreciation for the support and leadership of Wiebe and Kaarsemaker.

Several volunteers also commented on MCC's early involvement in the receiving home program. The first two set of houseparents noted the tensions of operating the program under government control. Even the physical structure is criticized because it is considered impractical and inappropriate for the reserve. Although the government does not control the Band's operation of its education program, there is concern the program merely transplants a non-aboriginal system on to the reserve. Nevertheless, the village cultural program is important to many parents, and so they prefer that their children attend the Band school rather than one of the town schools. On the other hand, several villagers

send their children to public schools primarily to prepare them for living in a non-aboriginal society. And the volunteers and other staff members at the Band school constantly grapple with preparing students for high school and maintaining instruction at an appropriate academic level.

MCC's involvement in a gardening program spanned six summers, but the hoped for annual planting of vegetable gardens never developed. The more recent participation in the Band's fishing operation is predicated on MCC's desire to support an economic activity rich in cultural meaning. Furthermore, operating the group home was to be a way for the Native people to gain more control over their child welfare problems. But they seem more interested in solutions that provide child care services that keep their children on the reserves. Recognizing the direction of the Native response helped MCC to decide not to renew the contract in fall 1987. Nevertheless, the local provincial social work people expressed gratitude to MCC for taking on the operation of the home. For them, the home filled a "tremendous need" for both Native and non-Native children, for it became the only such facility in the area.

With respect to MCC in more general terms, most of the volunteers' comments are positive. Several volunteers note the organization's willingness to be responsive rather than aggressively initiating a course of action. However, others point out that MCC's job descriptions often contain glaring inaccuracies. MCC's lack of professionalism is cited as a factor contributing to that communication problem. Regardless of any shortcomings, MCC's presence is seen to have generated a positive influence among the La'malis residents.

Essentially, this Chapter contains 'leftovers' – important data left over after the main discussion of individual volunteers in Chapters Six and Seven. One common thread throughout the three Chapters is that the contents represent, as much as possible, the

expressed experiences and feelings of people other than myself. A main objective has been to provide their detailed accounts so that the reader has a framework from which to assess the validity of the statements made in Chapter Nine, which is an assessment of the volunteer effort in Barano.

## Chapter Nine

### CONCLUSION: MCC'S IMPACT ON THE LA'MALIS PEOPLE

#### 9.1 INTRODUCTION

An assessment of MCC's impact on the La'malis people, from the organization's initial contact to 1987, poses numerous difficulties. Indeed, one can argue the issues are so complex and interwoven that it is impossible to provide a meaningful evaluation. While it is true real people and real-life situations are complicated, there is a place for an assessment that tries to be honest to the data and is not driven by a hidden agenda. The generation of such an assessment has been the objective of this Chapter.

One of the practical difficulties with presenting such an evaluation is the organization of its diverse and multi-faceted elements. The approach taken here has been to structure the discussion around the 16 working hypotheses outlined in Chapter Two. Just as these statements provided a flexible framework for the data collection, they provide a basis from which to begin the evaluation.

#### 9.2 WORKING HYPOTHESES

The working hypotheses have been grouped into five categories:

- 1) volunteers' characteristics (e.g., patient);
- 2) volunteers' home life and support network;
- 3) nature of assignments;
- 4) MCC's flexibility and cooperativeness; and
- 5) MCC's advocacy work.

The first five statements are based on the assumption that La'malis support of the volunteers' efforts is closely tied to the villagers' acceptance of the workers on a personal level.

### 9.2.1 Volunteers' Characteristics

- 1) The volunteers' personalities have a significant bearing on their effectiveness among the La'malis people. If the workers are patient, unpretentious, and listen and incorporate people's ideas, they will earn the community's trust. That trust will have a direct and positive impact on the success of any project.

Wolfe (1986) argues aboriginal communities need professionals who possess patience and humility, and are willing to lead, train and refrain from assuming control. King (1978) emphasizes that those outsiders who focus on listening, rather than being heard, will find aboriginal leaders to be informative. Clearly, it is crucial for a volunteer seeking to promote community development in La'malis to be able to become informed of the community's needs, as viewed by its leadership.

MCC B.C. stressed the importance of listening to aboriginal leaders to its researcher who was being asked to examine the Mennonite/First Nation relationship in the province. At MCC orientation sessions, Wiebe advises new volunteers to listen to elders, and in general, assess the impact of their own words and actions by waiting for feedback from the people. Kaarsemaker (1987b) claims MCC has earned a place of trust with La'malis people because volunteers have listened, and have shown love, care and respect to both young and old residents.

The ability to listen well was attributed to the first MCC volunteer in Barano. Wiebe felt Martin was able to communicate easily with all La'malis residents. He heard villagers talk to Martin about numerous topics unrelated to his position as welfare aide.

He had eyes to see their hard work, ears to hear their agonies from their point of view, and he didn't jam it all into his profession. He heard the people and was very deeply appreciated ... (Wiebe 1987b).

Indeed, villagers were astonished to learn that on one occasion, a former Chief had talked to Martin for hours about the past. Jean and Martin felt so strongly about the need to be listeners, that they stressed the volunteer replacing Martin be the type "of person who

listens and asks questions rather than offers solutions to all problems immediately” (Jean 1975).

Ruth was another volunteer able to build a rapport with La'malis residents. She attributes her success, in part, to her non-aggressive personality. At first, she was hesitant to communicate with parents, not wanting to force herself on anyone, nor wanting to appear to be a “know-it-all” (Ruth 1986). She would not try to force or maintain conversations.

Neil, on the other hand, openly doubted whether he had the right personality for his position as school principal. As a ‘let’s get it done, meet problems head-on’ type of person, he became frustrated with how Band Council approached issues. He was struggling to be patient and let the Councillors address the issues. At one Council meeting, several Councillors became upset at Neil for talking about the school for several hours. He admitted he had a problem of talking too much in those meetings, and was working on ways of balancing the need to inform Council without taking a great deal of its time.

Evidence suggests most of the volunteers were generally quiet, reserved people, who were more interested in handling their assignments well than seeking to gain power or trying to promote a particular project or community development strategy. At one level, Neil was an exception, for he was opinionated. However, he too was most interested in performing his job duties well, which in his case meant balancing his responsibility for providing leadership to the Band’s education program with allowing the community to give direction.

There is no indication that any of the volunteers had been considered offensive by the La'malis community. On the contrary, right from the initial Mennonite contact with local aboriginal people, the adjectives ‘humble,’ ‘patient,’ ‘loving,’ and ‘caring’ were used to describe volunteers. Samantha (1986) observed that the volunteers in the Band’s education

program did not speak at her, as other professional people had done, but rather spoke with her as an equal. She also appreciated that the teachers were on a first-name basis with the children.

The four preschool teachers, Ruth, Denise, Betty, and Maria, seemed to be from the same mould, possessing patience, and showing kindness and love to the children. Samantha (1986) saw them as being like mothers in the classroom, which is a great compliment given the high value placed on motherhood in the village. In addition, Linda (1986) described Ed and Karen as a caring couple, who had “big hearts.”

One volunteer appeared to have received a great deal of affection from the La'malis community. Ruth was held in very high esteem both by Band members and her co-workers. People pointed to her strong, optimistic inner spirit, and her teaching ability in the classroom, as to why she had become so popular among La'malis people. Quite simply, her students came to adore her, and the entire village noticed this, and came to accept Ruth with great warmth. Clearly, the community was saddened by her departure (e.g., Les 1986b; Peter 1986).

- 2) The more volunteers use their leisure time to interact with La'malis people, the more likely villagers will come to accept and befriend them.

If Ruth (1986) had left Barano after her initial two-year term, she believes none of the La'malis adults would remember her now. It took approximately five years before she was comfortable visiting with any of the members of the community. Indeed, Ruth's sole recommendation to MCC staff upon ending her service with the organization was to lengthen volunteers' terms to allow friendships to develop. Wiebe (1987b) agreed with Ruth, and supported the opinion that volunteers should assume three-year terms when working with aboriginal communities.

Ruth's friendships with villagers began to develop once she opened her home to her students. Then, as she attended community events, such as potlatches, the adults began to notice how the children were eager to be with her. Over time, she was able to 'connect' with a few adults, and then it became natural for her to spend a great deal of her leisure time in the village, or in activities with villagers.

Other volunteers also interacted with La'malis residents outside of their job duties. For example, Martin regularly visited village homes, and Jean brought their children into the community to play with La'malis children. Rick played floor hockey with La'malis men, and he and Val attended potlatches and hosted a Christmas feast for villagers one year. Ed and Karen also attended potlatches, and on one occasion, they were able to travel with some villagers to the old Samaltan village site. And Denise became a hairdresser for some La'malis women, and she visited with friends in the village evenings and on weekends.

All the volunteers, up to the first set of group home workers, appear to have socialized on the reserve and developed some meaningful relationships with villagers. An exception was Ingrid and John, who spent only one year in Barano, and admitted their short time there did not allow them to establish anything more than superficial relationships. Once Neil and Donna, and Russ and Lynn arrived to work in the group home, two major changes occurred to the nature of MCC's effort in Barano. For the first time, volunteers were involved in a program not under Band control. Second, the arrival of four volunteers, the continuing presence of three former volunteers and other Mennonite teachers in Barano, combined to shift the volunteers' focus to socializing among themselves through the formation of a small church group.

Time diaries produced by several of the volunteers active in 1987, support the above assertion (see Appendix A). At no time during the weeks chronicled, did any of the

volunteers spend even a portion of their leisure time with La'malis residents. Volunteers did devote numerous hours to church group activities, and they associated with friends from the church.<sup>1</sup> Although Betty did not include leisure time in her diary, it appears that she too was not visiting the village outside working hours. She was involved in a different church group, and as she was engaged to be married, she was spending considerable time with her fiancée. Even Ed and Karen, who had participated in La'malis social activities as volunteers, seemed absorbed in the life of the church group. Irene (1987), a Band Councillor's wife, noted they once attended many village gatherings "until they started to get involved in their own activities."

An examination of the length of time volunteers lived in Barano (Figure 9.1) indicates that, in most cases, at least two years was required before they could claim to have developed significant relationships with La'malis residents. Exceptions seem to be Jean and Martin, and Rick and Val, whose assignments led them to be intensely involved in village life. This supports Cardinal's (1969) contention that years are required before non-aboriginal people gain the trust and confidence of First Nations people.

- 3) Volunteers' attempts to learn the Holat'in language and cultural traditions will be deeply appreciated by the La'malis people.

Many of the volunteers' leisure activities that involved La'malis people centred on cultural events, such as potlatches. At the outset, one of the goals Wiebe (1974) and other MCC staff persons derived for volunteers in Barano included the possibility volunteers would encourage the potlatch and other Holat'in social patterns. Indeed, when he participates in MCC's volunteer orientation sessions, Wiebe (1987b) encourages volunteers

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<sup>1</sup> In follow-up interviews, the volunteers indicated that these weeks were not extraordinary or atypical with respect to the activities described (e.g., Neil 1987a; Maria 1987a).

Figure 9.1 – Length of Stay of Volunteers in Barano, 1974 to August, 1987

Volunteers	Time with MCC	Time after MCC
	_____	.....
Jean & Martin	_____	
	2 yr.	
Rick & Val	_____ . 2 mo.	Total: 2 yr., 3 mo.
	2 yr., 1 mo.	
Lois & Chris	_____	2 yr., 4 mo.
		Total: 7 yr.
Ruth	_____	.....
	3 yr., 11 mo.	3 yr., 1 mo.
		Total: 7 yr., 4 mo. (continuing)
Ed & Karen	_____	..... →
	2 yr, 2 mo.	5 yr., 2 mo. (continuing)
Denise	_____	2 yr., 10 mo.
Ingrid & John	_____	1 yr.
Russ & Lynn	_____	2 yr.
Betty	_____	4 yr.
Neil & Donna	_____ →	3 yr. (continuing)
Marg	_____	1 yr., 3 mo.
Judy	_____	1 yr., 4 mo.
Gail & Ron *	_____ →	1 yr., 4 mo. (continuing)
Grant & Louise	_____ →	7 mo. (continuing)

\* Barano residents prior to 1974

Sources: Personal Interviews

to learn of aboriginal people's history and culture by listening to elders and by understanding their legends. He also cautions volunteers not to assume aboriginal languages are unimportant and bound to become extinct, even though the use of English is predominant in most aboriginal communities, including La'malis.

Apart from having attended potlatches, dinners and other ceremonial events, several volunteers participated in cultural endeavours in other ways. Martin's discussions with men in the village led him to realize that, in general, they possessed considerable artistic talent. Through his initiative, three men were paid to carve and paint over an eight-week period, after which their works were displayed and offered for sale. Ruth, Ed and Betty became more than simply observers at some gatherings by dancing themselves, and they became known as "good dancers" (Nelson 1987). Denise showed an interest in traditional Holat'in foods, and was able to learn how to make authentic tasting bannock. And Ed became known for his understanding of the Holat'in language (Linda 1986).

Ron was the volunteer who had the greatest exposure to La'malis people's traditions. As a boy, he lived in the old Samaltan village, and that experience led him to develop a deep appreciation for their cultural heritage, and a desire to see it maintained. A manifestation of that desire was the time he had invited La'malis people to view several early twentieth century films in which Walith people had been actors. Such links to the past help keep traditions alive.

A general European fascination with aboriginal cultures, combined with MCC staff's emphasis regarding understanding and promoting Holat'in traditions, created a setting conducive to Barano volunteers expressing an interest and participating in Holat'in cultural activities. There is no doubt their interest and participation was well-received by La'malis people. Evidence also suggests that, apart from Ron, volunteers' participation in traditional community events waned as the size of their contingent grew and their leisure activities began to focus on the emerging church group.

- 4) Villagers will reject workers if conversion to the Mennonite faith is preached.

Some conservative church people still consider potlatches and dances as heathen practices. One of the first missionaries in the area opposed Holat'in society and viewed the potlatch as the root cause of its 'depraved' ways. Clearly, neither MCC staff nor volunteers ever exhibited such a mindset toward La'malis people. Indeed, Funk (1987) claims MCC's Native Concerns program, as directed by Wiebe, has been somewhat critical of paternalistic attitudes displayed by Mennonite churches.

Churches, particularly so-called 'evangelical' ones, also have been criticized for competing with each other for members. Wiebe advises new volunteers to avoid such competitive denominationalism. He believes MCC has been welcomed in aboriginal communities across Canada because it declares its intention to have workers join already established churches and not to form a separate Mennonite church. Such was the case, at least initially, in Barano, as Clarence and Jean and Martin participated in the services of the local Pentecostal Church. Even when the Mennonite church group began to emerge, it never focused its efforts on converting La'malis people to the Mennonite faith.

Volunteers did, on occasion, undertake church related activities that involved La'malis people. Denise and Ingrid set up Bible clubs for La'malis children one summer, but the children were not interested, and so Denise did not repeat the program. Lois and Chris were instrumental in their foster girl making a commitment to become a Christian, and group home staff often invited the children in their care to attend church services. Ron served as a pastor for several La'malis people, and together with Gail conducted Seventh Day Adventist services on the reserve. He also acted as a spiritual advisor for the Alcoholics Anonymous program active in the community.

There is no indication any of the MCC volunteers took on the role of evangelist and tried to convert La'malis people to the Mennonite faith. Even though Betty had sensed

there was a lack of Christian discipleship among La'malis residents, she held back addressing the matter directly, because so many churches were already involved in the community. Meredith, Social Services District Supervisor, noted the Ministry had entered into few service contracts with religious organizations because of the element of proselytism. Social Services staff had not anticipated proselytism would be a problem with MCC as the operating society for the group home. Erica and Samantha observed that volunteers working in the village did not push their own religion. One La'malis couple commented that many people had come to the community to preach, but Martin was the first one who stayed and showed them how to live a Christian life from day to day. And Erica (1986) went so far as to call the volunteers “great believers of God.”

- 5) As volunteers, MCC workers will not be seen by villagers as people who are there to make a ‘fast buck.’

Erica also remarked that the volunteers were not working in the community for the sake of money. In contrast, Chief Les noted some Band employees had viewed their work as simply a job, and had spoken poorly of the village to Barano residents. The Band manager at the time of Martin’s arrival even was suspected of misappropriating funds.

A supposed strength of volunteer-based NGOs is that their volunteers are much less expensive to support in the field than professional consultants. There is no question the La'malis Band saved many thousands of dollars by using MCC volunteers to fill positions. For example, the Band was able to have Lois and Chris operate its foster home in 1979 with a contribution of only \$16,200. That same year, a half-time nursery school teacher (Ruth) was supported with \$7,200, and in 1986, \$35,500 enabled the Band to retain both a full-time principal (Neil) and a full-time special needs teacher (Betty).

Although the Band was able to stretch its budget by using MCC volunteers, in most cases, MCC had a surplus after meeting volunteer expenses. Again, taking the example of

the foster home, earnings from Chris' hospital job meant that MCC was expecting to receive a \$4,300 surplus. The excess amount of funds was funnelled out of the community to support other MCC projects across Canada. Even in the case of Neil and Betty, their combined living expenses would not have exceeded \$30,000, netting MCC over \$5,000. And MCC received \$22,000 for Maria's work, while her family's expenses would not have surpassed \$17,000 for the year. However, MCC did use its own funds to keep the foster home operating when the Band could no longer do so.

Many volunteers expressed mixed feelings about not receiving incomes. There was a tension between feeling secure, knowing expenses would be covered, and feeling like a charity, dependent on MCC and often being the beneficiary of gifts and donations from friends and relatives. While Maria enjoyed the financial security, she also felt volunteers should be prepared to draw upon their savings, for MCC did not cover all expenses. Although having to account for every dollar was tedious, most volunteers found it helpful to know how and where they were spending money. However, apart from Neil and Donna, and possibly Grant and Louise, they saw themselves as being volunteers for a finite period, and then returning to "real living."

Evidence suggests most La'malis people did not know MCC workers were volunteers, or that they were associated with a Mennonite development organization (e.g., Cathy 1986). As a result, apart from Council and some Band employees, the people never realized when Ed and Ruth had stopped being MCC volunteers. Even some of the Band employees who were aware of MCC, did not know why the organization was present in the community (e.g., Linda, Cathy). On the one hand, the lack of recognition indicates MCC was not particularly concerned about building up its own image in the community. On the other hand, by remaining a largely unknown entity, the organization was not building a bridge between its constituency and La'malis. A full disclosure by MCC of its

raison d'être and available resources and expertise, might have opened up other service opportunities within La'malis.

A criticism often aimed at aid organizations that use volunteers in the field is that many volunteers do not possess the necessary skills and experience to be of any significant assistance in the community's development. Indeed, Cardinal argues these "do-gooders" can discourage the development of aboriginal leadership. An examination of the MCC volunteers' educational backgrounds and related work experiences reveals that, for 24 assignments, 14 volunteers were placed without previous related work experience (Table 9.1). Karen (1986) admitted that she and Ed had made mistakes as foster parents because of their inexperience.

Overall, educational training was not that important a factor, for 16 of the assignments related to parenting at either the receiving, foster or group homes. For the remaining eight positions, only Martin and Denise were placed without relevant post-secondary training. And only six volunteers had had direct work experience with First Nations prior to working with the La'malis Band or at the group home.<sup>2</sup>

### 9.2.2 Volunteers' Home Life and Support Network

- 6) Rapid and smooth adjustments by workers' families, particularly spouses, to their new homes in Barano will lessen stress and help workers focus on their assignments and building relationships with villagers.

Trail (1968) notes the failure of workers' families to adjust to their new surroundings often leads to aborted assignments. The transition can be particularly troublesome for the spouse who is at home helping the children adjust. Such was the case for Jean. For the first time, Jean was in the role of housebound mother, which she found to be difficult. In

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<sup>2</sup> One group home parent, Ron, was one of the six volunteers. Eight of the total number of assignments were at the group home, which was not directly related to the La'malis Band.

Table 9.1 - Volunteers' Pre-Service Experiences

VOLUNTEERS	ASSIGNMENT	RELATED		WORK WITH NATIVE PEOPLES
		EDUCATION	JOB EXPERIENCE	
Martin	welfare aide	No	No	No
Rick	receiving home parent	N/A	No	No (interest)
Val	receiving home parent	N/A	No	No (interest)
Lois	receiving/foster home parent	N/A	No	No
Chris	receiving/foster home parent	N/A	No	√
Ruth	teacher	√	No	No
Ed	foster home parent	N/A	No	No (interest)
	teacher	√	√	√
Karen	foster home parent	N/A	No	√
Denise	teacher	No	√	√
Ingrid	receiving home parent	N/A	√	No
John	receiving home parent	N/A	√	No
Russ	group home parent	N/A	No	No (studies)
Lynn	group home parent	N/A	No	No (Ruth's sister)
Betty	teacher	√	√	No
Neil	group home parent	N/A	No	No
	education coordinator	√	No	No
Donna	group home parent	N/A	No	No
Marg	group home parent	N/A	√	No
Judy	group home parent	N/A	No	No
Gail	group home parent	N/A	√	√
Ron	group home parent	N/A	√	√
Maria	teacher	√	√	√
Grant	boat & house manager	√	√	No

N/A - not applicable

Sources: Personal Interviews

addition to her new role, other factors such as the isolated location of the house, lack of mobility, no other volunteers, disappointing involvement in the Pentecostal Church, and heavy rains, combined to depress her during the initial period in Barano. Other couples, such as Rick and Val, Ed and Karen, and Neil and Donna, also experienced difficulties initially, but the troubles were primarily related to their assignments, and not the move to Barano.

Rick and Val, Ed and Karen, and Neil and Donna, also had young children with them while they were in Barano. Rick and Val's young boy helped bridge the gap between the couple and some adults in the community. Similarly, the birth of Ed and Karen's first child eased tensions in the foster home. In contrast, Neil and Donna would have been more comfortable working in the group home without their young son, for they feared for his safety. Nevertheless, villagers seemed to respond favourably to volunteers who would bring their young children into La'malis.

Another family matter, not directly related to the presence of children, affected Maria during her initial period in Barano. Unexpectedly, she had to deal with finalizing the details of her divorce. The strain was evident in her work at the preschool, as she was forced to sort through many issues at once.

- 7) Regular interaction with fellow volunteers and MCC staff will provide a much needed support network for workers to better face the trials of their positions.

Maria would have had a much more difficult first few months had it not been for the support provided by other volunteers and members of the Mennonite church group. Indeed, many volunteers developed strong friendships with their fellow volunteers. Those who did not have the opportunity to relate to other volunteers because they were the lone MCC representatives, felt the interaction would have helped them a great deal as they faced various difficulties.

Russ and Lynn found the importance of getting together with other Mennonite church group members increased over time. The gatherings proved to be a source of energy and renewal. However, since social activities revolved around church group friends, the couple did not pursue other possible relationships, such as the one with a group home child's brother.

There appears to be a tension between volunteers receiving too little support and relying too much on other volunteers for empathic understanding. Having to struggle alone can lead to depression, and being part of a close-knit group can absorb nearly all extra-curricular energies. From the time of Ruth's arrival until the formation of the group home, there seemed to be a balance between the amount of time volunteers spent among themselves and with La'malis residents. For example, Betty received considerable support from former MCC volunteers, Ed, Karen and Ruth. And Ruth introduced Betty to many La'malis residents, who Betty otherwise would not have met for a long time.

Support from MCC staff also was important during those difficult times faced by volunteers. Jean and Martin found staff to be very supportive, as did Rick and Val, who added they knew of several other such organizations in which that was not the case. Maria contrasted MCC with Indian Affairs, which she experienced as unsympathetic and impersonal. MCC was the opposite, accommodating her specific needs. Denise marvelled at the genuine interest MCC Canada staff showed in her and the work in Barano, even though they dealt with numerous volunteers and assignments across Canada. And Neil and Donna praised Kaarsemaker for being caring, gracious and a good listener, during their trying time at the group home.

Ed and Karen were volunteers just prior to the time Kaarsemaker assumed his position. In retrospect, the couple felt Kaarsemaker's predecessor lacked sensitivity. When they became fatigued from working as foster parents, he did not offer them

assistance. Also, when Karen gave birth to their first child, he failed to provide them with relief. Furthermore, MCC staff should have anticipated that, with no previous experience as foster parents for Native children, Ed and Karen would have a need, at least initially, for guidance, in the form of expert advice, and strong moral support.

### 9.2.3 Nature of Assignments

- 8) If the villagers have provided the impetus for the projects, they will continue on with the work after MCC's involvement ends.

Ed and Karen's assignment to serve as foster parents originated in response to the Band's concern that too many of its children were being placed in distant foster homes. With that assignment, and with most of the others, MCC did follow Wiebe's (1987b) advice that "if the dream is not theirs, it's not worth pursuing."

However, MCC's first assignment in La'malis was not a straightforward example of the organization responding to a call from the Band for assistance. Although Wiebe did consult with Band members and the former Chief, and sensed volunteers would be welcome on the reserve, he was not asked to supply volunteers. Furthermore, when the new Chief was elected, he made it clear that he did not want any more non-aboriginal people working for the Band. Nevertheless, MCC staff proceeded to make the necessary arrangements so that Martin was available to work on the reserve, and eventually he assumed the position of welfare aide.

The summer gardening program also was not initiated at the Band's request. But Wiebe had started this national program, which had proven to be popular in several aboriginal communities across the Prairies and northern Ontario. In La'malis, however, gardening never had much of a chance of taking root. Climatic and soil conditions make it difficult to garden in the area, and planting vegetables is not part of Holat'in heritage. Equally important, if not more so, was that fresh vegetables were readily available a short

distance away in Barano grocery stores. Clearly, gardening had not been a dream of the La'malis people, and they chose not to pursue it.

Although the group home was initiated by government, and was not intended to be under Band control, MCC chose to become the operating society. MCC had sensed, based on its previous involvement in the receiving and foster homes, that the Band had been seeking a way to address the problem of its children being removed to distant communities by provincial social workers. Even though a group home advisory committee was formed that included Band representation, it appears the Band did not view the group home as the preferred means of addressing its concerns. Once it became clear to MCC that the group home was becoming less important to the Band because of its success in keeping children on the reserve, MCC made the decision not to renew its operating contract with Social Services.

Assignments associated with the other two child care facilities were initiated by the Band. Erica, the Band's health care representative, asked MCC to supply a couple for the receiving home, and it was requested that Lois and Chris set up a foster home for teenagers. Despite the impetus coming from the Band, both facilities had to be closed because of a lack of funds.

Through Rick, the Band's preschool society approached MCC for a replacement nursery school teacher. Ruth's acceptance of the assignment began a tradition of MCC volunteers teaching at the preschool (Denise, Betty and Maria). Ruth's move to the primary class also was a result of a resignation, and it was a position she continued to fill after she left MCC. Ed applied and was accepted for a vacant teaching position, which he, like Ruth, remained in after his term with MCC. Neil also was the successful applicant for the Band's education coordinator vacancy. With all of these assignments, MCC volunteers filled existing positions, which had been created because of the Band's desire to control its

children's education. And Neil, as education coordinator, helped create the new support teacher position, and Ron and the Band manager were instrumental in Band Council approving the boat and house manager position.

- 9) Projects that are small-scale and geared toward self-determination will generate the most favourable responses from the people.

All of the MCC assignments could be considered small-scale in nature. The education coordinator had the greatest responsibility among volunteers, overseeing the Band's entire education program with a budget in excess of \$300,000. Even this position required dealing with small issues like fixing the school's bell system, and handling specific discipline problems one-on-one with students and parents.

However, the issue of whether these assignments were geared toward promoting the Band's self-determination is more complex. On one level, the Band initiated assignments were inherently self-determining simply because the Band chose to create them. Having control over education and some aspects of child care is fundamental to the process of self-determination. However, for the most part, Band Council did not use its authority to give direction to MCC's work, even though MCC viewed Council as final authority for all assignments, except those connected to the group home.<sup>3</sup> For example, the receiving and foster home parents operated with little or no input from the Band. Children may have been retained in the community or in nearby Barano, but the Band had not planned for their return to more stable family situations.

In some ways, the work of the welfare aide, and receiving and foster home parents, could be labelled as 'disaster relief.' Without welfare, many of the families would have

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<sup>3</sup> Even with the group home, the Band could have exerted considerable influence through the group home advisory committee.

been without food. The receiving and foster homes were addressing the alarming rate at which families were being ripped apart by children being removed to far off towns.

In contrast, the assignments related to education had great potential for fostering self-determination. Band leadership had been dissatisfied with the public schools, and so it established an alternative preschool and elementary school. Again, similar to the receiving and foster homes, the argument can be made that the on-reserve education program received little community input, as non-aboriginal teachers and a non-aboriginal education coordinator operated the schools on the basis of the standard provincial curriculum. Nevertheless, the importance of the Band schools to the community cannot be easily dismissed.

Children attended the Band school for several reasons, including convenience, discipline and other problems in the Barano schools, and the Band school's Holat'in cultural program. Although the cultural program was limited to a small portion of class time and was inactive for long periods due to few willing and able elders, the children's brief exposure to the Holat'in language and traditions was significant. Many of their parents had already lost their cultural knowledge, and hence, the program served as a vital, albeit weak, link to the past. Aboriginal communities must look back and become firmly rooted in the past to gain their identities, before they can begin to move forward toward self-determination.

The boat and house manager assignment was aimed at moving the Band toward self-sufficiency. In setting up administrative procedures for the new houses and the Band's fishing company, Grant was playing a key role in two very important Band initiatives. The new houses dramatically improved living conditions on the reserve and generated some much needed employment. If managed properly, the collection of house rents would lead to the building of additional houses. And the Band's fishing company had the potential to

re-employ gradually many of the village men as fishers, their traditional livelihood. In addition, Grant was to train a Band member to take over the administrative duties.

- 10) If La'malis people are active participants in all aspects of the projects, including the decision-making processes, positive social change will result.

Grant's duties were directed by the Band manager, who in turn received Council's approval for his action plan. However, most of the other assignments received little input from Council and involved few community members.

One reason there was little La'malis input into the assignments is that each one was quite specific. For example, the welfare aide administered the distribution of welfare according to government regulations, and the nursery class teacher prepared and delivered lessons for four-year olds. Community members, including the Councillors, did not feel qualified to provide direction to the volunteers.

Neil, as education coordinator, regularly sought Council's direction concerning the education program. He struggled to be patient and allow Council the time it needed to make decisions. At times, this created tension, for Councillors became frustrated with how long it took to deal with educational matters in Council meetings. But Neil had been asking Council to become much more involved in decision-making than it had been previously. As a result, he arranged for the Councillors to visit the Band school so that they would have a better understanding of the daily activities there, as they rarely, if ever, entered the school on their own accord. In addition, Neil also sought the advice of his office co-workers, most notably Samantha, regarding educational issues.

The design of the proposed new school was a project in which Neil hoped the community would become involved. He arranged a presentation at an all Band members' meeting so that anyone in the village could share his/her views on the proposal. Even though Band members seemed confused regarding the meeting's purpose, and no one

responded with ideas or suggestions, it was an honest, albeit ill-conceived, attempt to get the community's input.

Neil also made every effort to find employment and training opportunities for Band members who expressed interest in the education program. More specifically, Neil informed the village women who were enrolled in the early childhood education program that the preschool position(s) would be open to them upon graduation. And Neil continued the practice of placing an aboriginal aide in each class of both schools. The long-term objective was to have every education position in the community occupied by a local Holat'in person.

- 11) Reliance on local skills, ingenuity, labour and/or materials will be greeted with enthusiasm by the people.

As noted above, each assignment was quite specific. The positions were filled by MCC volunteers because the La'malis people either did not possess the required skills, or they were unwilling to use them (e.g., receiving or foster parents). For the most part, a reliance on local labour, materials or ingenuity had not been relevant to the assignments.

The initial Mennonite contact in the Barano area should have resulted in the extensive involvement of local labour in the repair of Walith homes and buildings. But the three Mennonite men did the repair work so quickly that the Walith people were not able to learn from the experience. Hence, the effort did not generate other repairs to damaged facilities on the reserve.

Some volunteers though, did try to promote, outside of their normal duties, the development of local aboriginal skills and interests. Martin promoted carving and painting by securing an eight-week grant, and Val helped some village men install oyster spats near an old village site.

Conspicuous by its absence as part of assignments was a training component, which was incorporated only into the boat and house manager position. For the teaching positions, there had been no La'malis residents to train because of the decision to maintain provincial standards within the Band schools (i.e., hire only certified teachers for the elementary school). It should be noted, however, that the aboriginal classroom aides did receive some training for they were encouraged to participate with the teachers in professional development sessions.

- 12) Well-defined assignments will produce less worker frustration and improve project delivery.

The teaching assignments did not require well-defined job descriptions, for prospective volunteers had a good understanding of the nature of the work. However, there were other assignments where MCC's job descriptions contained significant inaccuracies.

Volunteer frustration seemed greatest with the group home job descriptions. MCC Canada staff informed Neil and Donna the home was for young children only and was located right on the La'malis reserve. If Neil and Donna would have known beforehand that teenagers would be living in the home, they would not have accepted the assignment. Two years later, Judy was told the same thing, that teenagers would not be in the group home. Russ and Lynn though, had an accurate understanding of the group home, for they relied on Ruth for information.

One of the reasons for the inaccuracies being communicated to the group home volunteers is the general nature of MCC's orientation sessions. MCC uses the ten-day sessions to orient volunteers to the organization, and where appropriate, also orient them to aboriginal issues. However, no time is taken to familiarize volunteers with the specific

situations of their assignments, and hence, MCC staff are not required to become familiar with the details.

With respect to Barano, apart from Grant and Louise, only those volunteers who took the initiative to contact active or former volunteers to learn about La'malis and the assignment beforehand, avoided surprises as they began their work. The experiences of the volunteers filling the preschool teaching position supports this contention. Denise, Betty and Maria assumed very similar assignments to that which Ruth had accepted initially, yet only Betty had been aware of the preschool situation prior to arriving in Barano. Denise had no idea of what the preschool was like, nor had Maria, even after seven continuous years of volunteers occupying the position. The reason Betty had known about the situation beforehand was because she had decided to visit the community, and had been able to talk with Ruth during her visit. Only with Grant and Louise did MCC arrange for prospective Barano volunteers to learn about La'malis and the assignment.<sup>4</sup>

Volunteers also had some responsibility for their knowledge of La'malis not being passed on to those who followed them. Most of the volunteers failed to prepare quarterly reports consistently, and hence staff did not receive the requested feedback (e.g., Neil 1987c). However, staff did make frequent visits to Barano and could have taken photographs and prepared reports that would have provided invaluable insights to future volunteers.<sup>5</sup>

With benefit of foresight, several volunteers would not have accepted their assignments. Rick and Val claim their ignorance had been an advantage, for otherwise they might have been too afraid to take on the receiving home position. Similarly, Ed and Karen

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<sup>4</sup> Kaarsemaker also used the visit with Russ and Lynn to receive feedback from them as to Grant and Louise's suitability for the assignment.

<sup>5</sup> Kaarsemaker attempted to visit Barano four times a year.

would not have accepted their assignment as foster parents, and Ingrid and John felt their skills were not suited to the receiving home. As noted before, Neil and Donna would not have taken the group home assignment had they known beforehand there would be teenagers in the home, and Marg and Judy left their group home positions early because they felt unqualified.

#### **9.2.4 MCC's Flexibility and Cooperativeness**

- 13) MCC's flexibility, innovativeness and ability to take risks will ensure projects adapt to the changing needs of the La'malis people.

Ed felt MCC took risks placing inexperienced people in positions, hoping the assignments would not harm them psychologically, or destroy the developing relationship between the organization and the local people. Several Barano volunteers found themselves in such a situation, and some had been on the verge of suffering breakdowns (e.g., Val, Ed and Karen). MCC staff should not have taken those risks because they had not been prepared to provide those volunteers with the needed direct support and expert advice.

MCC staff also took risks in placing volunteers in several assignments that involved significant amounts of authority. Ideally, La'malis people would have filled those leadership positions, and MCC volunteers would have been in supportive roles, where required. However, outsiders were needed to fill such positions as Band manager, education coordinator and welfare aide/social worker. In placing Neil and Martin in the latter two positions, MCC staff took the risk of them directing the community in ways inconsistent with its desires. It appears, in Martin's case, that the concern was unfounded, for he is credited with helping the community establish its own child welfare committee (Les 1986b).

On the other hand, Neil, because of his aggressiveness, pushed Council at times in directions with which it was uncomfortable. An example was Neil's firing of the elder who had been instructing the cultural program, and his instituting a zero-tolerance policy regarding alcohol abuse for education staff. Even in that case, Council had the final say, for Neil made every effort to have Council be the decision-making body. At times, that authority made the Councillors uncomfortable because they were being asked to make difficult decisions.

Neil had been able to accept the education coordinator position because of MCC staff's flexibility in allowing him and Donna to leave their group home work early. Similarly, staff adapted to changes in the receiving home and allowed Lois and Chris to set up a foster home. Several volunteers also showed flexibility in their approaches to assignments. Ruth did not rigidly structure her classroom around the clock, but instead strove to make the school a warm, casual place where the children would feel accepted and comfortable. And Maria planned lessons on a day-to-day basis to take advantage of teachable moments, and she also aimed to make the preschool a warm place.

Volunteers in the La'malis education program also exhibited some innovativeness. Rather than spend the annual budget surplus on more school supplies, Neil planned to redirect it to other community programs. He and other volunteers made it possible for the aboriginal classroom aides to attend teachers' professional development sessions, and for the early childhood education program students to visit another Band school. In addition, the volunteers promoted the use of the whole language approach so as to develop more quickly the children's reading comprehension skills.

- 14) Joining forces with similar organizations in the Barano area will spread the projects' benefits to more villagers.

There appear to be no instances in which either volunteers or staff approached other NGOs about the possibility of assisting MCC with its work in Barano. Because of the presence of several churches in Barano, and a history of evangelistic rallies being held in La'malis, MCC staff and volunteers astutely avoided creating possible tensions by not associating with any one church. However, MCC could have attempted to organize an inter-church effort, with the Band's approval, for projects that addressed some basic needs in La'malis, such as badly needed house repairs.

Apart from the churches, MCC could have joined forces with another NGO. Native Indian New Start, a Seventh Day Adventist organization, periodically offered seminars and training programs for local Holat'in people. Indirectly, MCC had a connection with the organization, for Ron continued his involvement with Native Indian New Start by assisting with the instruction of a net-mending course while serving as a MCC volunteer.

#### 9.2.5 MCC's Advocacy Work

- 15) MCC's lobbying of governments so that they change systems in order to foster greater self-determination, will increase the benefits derived from projects to more villagers over time.

MCC's lack of involvement with other NGOs is not indicative of the type of relationship it had with government.<sup>6</sup> Lissner (1977) claims an NGO takes on one more of the following roles in its relationship to government: subservient, partnership, compensatory, corrective, disobedient, and/or subversive (see Chapter Two). In general, MCC's relationship to the provincial government has been based either on subservience or partnership, reflecting the Band's interaction with the Province. The receiving and group

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<sup>6</sup> Interaction with municipal governments was not a significant aspect of any of the MCC assignments.

homes had operated with provincial funds, and subsequently, according to provincial regulations. The Band school, although not under provincial jurisdiction, adhered to the provincial curriculum. On the other hand, the foster home had somewhat of a corrective role for it had been created to try and halt the apprehension of La'malis teenagers by provincial social workers.

The assignment that generated the most direct contact with the federal government was the education coordinator position. Neil had attempted to take a corrective role in his approach with Indian Affairs regarding the possible construction of a new school by seeking funding to enable the community to have input at the design stage. In addition, Neil's proposed redirection of the education program's budget surplus to other Band programs could be labelled a 'disobedient' action. However, with regard to a more formal lobbying effort, neither the provincial nor national MCC organizations had approached the federal or provincial governments concerning a specific La'malis issue, simply because the Band had not requested that MCC do so.

- 16) Constituency education concerning the barriers faced by La'malis people in their struggles for self-determination will rally Mennonite support. That increased support will encourage MCC to be more aggressive in its pressure on bureaucracies to alter their obstructive policies and practices.

Members of MCC's constituency have raised considerable opposition whenever the organization has supported First Nations in their conflicts with government (Funk 1987). In particular, those Mennonites who emigrated to Canada to escape persecution in the former Soviet Union, find it hard to believe a system that created a safe and prosperous haven for them also could isolate and oppress First Nations in the name of progress. It has been acknowledged that careful educational efforts are needed to broaden the constituency's perspective.

In 1987, Wiebe (1987c) identified constituency education as the greatest challenge for MCC Canada's Native Concerns program. A major review of that program, also in 1987, cited the need for the direct involvement of aboriginal peoples in more extensive constituency education. With respect to La'malis, there is no evidence to suggest villagers had been involved in MCC sponsored educational initiatives.

In a few instances, MCC volunteers and staff engaged in activities that could be viewed as constituency education. Jean and Martin wrote a letter to a Mennonite periodical countering the claims of a previous letter-writer who had described aboriginal peoples as lazy, immoral drunkards. Ruth reported on her work at the Band preschool to an annual MCC B.C. conference, and occasionally, she brought students to her home church and gave reports. And Wiebe (1987b) wrote an article entitled, 'The Price is Lice,' describing Ruth and Denise's efforts in La'malis, which was published in many church papers.

### 9.3 CONCLUSION

When you think of the years MCC has been involved in La'malis and you try to imagine La'malis without that presence, it's hard to do. Yet, maybe it wouldn't be any different (Karen 1986).

Constituency education is a stated objective of MCC, whether it is related to efforts in North America or overseas. Other universal MCC objectives include influencing public policy decisions that affect disadvantaged peoples, and fostering self-reliance in a spirit of respect that recognizes privileged peoples have as much to learn from disadvantaged peoples as they have to teach or give.

Evidence suggests MCC's educational efforts directed at B.C. Mennonites, with the objective of providing them with an understanding of the situation in La'malis, were virtually non-existent. MCC is often criticized for trying to be everything to everyone, and hence it spreads itself too thin by engaging in so many diverse activities in many different

communities. La'malis, therefore, was just one community among hundreds MCC was involved with at any one time. Granted, it would have been difficult for MCC to capture the attention of the Mennonite community without exploiting the La'malis people's plight, but that is the challenge of good constituency education. Most aboriginal communities are leery of the pity and public outcry their situations can evoke once exposed to non-aboriginal society. However, if done thoughtfully and with the full support and participation of the La'malis leadership, an educational initiative could have been very effective in eventually encouraging the federal government to address the injustices suffered by the Buwahlie and Samaltan peoples as a result of their forced relocation to La'malis.

MCC essentially took on the role of filler in La'malis. Most of the volunteers filled existing or newly created positions. Apart from the initial assignment and those related to the group home, MCC placed volunteers in response to specific Band requests. At no time did MCC send in a volunteer to show the community how it should develop itself. Clearly, MCC never acted in a paternalistic manner toward La'malis, and did not seek to dictate the community's development efforts.

However, the question remains of whether MCC was promoting self-reliance in the community. The issue is best addressed by examining the extent to which MCC incorporated training components into the assignments so that the people could eventually take over the positions. Apart from the last assignment, training La'malis people to serve as replacements did not occur. In fairness to MCC, it should be noted that even if there had been an emphasis on training, it would have been very difficult to find La'malis trainees.

Moreover, volunteers' experiences reveal that MCC staff had not planned most of the assignments adequately. Many of the volunteers entered their assignments with no related work experience, and several of them were placed in very demanding positions (e.g., Rick and Val; Ed and Karen). MCC staff should have anticipated the volunteers would require

such basic needs as expert advice and respite. Particularly disconcerting is that several assignments were inaccurately portrayed to volunteers. The faulty job descriptions reveal that MCC staff failed to communicate sufficiently with the Band, and in the case of the group home, with Social Services, and/or failed to pass on the information to the volunteers. Evidence indicates both types of communication failures took place. In some instances, staff simply did not have a good understanding of the assignment, as with the group home positions. Furthermore, even after seven continuous years of volunteers teaching in the preschool, Maria was surprised when she viewed the preschool set-up for the first time. Volunteers also had a role in the communication problem by not consistently reporting back to MCC staff.

Despite the generally poor administrative record, MCC's impact on La'malis should be assessed primarily on the collective actions of the individual volunteers. As stated earlier, MCC strives to show respect to disadvantaged peoples, recognizing that they have much to contribute to the development of privileged peoples in the West. That attitude of respect, as well as a genuine concern for the well-being of the people, stand out as the traits of the MCC volunteers who were active in La'malis. Reflective of that mindset is that many of the volunteers expressed that they had learned much more from their assignments than the community had gained in the form of assistance from them. In addition, most of the volunteers showed a deep commitment to their work, which, at times, meant they continued on with their assignments despite considerable hardships.

To say MCC became accepted by the community is somewhat misleading for the organization was not well-known among residents generally, nor even among those members employed by the Band. However, the individual MCC workers who were active in the village were accepted by La'malis residents. These volunteers were not working in the village for the purpose of advancing their careers or making money, but instead they

were motivated out of a genuine desire to see the La'malis people improve their community. Moreover, volunteers demonstrated an interest in Holat'in culture and participated in important cultural events. At the same time, they showed considerable sensitivity regarding how they shared their Christian beliefs by being careful not to preach to people who had heard too many preachers.

Perhaps the most significant MCC contribution in La'malis was provided by the teachers. Much has been said and written regarding the tragic experiences of aboriginal peoples in residential schools across the province. School was a terrifying place for generations of Native peoples. Ruth and the other preschool teachers, however, helped a new generation of La'malis children experience school as a warm place where they could be hugged and could learn their language and traditions.

MCC's involvement in La'malis from 1974 to 1987 did not generate a dramatic turn around in the development of the community. Indeed, the examination of that involvement reveals how complex and difficult it is for non-aboriginal groups to assist in the development of aboriginal communities. Nevertheless, MCC volunteers did make positive contributions to La'malis. They participated in cross-cultural education, which is a fundamental aspect of the development process. And, most importantly, they established friendships with La'malis people. Friendships between privileged and disadvantaged peoples must be established before systemic change can occur that will enable disadvantaged peoples, and, indeed, privileged peoples, to experience true human development.

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Appendix A  
TIME DIARIES

BETTY

(Monday February 9 to Friday February 13, 1987)

MONDAY FEBRUARY 9

- 8:05 – arrived at school by bike
  - consulted with other teachers
  - prepared for the day
- 9:00 – worked on number concepts, counting and adding games, etc., with one boy
- 9:20 – read together with two boys and they wrote in journals
- 9:50 – gave individual help during math period in Ed's class
- 10:30 – recess prepared for testing [Canadian Test of Basic Skills – C.T.B.S.]
- 10:45 – coordinated and monitored the [C.T.B.S.] testing of three different levels in Burl's class
- 11:30 – helped children with their language arts activity in Sherry's class
- 11:45 – took a boy out of the class for an individual sight word program
- 12:00 – lunch chatted with other teachers
  - prepared for the afternoon
- 1:00 – did oral C.T.B.S. testing with two boys and read together with them, and at the same time monitored a boy reading along with a tape in the storage room
- 1:45 – a girl from Ed's class came to read to me
- 2:15 – paperwork
- 2:30 – a girl from Burl's class came to read to me
- 3:00 – school over
  - recorded each child's work for the day
  - cleaned-up
  - consulted with other teachers and prepared for Tuesday

4:15 – left for home

## TUESDAY FEBRUARY 10

- 8:10 – arrived at school by bike
  - consulted with the other teachers and prepared for the day
- 9:00 – made number line and did counting games with one boy
- 9:15 – two boys made/wrote ‘books’ for each other about being friends
- 9:45 – helped with individual needs in Ed’s class during math
- 10:30 – recess
  - test preparation
- 10:45 – monitored three different levels of written C.T.B.S. testing in Burl’s class, while a fourth level worked in the storage room
- 11:30 – helped individuals with their language arts work in Sherry’s class
- 11:45 – math practice with a girl from Sherry’s class
- 12:00 – lunch
  - talked with other teachers and made preparations
- 1:00 – reading practice with a boy from Sherry’s class
- 1:20 – reading practice with a girl from Sherry’s class
- 1:45 – C.T.B.S. oral testing with two boys
  - reading and sight words with them
- 2:30 – helped with a boy’s journal
  - reading with Burl’s class
  - other individual assistance
- 3:00 – some reading with reading club kids in Sherry’s class
- 3:30 – cleanup
  - paperwork
  - consulted with teachers and prepared for Wednesday
- 4:30 – home

## WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 11

- 8:10 – arrived at school
  - consulted with other teachers and prepared for the day
- 9:00 – number line games and counting stories with one boy
- 9:15 – two boys made another ‘friend book’
- 9:45 – gave individual help in Ed’s class during math
- 10:30 – recess
  - prepared for testing
- 10:45 – more oral and written testing for three different levels of C.T.B.S. for Burl’s class
- 11:30 – gave individual help in Sherry’s class during language arts
- 11:45 – with two boys for a sight word program
- 12:00 – lunch
- 1:00 – [blank]
- 1:45 – reading practice with a girl from Ed’s class
- 2:15 – reading with two boys from Burl’s Class
  - they also wrote and worked on ‘My Friend’ books
- 3:00 – dismissal
  - cleanup, preparation, etc.
- 4:30 – home

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12

- 8:10 – arrived at school
- 8:40 – tested a boy absent yesterday
- 9:00 – used play money for adding and subtracting games with a boy
- 9:15 – two boys worked on their journals about making friends happy
  - they also did some reading
- 9:45 – helped Ed’s class during math
- 10:30 – recess

- 10:45 – [blank]
- 11:00 – C.T.B.S. testing with a girl who did not finish yesterday
- 11:30 – circulated in Sherry's class during language arts
- 11:45 – worked with two boys from Sherry's class on a sight word program
- 12:00 – lunch
- 1:00 – reading practice with a girl from Sherry's class
- 1:20 – paperwork
  - prepared for testing
- 1:45 – three different levels of C.T.B.S. testing in Burl's class
- 2:15 – read with two boys
- 2:30 – reading practice with a girl from Burl's class
- 3:00 – read with some reading club kids from Sherry's class
- 3:15 – C.T.B.S. testing with a girl who missed it in Burl's class
- 3:40 – paperwork
  - consulted teachers
- 4:30 – home

#### FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13

- finished making Valentine cookies at home
- 8:15 – arrived at school
  - prepared for the day
- 9:00 – worked in Sherry's class
- 9:15 – wrote letters to Ruth with two boys
- 9:45 – in Ed's room for math
- 10:30 – recess
- 10:45 – read with two boys
  - they wrote letters to Ruth and 'warm fuzzies' to their classmates

12:00 – Valentine-making spree!

1:00 – parties

1:40 – swimming

3:00 – paperwork  
– cleanup

3:45 – meeting with Neil

4:15 – home

Source: Betty 1987a

## NEIL

(Wednesday January 28 to Wednesday February 4, 1987)

## WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28

- 7:10 – shower, shave, breakfast
- 8:00 – drove to work
- 8:10 – finished writing up 'fire exit plans' for Band school as required by federal fire inspector and gave it to the secretary to type
- 8:45 – phone call from a Tribal Council representative about her interviewing me for a local radio show re: Band education programs
  - told her I wanted to seek approval from some Councillors first
  - contacted two Councillors and they thought it was okay
- 9:00 – met with Samantha to discuss how our education budget stands for the last two months of the fiscal year
- 9:30 – Samantha and I had a 'disagreement' with the Band manager over how to do travel expenses
- 9:40 – met with parent re: her two kids' re-entry to the Band school
  - all agreed it was for the best
- 10:00 – went up to the school to reset the school clock system which was mysteriously malfunctioning
- 10:45 – went to town to pickup office supplies and mail
- 11:15 – met with the education administrator for the Naskitlo Band school
  - we discussed budgeting processes and the last Indian Education Advisory Committee [(IEAC)] meeting
- 12:05 – lunch
- 12:30 – went to pickup donuts for the meeting
- 12:45 – went to the school district office for the IEAC meeting
- 1:30 – met with four Bands and the school district and discussed the Bands' priorities for how the school district should spend the Indian Education money they are receiving
- 3:45 – met with Ed at the school to discuss school concerns and problems he had

- 4:45 – picked up the Band's alcohol counselor for supper and visited with her for the evening
- 9:00 – relaxed
- 10:30 – bed

#### THURSDAY JANUARY 29

- 7:15 – shower, shave, breakfast
- 8:15 – dropped Jacob off at school
  - Donna drove with me to the Band Office
- 8:45 – interviewed by the District Council representative in my office for a radio program
  - she said we can get a copy of the tape and transcript
  - I asked for a tape for the Band, and a transcript for MCC
- 9:30 – numerous phone calls and paperwork all morning
- 11:00 – introduced new MCC worker, Grant, to Office staff and the Councillor he will be working with
- 12:00 – lunch
  - talked with Band manager in his office re: the Council meeting next week and the items I want to bring up
  - asked him how we can apply for an economic grant to build a daycare facility
- 1:00 – long talk (or listen) with Cathy as she expressed concerns about high-school kids
  - discussed possible ways to establish an alternate program and the pros and cons of academic versus lifeskills/job training
- 2:00 – worked on checking off the order of books that arrived for the preschool library
- 2:30 – met with two Councillors to discuss a possible meeting with Indian Affairs big-shots at Walith
- 3:30 – Indian Affairs officials showed up here! surprise!
  - talked with them and showed them the present school situation
  - hope we can convince them to support our push to do pre-design work **now**
- 4:30 – Donna and Jacob picked me up at the office
- 4:45 – helped Jacob draw a road system on a large sheet of thin plywood left over from building his bookcase

- 5:30 – supper
- 6:15 – sang and prayed with the family
  - read to Jacob, told him a ‘Freddy’ (story)
  - practiced guitar
- 7:00 – church group Bible study held here
- 10:00 – relaxed
- 10:30 – bed

#### FRIDAY JANUARY 30

- 7:30 – shower, shave, breakfast
- 8:15 – picked up Heinz
  - got the school key from Burl
  - dropped Donna, Jacob and Heinz off at the Band Office and went to the school
- 8:30 – got the school book stamp
  - unsuccessfully tried to fix the bell system **again**
- 9:00 – made up paysheets for education employees’ paycheques, with numerous visits and phone calls interrupting
- 10:30 – took library pictures down to be matted for use in the preschool library
- 11:00 – answered Heinz’ questions with numerous calls and visits interrupting
  - main visit was from a man in the church group who wanted to see if we could lunch together
- 2:30 – paperwork, with various calls and visits
  - saw Chief Les and updated him on the last week and a half concerning the extension of reserve land and the new school
  - talked to the woman coordinating the Infant Development program and asked about her work on the reserve
  - talked to Maria
- 4:30 – Donna picked me up and we went to the bank
  - got Jacob from Ed and Karen’s place
  - ate out for supper
  - shopped for gifts for the little boy in Mississippi whose family we help support
- 6:30 – went home
  - read to Jacob
  - practised guitar
- 7:30 – filled out daily diary (two days) for Heinz

8:30 – read, relaxed

10:30 – bed

#### SATURDAY JANUARY 31

8:00 – got out of bed to answer door – the neighbour woman, drunk, wanted to use the phone (she is a relative of some La'malis people)

8:30 – shower, shave, breakfast

9:30 – Donna, Jacob and I went to town  
– dropped Donna off for the weekly grocery shopping  
– Jacob and I went to my guitar lesson with the minister of the Anglican-United Church

11:00 – picked up Donna  
– picked up Maria's greensheet [statement of monthly expenses] at Ed and Karen's place

11:30 – got ready for an impromptu family picnic (it was a sunny day)

12:30 – picnicked at the ferry terminal

2:30 – went back to the trailer  
– laundry  
– practiced guitar  
– played with Jacob

5:15 – worked on the January greensheet

6:15 – supper

6:30 – read to Jacob  
– sang, prayed and read with the family

7:00 – washed dishes

7:20 – read  
– greensheet

7:30 – put Jacob to bed

8:00 – read  
– greensheet

11:00 – bed

## SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1

- 8:30 – breakfast
- 9:30 – with family at the Mennonite church group
- 12:30 – lunch at home
- 1:00 – Donna, Jacob and I walked to the beach
- 2:00 – relaxed, slept, and read
- 6:15 – supper
- 6:30 – sang and prayed
  - did the dishes
  - put Jacob to bed
- 7:30 – practiced guitar
- 8:00 – read
  - visited with Donna
- 10:00 – bed

## MONDAY FEBRUARY 2

- 7:10 – breakfast
- 8:15 – drove to work alone
- 8:30 – various phone calls and paperwork
- 10:30 – met with Cathy and student concerning some damage done to school building
- 11:00 – delivered new books to school and reset the school clock system again
- 11:30 – drove to town, picked up personal and Band mail
- 12:00 – lunch meeting at high school with numerous B.C. college recruiters and local Band education workers
  - ate with a high-school counselor, Paukumaht home/school coordinator, Trinity Western University representative, and U.B.C. representative
- 1:15 – more paperwork and phone calls
  - met with Cathy and Deanne briefly to discuss two children apprehended and to be placed at the group home
  - encouraged Band's Child Welfare Committee to meet with group home staff

- 3:45 – Mennonite church group leadership meeting at a hotel with Ed and Darlaine
- 5:30 – supper
  - sang and prayed
  - did the dishes
- 7:00 – went to Barano library with the family
- 8:00 – completed greensheet and compiled all La'malis reports
- 10:00 – discussed a silent retreat idea with the Anglican-United minister
- 10:30 – bed

## TUESDAY FEBRUARY 3

- 7:30 – read book to Jacob
  - breakfast
- 8:15 – Donna drove me to work
- 8:30 – paperwork, phone calls
- 9:15 – met with student and father and Cathy to discuss the damage the student did to the school door
- 10:00 – worked alone in office
- 12:00 – went home with Donna and Jacob for lunch
- 12:45 – drove the car back to town
  - various errands and banking of monthly MCC cheques (distributed monthly cheques to other MCCers during the day)
- 1:30 – met with a local Indian Affairs worker in my office re the new school
- 2:30 – went to the school to make some package deliveries
  - talked with the teachers
- 3:30 – Samantha and I went over the education budget to see how things stand as the fiscal year nears its end (March 31)
- 4:50 – gave Grant a ride home
- 5:30 – supper at home
- 6:00 – sang and prayed
- 6:30 – did the dishes

- 7:00 – read
- 8:15 – put Jacob to bed  
– practiced guitar
- 9:15 – prepared for next Sunday's worship service
- 10:30 – bed

#### WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 4

- 7:30 – breakfast
- 8:15 – took Jacob to school and drove to work
- 8:30 – delivered Betty's MCC cheque to her at school
- 8:45 – planned to work on preschool library books but ended up doing a variety of paperwork  
– hunted down a Council member to sign travel cheques and delivered the cheques (sending some people to visit another Band's education programs)  
– looked for people to take a forestry training course, some luck with the alcohol program's help
- 12:00 – lunch with a church group member
- 1:15 – more errands downtown for the Band
- 2:00 – met with Band lady who sewed pillow covers for the library pillows
- 2:30 – received a call from the Glendale people re the testing to be done in two weeks  
– Samantha came up to discuss staff unhappiness with the new Band manager; I suggested airing it at the next staff meeting
- 3:15 – teachers' staff meeting at school
- 5:00 – headed home for supper
- 5:45 – supper with Ed and Karen and their children
- 8:00 – put Jacob to bed  
– practiced guitar
- 9:30 – wrote up agenda for tomorrow's Council meeting
- 10:45 – bed

Source: Neil 1987b

## DONNA

(Friday January 30 to Thursday February 5, 1987)

## FRIDAY JANUARY 30

- 7:15 – shower, made bed and breakfast, did dishes
- 9:00 – processed the new library books at the Band Office with Jacob and answered Heinz' questions
- 11:30 – went into town with Jacob to get the mail  
– returned school key to Burl's place and picked up Ed and Karen's girl
- 12:30 – lunch at home with Jacob and Ed and Karen's girl
- 1:00 – prepared papers [time diary] for Heinz  
– started soup for dinner
- 1:30 – reviewed Jacob's theology lesson  
– read, made menu and grocery list  
– finished dinner preparation
- 4:00 – picked up Neil and Jacob and had dinner in town  
– did errands
- 6:30 – cleaned up kitchen
- 7:05 – prayed and read Bible
- 8:00 – read paper, *Other Side* [Christian periodical], baby books
- 10:00 – bed

## SATURDAY JANUARY 31

- 7:45 – shower, fixed hair and had breakfast
- 9:30 – went to town to do weekly grocery shopping
- 11:30 – put away groceries with Neil and Jacob
- 12:00 – picnicked and watched wildlife at the ferry terminal
- 2:30 – read to Jacob at home

- 3:35 – hung up laundry
- 4:00 – finished Sunday School preparations
- 4:45 – folded laundry, made muffins and granola
  - fixed dinner and ate
- 6:35 – sang and prayed with Neil and Jacob
  - finished making granola
  - helped Jacob bathe, read to him
- 7:40 – mended clothes, polished shoes
- 8:15 – put away dishes, scoured sink
  - fixed rice
  - washed Jacob's picnic set
  - read Bible, *Other Side*, baby books
- 10:15 – bed

#### SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1

- 8:00 – shower, breakfast, dishes
- 9:30 – attended church worship service [Mennonite church group]
  - taught Sunday School
- 12:00 – ate lunch at home
- 1:00 – walked with Neil and Jacob to the beach
- 2:00 – washed dishes, made fig bars
- 3:35 – cleaned out recipe box
  - wrapped packages for mailing
  - made paper crafts
  - pinned Jacob's pants
- 5:00 – supervised clean-up of Jacob's play area
  - fixed dinner
  - replaced light bulb
- 6:20 – ate dinner
  - sang and prayed with Neil and Jacob
  - read to Jacob
- 7:35 – wrote letter
  - sewed Jacob's pants

9:20 – looked at baby name book  
– talked with Neil

10:20 – bed

### MONDAY FEBRUARY 2

6:50 – shower, breakfast, put away dishes, walked Jacob to school

8:30 – ironed clothes

9:30 – prayed, read Bible, ate yogurt

10:30 – vacuumed

11:00 – met Jacob at the bus  
– read to Jacob

11:45 – lunch, washed dishes, drew with Jacob

12:40 – mopped floors, scoured tub, mixed bread  
– worked on library story hour

2:00 – read to Jacob

3:00 – rolled out bread, did dishes, wrote cards and letters  
– sang and danced with Jacob  
– fixed dinner

5:30 – ate dinner, sang and prayed

6:45 – went to the public library with Neil and Jacob to pick out books  
– read to Jacob

8:10 – read to Jacob  
– read letters and books  
– talked with Neil

10:30 – bed

### TUESDAY FEBRUARY 3

7:10 – shower, breakfast  
– took Neil to work

8:50 – prayed, read Bible, reviewed Jacob's theology lesson  
– started a letter

- 10:40 – took Jacob to his swimming lesson  
– errands
- 12:15 – lunch with Neil and Jacob  
– washed dishes  
– helped Jacob tape songs and read to him
- 2:00 – napped, wrote letters, read *Other Side*  
– read to Jacob  
– fixed dinner
- 5:45 – dinner  
– sang and prayed with Neil and Jacob  
– helped Jacob bathe and read to him
- 8:10 – read library book and magazines
- 10:15 – bed

#### WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 4

- 7:30 – breakfast, made lunches
- 8:15 – put away dishes, shower, made phone calls  
– Sunday School preparations  
– made menu and grocery list
- 11:05 – talked with Jacob, read to him  
– lunch, washed dishes
- 3:45 – read to Jacob and played game with him  
– fixed dinner
- 5:30 – dinner with Ed and Karen's family, visited
- 8:30 – read paper and books
- 10:30 – bed

#### THURSDAY FEBRUARY 5

- 7:10 – shower, breakfast  
– took Jacob to school and Neil to work
- 8:55 – made apple turnovers, did dishes  
– read Bible and prayed

- 10:35 – took Jacob to his swimming lesson  
– lunch at a friend's place [Mennonite church group attendee]  
– did the story hour at the public library  
– weekly grocery shopping
- 5:30 – ate dinner  
– fixed dinner for neighbours
- 7:15 – at Mennonite church group Bible study
- 10:00 – bed

Source: Donna 1987a

## JUDY AND MARG

(Monday February 2 to Sunday February 15, 1987)

## MONDAY FEBRUARY 2

- 7:00 – woke up children
  - breakfast
  - packed lunches and got the kids off to school by 8:00
- 8:00 – laundry, cleaned house and packed up things
- 9:30 – went to apartment and unpacked
- 10:00 – left for doctor's appointment [in a larger town]
- 12:15 – picnic lunch
- 1:00 – stopped in a town and spent a lot of time trying to find the computer shop where our computer was being fixed
- 3:30 – left for the town in which I had the doctor's appointment
  - got a motel room
  - supper
  - shopping
  - returned to the motel and relaxed
- 10:00 – had our devotions together
  - retired

## TUESDAY FEBRUARY 3

- 9:00 – packed up
- 10:00 – went out for breakfast
- 11:00 – I went for hearing tests
  - Marg waited
- 12:00 – went for a short drive in town
- 1:00 – I went to the hospital for x-rays
  - Marg went shopping
- 4:00 – after a long wait spent reading I saw the doctor
  - Marg waited

- 5:00 – drove to the next town and had supper
- 6:30 – left for Barano
- 9:00 – home at last
  - went to the group home and checked in
- 9:30 – filled out reports for the Social Services meeting on Wednesday
- 9:45 – relaxed
- 10:30 – devotions
  - bed

#### WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 4

- 8:00 – started day
- 9:30 – attended Social Services meeting
- 10:30 – shopping, banking
- 11:30 – went to a ladies' Bible study
- 12:45 – came home
  - put away groceries
  - went for a walk (locked keys in the house – Marg climbed in through the window)
- 2:15 – read our mail
  - did the books
  - I read and knit
  - Marg wrote letters
- 5:00 – supper
- 6:00 – I did Bible homework
  - Marg wrote letters
- 7:00 – I slept
  - Marg wrote letters
- 8:00 – we played games
- 10:30 – devotions
  - bed

## THURSDAY FEBRUARY 5

- 9:00 – started day
- 10:00 – went to town to run errands
- 11:45 – came home
  - I rested and then did Bible homework
  - Marg did Bible homework
- 2:00 – I washed my hair, bathed, and read
  - Marg went out with a friend for lunch
- 3:30 – we talked
- 4:00 – played cards
- 5:00 – supper
  - Marg had a guest
- 7:15 – I went to the Mennonite church group Bible study
  - Marg and her friend watched videos
- 11:15 – devotions
  - bed

## FRIDAY FEBRUARY 6

- 9:00 – breakfast
- 9:30 – I read and knit
  - Marg went for a walk to get a video
- 10:45 – I read and slept
  - Marg went to play racquetball with a friend from her College and Careers group
- 1:00 – lunch
  - Marg's friend stayed for lunch
- 2:00 – we went for a walk
- 3:00 – we watched a video
- 6:00 – supper
- 7:30 – we went for a drive and then spent the evening at Ed and Karen's place
- 10:00 – went for a walk

- 11:15 – devotions
- bed

#### SATURDAY FEBRUARY 7

- 8:00 – breakfast
- 9:00 – we did our Bible homework
- 10:00 – started laundry and dinner
- 10:30 – went for a walk to the beach
  - I stayed for a quiet time by the ocean
  - Marg went home
- 11:45 – worked on laundry and finished dinner
- 12:00 – dinner
- 1:00 – went to town
  - shopped and bummed around
  - drove down to the ocean and came home
- 3:00 – made squares
  - rested and listened to music
- 4:00 – went for a walk
- 5:00 – supper
  - played games and talked
- 7:15 – I spent the evening knitting, listening to music
  - I phoned my daughter
  - Marg went to College and Careers
- 11:30 – bed

#### SUNDAY FEBRUARY 8

- 8:30 – showered and bathed
  - breakfast
- 9:45 – attended a workshop with Marg and Gail
- 1:45 – staff meeting with Gail and Ron

- 3:00 – we went to La'malis to see Ed at school and get one of the girl's school supplies for Monday  
– visited with Ed for a bit
- 5:00 – relaxed and watched TV
- 7:00 – cleaned up and got ready to move to the group home (we're going in a day early because Gail has to drive a load of kids to a ski hill)
- 8:15 – we came on duty  
– Bert cried for a long time (he had a cut finger and it caused him pain – he wanted his Dad)  
– one of the Native girls was also crying – she wanted her mother
- 10:00 – we watched Jimmy Swaggart  
– wrote reports
- 11:00 – bed

#### MONDAY FEBRUARY 9

- 4:30 – Marg was up with Bert for he was crying again
- 7:00 – woke the kids up  
– packed lunches and made breakfast
- 7:45 – kids sent off to school
- 7:50 – I did laundry, got some things ready for Tuesday's lunches, unpacked my suitcase, wrote a letter, answered the phone  
– Marg drove one of the girls to school to have her registered
- 9:00 – worked on menus  
– read some reports
- 10:15 – went to town  
– grocery shopping
- 11:30 – put away groceries  
– lunch
- 12:00 – prepared dessert, sandwich fillings, and relishes for lunches
- 12:30 – I wrote a letter  
– Marg folded laundry
- 1:00 – Marg went to pickup Bert (he hurt himself)  
– she bathed and dressed his hand and helped him with his homework

- 2:15 – Henry called
- 2:30 – Neil called concerning the two La'malis girls
  
- 3:05 – Rose called
  
- 3:45 – a social worker called
  
- 3:55 – one of the Native girl's mother called
  - We had to deal with the two Native girls since they had skipped school after lunch (but they came home on the bus). We told the girls they couldn't play or watch TV for a while. They tried to run away again and we stopped one but the other one left. We phoned the police.
  - Marg drove Marvin to his aunt's for dinner
  
- 6:00 – the girl that ran away was brought back by Deanne
  - supper
  - cleaned up
  - played games with the kids who didn't have homework
  
- 7:30 – started getting the kids ready for bed
  - we played with the children and tucked them in
  
- 8:00 – I packed parts of the lunches
  
- 8:30 – checked on the kids and turned lights out
  - checked on them every fifteen minutes
  
- 10:15 – we got ready for bed
  - The girls must have thought we had already gone to bed, because when we checked again they were gone, even Rose. Arlene had dressed but changed her mind.
  
- 11:00 – called the RCMP
  
- 12:00 – bed

## TUESDAY FEBRUARY 10

- 3:00 – We got seven phone calls from one of the girls' mother. (What a night, between being upset wondering if they were alright, especially Rose, and the phone calls we only got two hours sleep.)
  
- 5:00 – back to bed
  
- 7:00 – called the children
  
- 7:15 – made breakfast for the kids
  
- 7:45 – sent kids off to school

- 8:00 – we had breakfast
- 8:30 – phoned social workers
- 9:00 – got things ready for dinner, cleaned up kitchen, started laundry
- 9:30 – James (the social worker of the two Native girls) dropped by
- 10:00 – relaxed
  - two different social workers called concerning two of our children and their sexual behaviour
- 10:30 – we looked for pictures of the girls for the RCMP (they will be out later)
  - we tried to call Fred Kaarsemaker but he wasn't in
  - made coffee and tried to relax and watched TV for a few minutes
- 11:15 – went into town to run errands
- 12:00 – home for lunch
- 1:00 – Gail and two other women, including the psychologist, came for a meeting about Bert and Marvin
- 2:30 – Fred Kaarsemaker called
- 4:30 – we called the RCMP to let them know Rose had been found
- 4:40 – we called Deanne to tell her the other girls had been seen in the village
  - We had a chance to talk to Gail about the way we feel, that we don't think it's good to have two women working together, and that a couple would work out better. The kids we get need the male figure of authority. We also shared how we feel about how we always seem to do everything wrong. It seems no matter what we do it's not right.
  - Rose's social worker called to say Rose had told him Marg had shook her, and that he wasn't going to bring her back here till he could have time to sort things out. He took her to Gail's house for the night. It seems she's embarrassed about coming back, so this was her way out. Now Marg's in trouble and an investigation will automatically follow. Ron came over to bring us this news. We had just decided an evaluation should be done to determine what would be best concerning our situation. At present, we don't know what will happen.
- 6:00 – finally had supper, although I couldn't have cared less
  - we cleaned up the kitchen and dining room
- 6:20 – we got Arlene off to Guides and got the boys in for a bath
  - I know I'm going to find it very hard to work with Rose after what she's done. It really hurts. There's a good possibility they may not bring her back.

- 7:30 – started getting the boys ready for bed
  - James came with one of the La'malis girls to get her clothes
  - Ron came to get Rose's school clothes for Wednesday
- 8:00 – prayed and tucked them in
  - Marvin tried to give us a hard time. He was very psyched up about all the action concerning the girls.
- 8:20 – Marg went to pickup the girl from Guides
- 9:00 – We tried to relax but it's pretty hard after what happened today. We found out that the girls were responsible for all our **late** night calls. They thought it was a big joke and laughed.
- 10:00 – Marg phoned Fred Kaarsemaker and talked to him about the accusation against her by Rose.
- 10:30 – we wrote reports
  - had some warm milk and devotions
  - tried to settle in but Marg cried most of the evening

#### WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 11

- 7:00 – got kids up, made lunches and breakfast, put out garbage
- 7:45 – got boys off to school
- 8:05 – got Arlene off to school
  - Karen phoned and asked over for lunch
- 8:15 – we had breakfast
- 8:40 – made our beds and cleaned up
- 9:00 – Darlaine phoned
- 9:20 – we left for the ladies Bible study
  - the hostess asked us all for supper Thursday
- 11:30 – we went into town and had lunch with Karen
- 1:50 – came home
- 2:15 – Fred Kaarsemaker called to explain more about details of the investigation
- 2:45 – The boys came home from school. They were pretty wound up. I bathed the Native boy's hand and changed the dressing. We spent time trying to unwind the boys. It was raining but they played outside anyway.
- 3:45 – Arlene came home

- 4:05 – James came by to get the other La'malis girl's clothes
- 4:15 – A social worker came by to talk to us about the investigation
- 4:30 – She decided we may as well have our interview. It went very well. The outcome, I believe, will depend on the kids. One of them lied and said we hadn't given her any supper.
- 5:10 – We left for our MCC potluck/progressive supper at Maria's and Grant and Louise's places. We had a good time. We compiled a quarterly report for our unit to send to Henry. We needed an evening of relaxation after the tension we had been through.
- 8:45 – we came home  
– talked to the relief staff person for a bit
- 9:30 – we caught up on our reports and the diary [time diary]
- 10:00 – bed

#### THURSDAY FEBRUARY 12

- 7:00 – breakfast, lunches  
– got kids off to school  
– boys had a fight at the bus stop and we had to try to settle it
- 8:30 – Marg showered  
– I started sorting laundry
- 9:00 – I had a bath and cleaned up our room  
– Marg made an appointment at the dentist for Bert
- 9:30 – we both did our written reports for the investigation
- 10:45 – we left for town to make photocopies of our reports and then took them to Social Services
- 12:30 – lunch, put away groceries, read mail and attended to laundry
- 1:15 – I did my Bible homework
- 1:45 – I rested  
– Marg watched TV
- 2:45 – Marvin and Bert came home. They told us they had been asked a lot of questions. Marvin became very obnoxious. He tried everything he could to get us to do something to him. I tried to talk to him quietly, but he said that I was threatening him and that he would report me.

- 3:00 – Marvin called his social worker to tell we were being mean. She talked to me and didn't give him any sympathy. He became very unruly. I tried to talk to him and reason with him. He only shouted and said that I was threatening him and that he'd report me.
- 4:00 – I called Neil about it. He had asked me to phone at anytime. Marvin realized I had called someone and he was scared that they were coming for him. He then settled down then and was quiet till 5:00 when he went to his uncle's place for supper.
- 5:30 – we had a quiet supper
- 6:15 – cleaned kitchen  
– kids did their homework  
– Marg folded laundry  
– I caught up on this report
- 7:00 – we played a game with the kids till bedtime  
– Arlene wasn't feeling well so we had to look after her  
– Marvin was quieter after he came home  
– It was a quiet evening, thank goodness. We had had enough for a while. We find it's been a real strain and very upsetting coping with all that's happened. We both feel emotionally drained, but we are beginning to relax somewhat.
- 8:30 – decided to relax with a video to get our minds off it but the video wasn't good so we watched TV  
– did our reports
- 11:00 – bed

### FRIDAY FEBRUARY 13

- It's a good thing Marg and I aren't superstitious or I'm not sure how we'd handle Friday the 13th. Anyway, here goes another day.
- 7:00 – the usual except they were all ready for school  
– We played a game with them to keep them from fighting at the bus stop. We kept them in till the bus came.
- 8:00 – we had breakfast and talked  
– cleaned up the kitchen
- 8:40 – Marvin phoned from school and said he'd fallen in the mud and asked us to bring him some clean clothes, which Marg did.  
– Ron came over to get Rose's band instrument
- 9:15 – we did my Bible reading homework  
– Arlene's teacher called and said she wasn't feeling well and she wanted to be picked up

- 10:20 – left to run errands and pick her up
- 11:15 – lunch
- 12:00 – prepared casserole for supper
- 12:30 – we both rested
- 2:45 – Marvin and Bert came home
  - they played in their room
  - I knit for a while and Marg watched TV
- 4:00 – They asked to go outside and came home a few minutes later screaming that the neighbour had taken Marvin by the hair and had taken Bert's bike. He told them they were not to play in the ditch anymore. Marg went over to investigate and he asked her to bring the boys over after supper.
- 5:00 – We had supper and then Marg took the boys over. Shortly thereafter the police phoned and said Marvin had called. They wanted to know what happened. I called Marg to tell her but he had made the call from there so she knew. The police were going to investigate.
- 7:00 – Marg, Marvin, Bert, and the police officer came over and things got settled for the time.
- 7:15 – we played a game with the kids till 8:00
  - watched TV for half an hour and then they went to bed
  - Marvin tried to give us a hard time but he didn't get anywhere. We took away his radio and batteries and he soon quieted down. I hope we can keep the upper hand with him. I really tried talking to him but it's not easy.
  - Marg got a call about the investigation and really feels she can't do anything right. I know how she feels. I sure loose my self-confidence at times.
- 9:00 – Marg and I watched TV til 10:00
- 10:00 – we wrote up reports and diary
  - I read for a while

#### SATURDAY FEBRUARY 14

- 8:30 – Marg had a shower
  - I had a bath and cleaned up
- 9:00 – breakfast
  - the boys cleaned their rooms
  - we vacuumed, dusted, did laundry, bathrooms, etc.

- 10:30 – relaxed a bit
  - played a game with Arlene
- 11:40 – Marvin's Dad came and we visited with him a bit
- 12:00 – lunch
- 12:30 – went into town
- 1:30 – Marg and Bert cleaned and washed the van
  - I spent time with Arlene
- 2:30 – we watched a video
- 4:45 – we prepared supper
- 5:00 – supper
- 5:30 – left for the Valentine party
- 8:45 – returned home and put kids to bed
- 9:15 – Marg left for College and Careers
  - I did reports and my Bible reading
- 10:30 – I went to bed
  - Marg went to bed

#### SUNDAY FEBRUARY 15

- 9:00 – slept in, it sure felt nice
- 9:20 – breakfast
  - dressed for church
- 10:30 – left for church
- 12:30 – returned home
- 12:45 – lunch
  - we spent a quiet relaxing day

Source: Judy & Marg 1987

## MARIA

(Tuesday January 27 to Monday February 2, 1987)

## TUESDAY JANUARY 27

- 7:00 – routine morning
- 8:25 – left for school
  - prepared the snacks and for the fieldtrips
- 9:00 – students arrived
- 10:00 – tooks students skating
  - served snack (hot chocolate and oranges)
- 11:00 – waited for bus (did movement activities while we waited)
- 11:30 – arrived back at school
  - quiet book time, brushed teeth
- 12:00 – lunch
- 1:00 – students arrived
- 1:30 – left on fieldtrip to firehall
- 2:45 – returned from fieldtrip
  - dismissal
  - dropped off film
- 3:00 – tidied up at school
  - grocery shopping
  - began supper
- 4:00 – supper
  - relaxed
- 5:00 – left for Jo and Kim’s piano lessons
- 6:00 – read STEPteen [Systematic Training for Effective Parenting for parents of teenagers] lesson while I waited for the kids
- 7:00 – returned home
  - left for STEPteen meeting

- 9:00 – returned home
- watched TV
- planned for Wednesday's class

10:00 – bed

### WEDNESDAY JANUARY 28

- 7:40 – slept in (sudden start to the day)
- packed lunches
- 8:30 – arrived at school
- 9:00 – worked with two girls on numbers
- 10:00 – fieldtrip to the airport
- 11:45 – returned to school
- passed out milk
- dismissal
- 12:00 – lunch
- prepared craft for nursery students
- 1:00 – students arrived
- made 'firefighter' hats
- read 'The little fire engine'
- 2:00 – began snack early
- 2:30 – instructor for cultural program arrived
- 3:00 – dismissal
- picked up Burl and went to his place to plan the Sunday worship service
- 5:00 – went home
- supper
- relaxed
- 7:00 – made muffins
- worked on greensheet [monthly statement of expenses]
- 8:00 – interviewed by Heinz
- 10:00 – planned for class
- bed

## THURSDAY JANUARY 29

- 7:00 – rise and shine (buttermilk/wholewheat pancakes for breakfast!)
- 8:30 – arrived at school
  - preparation time
- 9:00 – students arrived
  - aide worked with a larger group on airplane collage while I worked with three students on numbers
- 10:00 – snack
  - left to go drop off film and go for the story time at the public library
- 11:45 – arrived back at school
  - milk and snack
- 12:00 – dismissal
  - lunch
  - prepared for nursery class
- 1:00 – students arrived
  - showed filmstrips of stop/drop/roll procedure for fire safety
- 2:00 – snack
  - playtime and story
- 3:00 – dismissal
  - said goodbyes to my aide (her last day of work)
- 4:00 – went to Band Office to collect snack cheque and look at new books
- 5:00 – went home
  - received wonderful phone call from my sister-in-law in Saskatchewan
  - made dessert
- 6:00 – at Ed and Karen's place for supper
- 7:00 – left for Mennonite church group Bible study
- 10:00 – returned home
  - planned for Monday's class
- 11:00 – read *Maclean's*
  - bed

## FRIDAY JANUARY 30

- 7:00 – rise and shine
- 8:00 – left for neighbouring community with my aide, Sherry and her aide, for a professional development meeting [on the whole language program]
  - said ‘Hi’ to Heinz on the road
- 9:00 – professional development meeting started
- 12:00 – lunch with my passengers and three others attending the meeting
- 1:00 – headed home
- 2:00 – bailed out trunk of car
- 3:00 – tea with Karen (long overdue)
- 4:30 – supper at friends’ place [Mennonite church group attenders]
- 8:00 – arrived home
  - Kim went babysitting
  - relaxed and watched TV
- 11:00 – bed

## SATURDAY JANUARY 31

- 7:00 – rose early to balance greensheet (due this day)
- 8:00 – breakfast
- 9:00 – picked up two boys from the Mennonite church group as part of the babysitting exchange
- 10:00 – all five of us went to my school
- 11:00 – the two boys played with Jo and Kim while I cleaned and organized the classroom (a good time for all)
- 12:30 – arrived home for a fast lunch
- 1:00 – worked on the Sunday service while Heinz interviewed Jo and Kim
- 3:00 – sewed banner in preparation for worship service
  - went to Burl’s place to complete worship planning
- 5:00 – supper with Burl and Darlaine
- 6:00 – completed worship planning

- 9:00 – went to school to xerox material for Sunday
- 10:00 – went home
  - meditated for strength for Sunday morning
- 11:00 – bed

#### SUNDAY FEBRUARY 1

- 7:00 – rise and shine (wholewheat buttermilk pancakes for breakfast with calorie reduced syrup!)
  - regular Sunday morning phone call from Mom in Saskatchewan
- 8:00 – prepared mentally for service
- 9:15 – left for church
  - setup for service
- 10:00 – church service and communion
- 12:15 – arrived at Grant and Louise's apartment for dinner (watched them cook waffles and white sauce – yum!)
- 2:00 – took Jo to the racquetball club to meet her friends
- 3:00 – tea and dishes with Grant and Louise
- 4:00 – napped
- 5:30 – picked up Jo
- 6:00 – shopped for school snack supplies and delivered them
- 7:00 – worked on planning for the week (a new theme)
- 8:00 – visited with an attender of the Mennonite church group
  - I went for a long walk with her
- 9:00 – tea with her
- 10:00 – home
  - checked plans for the week at school
- 11:00 – tried to live with the irritating noise from Betty's tap (light sleep – ask me about my dream!)
  - bed

## MONDAY FEBRUARY 2

- 7:00 – breakfast  
– packed lunches
- 8:00 – arrived at school  
– preparations  
– xeroxed at Band Office
- 9:00 – students arrived  
– Early Childhood Education student arrived  
– attendance and work jobs
- 10:00 – story time, new skills, theme work
- 11:00 – snack, quiet book time, brushed teeth
- 12:00 – dismissal  
– lunch  
– prepared craft for nursery class
- 1:00 – students arrived  
– craft and game time
- 1:30 – story time, theme work
- 2:00 – snack, brushed teeth, free play
- 3:00 – dismissal  
– worked in classroom making a class book  
– met with Cathy
- 4:00 – went to public library
- 4:30 – grocery shopping, picked up mail
- 5:00 – arrived home  
– supper
- 6:00 – relaxed  
– planned
- 7:00 – met with Darlaine and went swimming with her
- 10:00 – beddy bye time!

Source: Maria 1987b

## Appendix B

## MCC NORTH AMERICAN VOLUNTEER SUPPORT PLAN (1987)

**Room and Board**

- housing, food, basic furnishings, utilities, toiletries, non-prescriptive drugs (e.g., contraceptives) and laundry.

**Medical**

## Covered:

- major dental work deemed an emergency;
- prenatal and maternity costs not covered by insurance; and
- replacement eyewear.

## Not Covered:

- pre-existing conditions and elective procedures.

**Emergency Leave**

- pay up to 50 percent of round-trip travel costs when an immediate family emergency occurs.

**Family Assistance**

	<u>Annually</u>
Child 12 to 17	\$230 (Cdn.)
Child 11 and under	115

**Personal Allowance**

		<u>Monthly</u>
First-term worker:	Adult	\$ 50
	Child under 18	30
Continuing worker:	Adult	100
	Child under 18	35

**Worker Enrichment**

- annual or biannual retreats, often at church camps;
- access to local newspaper, weekly news magazine, a Mennonite periodical and one other Christian periodical;
- educational and recreational opportunities, resource materials; and
- up to \$14 monthly per child for educational enrichment when activities provided by the school system are not adequate.

**Vacation Allowance**

	<u>Per Week of Vacation</u>
Age 12 and over	\$115
Age 11 and under	60
• additional support available to workers in isolated locations.	
	<u>Vacation Period (weeks)</u>
Year 1	2
Year 2 to 8	3
Year 9 and on	4

**Home Leave**

- workers returning for an additional two-year assignment are eligible for a paid two-month home leave.

**Study Assistance**

- provide for up to one year of graduate study for returning personnel interested in leadership positions.

**Resettlement Allowance**

- begins with thirteenth month of service

	<u>Monthly</u>
Adult	\$42
Child under 18	28

**Retirement Program**

- workers serving five or more continuous years and whose age plus years of service equal 35 are eligible.

**Note:** In the introduction to its statement on personnel policy, MCC (1987b:1) contends the

policies are intended to serve those for whom they are written, and not the other way around. MCC recognizes issues may arise when predetermined policies are not workable and exceptions must be considered. At all times, the spirit of working with policies is to foster order while avoiding rigidity.

Source: MCC 1987b:12-21, 28

## VITA

Surname: Dyck                      Given Names: Heinz John  
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### Educational Institutions Attended:

University of Victoria	1985 to 1993
University of Winnipeg	1978 to 1979 and 1982 to 1985
Mennonite Brethren Bible College (Winnipeg, Manitoba)	1981 to 1983
Columbia Bible Institute (Clearbrook, British Columbia)	1979 to 1981

### Degrees Awarded:

B.A. (Honours)	University of Winnipeg	1985
B.R.S. (Religious Studies)	Mennonite Brethren Bible College	1983
Diploma (Biblical Studies)	Columbia Bible Institute	1981

### Honours and Awards:

University of Victoria Fellowship	1985 to 1987
The Canadian Association of Geographers Undergraduate Award	1985

### Publications:

Porteous, J. D. & H. Dyck. 1987. How Canadian are Canadian Geographers?  
*The Canadian Geographer*, 31(2):177-179.

Porteous, J. D. & H. Dyck. 1986. Foreign Fields: Canadian Academic Geographers'  
Non-Canadian Interests. *Operational Geographer*, 11:30-31.

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Title of Thesis:

THE WORK OF MENNONITE CENTRAL COMMITTEE VOLUNTEERS  
IN A DEVELOPING ABORIGINAL COMMUNITY

Author:



HEINZ JOHN DYCK

15 April 1993