

**AN EXAMINATION OF THE
POST-ADOPTION SERVICE NEEDS
OF ADOPTED ADULTS**

**Report of a Practicum
Presented to
The Faculty of Graduate Studies
University of Manitoba**

**In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work**

**By
Sherrill D. Berry**

June 20, 1988

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SHERRILL D. BERRY

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	i
INTRODUCTION	1
CHAPTER I: OVERVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE	
A. Changes in the Field of Adoption Practices & Attitudes	5
B. An Overview of Developments in the Adoption Field in Manitoba	11
C. The Effects of Adoption Practice On the Adoptee	19
D. The Adoptee's Interest in The Biological Family	28
E. A Summary of Existing Post-Adoption Services	31
CHAPTER II: THE PRACTICUM	
A. Setting	41
B. Clients	42
C. Practicum Personnel	44
D. Procedures	44
E. Evaluation	50
F. Evaluation Instruments	52
CHAPTER III: PROFILE OF ADOPTEES DEVELOPED FROM THE FILE REVIEW	
A. Examination of File Review Data	57
B. Relationship Between Questionnaire Items	65

CHAPTER IV: AN ANALYSIS OF THE PROVISION OF DIRECT
SERVICE TO ADOPTEES

A. Post-Adoption Questionnaire Data	69
B. The Relationship Between Questionnaire Items	78
C. Case Illustrations	82
D. An Overview of The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results	103
E. Post-Adoption Reunions	105

CHAPTER V: COMMON THEMES, CONCLUSIONS AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Common Themes	113
B. Concluding Remarks	122
C. Recommendations	126

APPENDIX

I. Post-Adoption Questionnaire	129
II. Intervention-Case Assessment & Recording Format	134
III. Registration by Adopted Adult, Form 1	136
IV. Client Satisfaction Questionnaire	138
V. Request By An Adult For Information From His or Her Own Record	140

VI.	Tables of Data	142
	Table 1. Marital Status of Adoptees	143
	Table 2. Address of the Adoptees	144
	Table 3. Request for Assistance to Contact Birth Mother by Need to Know	145
	Table 4. Request for Assistance to Contact Birth Father by Need to Know	146
	Table 5. Request for Assistance to Contact Birth Siblings by Need to Know	147
	Table 6. Are Adoptive Parents Aware of Request by Age of Adoptee	148
	Table 7. Request for Assistance to Contact Birth Mother by Age of Adoptee	149
VII.	Case Illustrations F - Q	150

BIBLIOGRAPHY

INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, agencies are being faced with post-adoption service requests from adopted adults. These requests contributed to changes in provincial legislation and to the recognition that post-adoption service is a valid and necessary service in its own right.

In July of 1985, The Child and Family Services Act was assented to in the form of Bill 12, later to be proclaimed on March 1, 1986. This Act, containing the sections which set out the provisions for services to children and families, replaced the Child Welfare Act. This new Act represented a shift in emphasis from children, to children and their families. Under the principles describing the provision of services, families are defined as the basic unit in society and as being the "basic source of care, nurture and acculturation of children, and parents have the primary responsibility to ensure the well-being of their children (Child and Family Services Act, 1985:3).

On April 1, 1986 the Post Adoption Registry Section of the Child and Family Services Act was proclaimed, marking its debut as a formal and legitimate service in its own right. Prior to this date and since 1980, some such services were offered under Part VI of the Child Welfare Act (1980) entitled "Adoptions, General Provisions". Section 92(2) dealt with the establishment of a registry. The registry was to record information volunteered by members of the adoption triad, convey information between members of the triad where there had been a willingness to

receive or obtain information, register the wishes of triad members as to whether they wished to be known to one another or to remain anonymous, and finally, to facilitate personal contact between triad members where their wishes had been registered to such an effect. The triad, often referred to as the adoption triangle, include the adoptive person or adoptee, the adoptive parents and the birth or biological parents (Dukette 1982, Depp 1982).

Section 93 gave the Director of an Agency the authority to release non-identifying information from the adoption files to members of the adoption triad. With the advent of the Post-Adoption Registry section in April 1986 services were now expanded to include adult siblings of the adult adoptee and the minor adoptee with the adoptive parents' consent. The major initiative of this new section however was the ability of the director of the registry to undertake a search for biological parents or adult biological siblings of the adoptee (if they were not adopted) at the request of the adoptee (Child and Family Services Act, 1985).

With the advent of the Post-Adoption Registry legislation in Manitoba, the need for underlying policy and procedures to guide the development of this service has been recognized by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, Brandon, Manitoba. The purpose of this practicum will be to assess the service needs of adopted adults, participants in the adoption process, based on their request for post-adoption service. An understanding of these needs will provide the basis for recommendations about the

adoption process and post-adoption service and will be available to the Board of Directors and Management of the Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba for consideration in the development of this new service.

This practicum will focus on the adoptee and will deal primarily with adoption placements where the children were under two years of age at the time of placement.

The objectives of this practicum focus on the following:

(1) obtaining knowledge and understanding as to the needs of the members of the adoption triad as previously defined, with special emphasis on the adoptee;

(2) gaining experience through the direct provision of post-adoption services and thereby participating in the development of this service;

(3) development of counselling skills in the area of post-adoption service to adult adoptees.

Chapter One of this report will present an overview of the literature relevant to the adoption process and post-adoption service. The literature review was organized around the following premises:

(a) changes in the field of adoption practice and attitudes;

(b) an overview of developments in the adoption field in Manitoba;

(c) the effects of adoption practices on the adoptee;

(d) the adoptees' interest in their biological family;

(e) a summary of existing post-adoption services.

Chapter Two will present a description of the methods used in carrying out this practicum. Chapter Three presents a profile of the 78 adoptee cases involved in the file review. Chapter Four provides an analysis of data obtained from the provision of direct service to adoptees. This chapter also provides five case illustrations of those adoptees involved in the practicum and will as well present data on those families who were involved in a reunion. Chapter Five presents the common themes, conclusions and recommendations arising out of the practicum.

CHAPTER ONEOVERVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATUREA. Changes in the Field of Adoption Practice and Attitudes

Kirk (1981:98) builds on the sociologist Weinstein's definition of adoption to define adoption as "the institutional practice through which an individual belonging by birth to one kinship group acquires new kinship ties that are socially defined as equivalent to the congenital ties". While Kirk acknowledges adoption as a legally established institution, he also maintains that equally important is the fact that adoption is a pattern of social relationships. However, Kirk (1981:98) states that "adoption kinship is not and cannot be the equivalent of blood relationship". The notion of adoption as a legally established institution and as a pattern of social relationships is reconcilable as two approaches viewed interdependently and as long as one is clear as to the roots of contemporary adoption practice in North America.

The first adoption legislation in North America was enacted in Massachusetts in 1851. In this legislation the adoptee's interests were given some consideration but the interests of the birth and adopting parents were the prime consideration. Kirk (1981) contends that the cultural climate, as well as demographic changes in North America which greatly reduced the supply of adoptable infants, contributed to the acceptance of his theory on adoptive kinship. He describes this as the Shared Fate Theory.

The Shared Fate Theory is based on the premise that adopting parents suffer a role handicap and that the larger community reinforces the attitude that adoption, while acceptable, is really an inferior alternative to natural parenthood. Kirk (1981) notes that there are two modes of coping with the role handicap, "acknowledgement of the difference" and "rejection of the difference" and he positions himself on the side of "acknowledgement of difference". Essentially, Kirk (1981) saw the adaptation of this stance as promoting stability and good communication in adoptive families as well as the positive integration of the adoptive parent-child relationship. Such a stance meant accepting that building a family biologically or by adoption was not equitable. The development of such a family life, as previously described, requires in Kirk's (1981) assessment empathy and communication with the child's natural or biological background and hence the value and necessity of coping behaviors grounded in "acknowledgement of the difference".

According to Kirk, the acceptance of this approach to adoptive kinship raises questions about institutional reform in areas such as sealed adoption records and the element of secrecy in adoption. Sealing adoption records provides confidentiality regarding the identity of the birth or biological parents. Kirk (1981) raised the question as to whether the legal and moral authority in this area should reside within the institution of adoption or the family itself. He believed reforms were necessary and inevitable and saw reform in this area freeing members of the adoption triad from external artificial props that serve

to attempt to reinforce the loyalties in the relationships. He further realized that his theory could become a stimulus that would eventually change adoption practices.

Rita Dukette (1982) has written extensively about adoption and describes contemporary adoption attitudes as a reaction against tradition. The traditional view about adoption reflected the social mores of society which essentially supported two stances. Adoption meant a break with the past and the legality of the process sealed this break and the adoption records. Secondly, the secrecy implied in the sealing of the records, which has created a nightmare for birth and adoptive parents (Dukette 1975) was also fostered by society's attitude towards sexuality and which ostracized women who bore children outside of marriage. During the period of the 1930's through to the 1960's, the secrecy component governed practices, and it was not until the civil rights movements of the 1960's that sealed records and secrecy came to be viewed as a violation of civil rights. These and other factors such as fewer infants available for adoption, the organization of self-help groups, and the popularity of assertiveness training as a means of achieving one's rights caused Dukette (1982) to contend that times had changed although legal practices have been slow to catch up. She saw a need to rethink our values, and to support the movement to acknowledge genealogy in constructive ways, mainly through a more open practice in adoption procedures and through good practice in record keeping and sharing. This means a full gathering and sharing of paternal and maternal information on the adoptee's biological family, with

social agencies and professionals having the responsibility of updating the records with the passage of time.

Sorosky, Baron and Pannor (1979) contributed to the field of adoption in a study of members of the adoption triad. They indicate that in the United States adoption law is not based on British common law, as are most laws in the United States. Early adoption laws in the United States find a parallel in Roman adoption laws as in both cases, gradual changes in adoption law were reflected by the changes in societal needs.

Sorosky, Baron and Pannor (1979) credit the Child Welfare League of America, a privately supported national organization, and the Childrens Bureau, a federal agency, with improving the standards and services to children and with promoting change and growth in adoption practices and values. Gradually, from the 1940's onward, there was a shift to the best interests of the child and instead of a search for the perfect child, the concern was for the best home for the child. While there has been an evident trend towards openness and honesty between the adoptive family and the adoption agency as well as between the adoption agency and the adoptee, the concern for openness has at times been more theoretical rather than practical (Sorosky, Baron and Pannor, 1979).

Adoption is viewed by Sorosky, Baron and Pannor (1979) as a lifelong process for all members of the adoption triad with there being ties that bind the members of the triad together forever. They maintain that these ties cannot be denied or severed and that in order to preserve the well-being of the concerned

individuals, openness must replace the secrecy that has and still does exist in adoption practice.

Pannor and Baron (1984) state that traditional closed adoption practices should end and be replaced by an open approach in which birth and adopting parents meet, exchange identifying information and retain the right to continue to maintain contact and exchange knowledge and information on behalf of the child. They believe that such an arrangement would allow birth parents to have a role in the child's life which would not undermine the adoptive parents' position, and that will restore to the adoptee the basic fundamental right to know one's biological and historical background. Birth parents were encouraged to believe that the relinquishment of their children would be an experience they would forget. Adoptive parents were encouraged to act as if the adopted child had been born to them. These practices have served as myths which have acted as a basis for numerous psychological problems. Pannor and Baron (1984) state that underlying open adoption practices is an acceptance of Kirk's (1964) view that adoptive kinship is not the same as consanguineous kinship.

Lifton (1979) describes the adopted adult's forefathers as Moses and Oedipus and that from that point in history, until at least the 1960"s, "the adoptee was in the closet" (Lifton 1979:13). Few questions were asked of the past by adopted adults, who were a silent minority playing the adoption game in which they were expected to regard the birth parents as if they were dead. Lifton (1979) states that for adoption to survive, the strong trend in our society towards openness and honesty must

apply to the adoptee with the ultimate goal being open records in every state and in Canada.

Sachdev's (1986) preliminary findings in his study of 300 adoptive parents, adopted adults and birth parents suggest overwhelming support from all three groups for the release of medical and non-identifying information to those concerned. Sachdev (1986) also found a majority of members of the adoption triad favor releasing identifying information with adopted adults being slightly less in favor with this reform than birth parents. The subjects of Sachdev's study were selected randomly from the records of a Canadian adoption agency and this is possibly the first such study to not rely on volunteers.

Wishard and Wishard (1979) describe a clear trend towards more open adoption records and state that birth parents and adopting parents currently involved in an adoption placement should expect their child, as an adult, to have access to his or her adoption records. Past adoption practices, based on statutes that provided for children to be reborn into adoptive families, only serve to perpetuate adoption myths, and consequently delay needed changes in the law.

Sorich and Siebert (1982) see the traditional view of adoption as being closed and secretive with the three members of the triad having limited factual information. They indicate the system operated in such a closed fashion because it was assumed to be in the best interest of triad members. Sorich and Siebert (1982) describe adoption practices at the Child Saving Institute (a non-profit child placing agency in Omaha, Nebraska) which have

been developing since 1976 and where various alternatives are offered to members of the adoption triad. They emphasize the availability of choices and the recognition that adoption is a lifelong process with each family situation being unique. The choices commence with the adoption placement and include a sharing of only non-identifying information, semi-open adoption and open adoption. Semi-open adoption is described by CSI as a process whereby birth and adoptive parents meet without the exchange of any identifying information. Where this process occurs with the exchange of identifying information, this would be described as a full open adoption. Over the passing of time there may be an agreement to exchange gifts, pictures and letters. Sorich and Siebert (1982) feel that it is members of the triad who should decide what form the adoption process will take for them.

B. An Overview of Development in the Adoption Field in Manitoba

In Manitoba, the History of Children's Aid Society file at Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba (formerly Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba) shows that Children's Aid Societies were formed in Winnipeg and Brandon in 1898. This came about as a result of pressure from the Humane Society of Winnipeg, urging the provincial government to make some provision for the protection of children. Initially these agencies offered protective services to children only, with the Department of Health and Public Welfare being responsible for unmarried mother

and adoption services. The mandate for services was eventually transferred to the Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba, the unmarried mother's service in 1938 and adoptions in 1946. Winnipeg Children's Aid Society did not assume responsibility for adoptions until the 1960's (History of Children's Aid Societies' File, undated document).

The adoption practices that developed in Manitoba were to a large extent based on policies and practices in the adoption field in the United States. People such as Mary Easterbrook and later Clayton Hagen (Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota) who influenced adoption practices in Manitoba received their training in the United States (Goodman, 1987). It was not until 1942, that the first class of trained social workers graduated in Manitoba, and it was not until 1955 that a supervisory position was occupied by a social worker with a master's degree (Goodman, 1987).

The traditional adoption practices that embraced confidentiality and secrecy existed in Manitoba as elsewhere in Canada and the United States. In adoption matters, the wisdom of agencies and practitioners and for that matter, society in general, dictated that secrecy was of paramount importance. One facet of such thinking involved society's attitude towards illegitimacy and the resulting stigma and practice of ostracization that existed towards women who bore children out-of-wedlock. Single pregnant women often took extreme steps to protect their identities, leaving family and friends to seek anonymity in large cities or other provinces. Goodman (1987) reports that in mater-

nity homes in Winnipeg there was a period of time when such women used pseudonyms in order to completely protect their identity. The secrecy and confidentiality that was then extended to these single mothers choosing adoption was welcomed and indeed expected. Prior to 1946, according to Goodman (1987) there was little history taken from birth mothers which meant there was little to impart to adopting parents. By the 1950's however, history taking had improved so that more background information was available and the major focus was to serve and protect the adopting parents. There was an attempt to guarantee adopting parents "the perfect child" so that children without two histories were not placed until child guidance testing had been completed, and children of incestuous relationships, with handicaps, or with hereditary diseases in their background were not likely to be placed for adoption at all. The period of the 1950 - 60's saw an emphasis on "matching" in the placement of a child with adoptive parents, part of the intent of such a practice being to convince adoptive parents that adoption was like having your own child. "The expectation was that this newly created family would function as any normal family." (Goodman 1984:1).

While more information might be on record regarding the child's biological background in the 1960's, what of that information should be imparted to the participants in the adoption process was determined by agencies and their staff. It was the policy at Children's Aid Society of Western Manitoba at that time that adopting parents would be given a typed copy of the informa-

tion that was shared with them verbally about the child's history. Easterbrook (1967) indicated at an adoption seminar in Winnipeg that information on the adopted child's background that would be helpful should be given to the adopting parents and information that would not be helpful, useful or that would arouse fear, should be withheld. This position subsequently found support in the Child Welfare League of America standards (1973) which indicated that only pertinent facts that could be used constructively by adopting parents should be released to them from the child's biological history. It was further suggested that detailed descriptive data such as age, height and physical description of biological parents should not be released. In 1970 the original birth name, formerly shown on the final adoption notice no longer appeared on this legal document (Child Welfare Act, 1974). At the same time that agencies were contemplating what information and how much should be released on a child's biological background, it was suggested that if too much emphasis was placed on hereditary and a child's natural background, then those holding such attitudes should not consider adopting as problems would be encountered for the adoptive parents, the adopted child and any biological children that might be in the family (Wagner, 1965).

In 1967, the Manitoba Adoption Council was established, mainly due to the backlog of children for whom there were no homes. The major task of the council at this time was to recruit adoption homes. Besides children with handicaps, of mixed racial origin, and sibling groups needing homes, it had become apparent

that the number of adoption applications had gradually been declining while the number of infants being relinquished had been increasing. Manitoba Adoption Council minutes (1969) reflect the concern about the need to find families and homes for children and the value in a sharing of recruitment ideas. It was at this time that Clayton Hagen of Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota offered workshops on adoption in Manitoba (Goodman 1987). The emphasis was on group meetings with adoptive parents, screening applicants in rather than judging their suitability, of limited history being taken or given, and the notion that a child's life starts with his entry into the adoptive family.

While not everyone agreed with this philosophy, these presentations still had an effect on adoption practice in Manitoba at this time. The Manitoba Adoption Council was to develop as a forum for sharing ideas and strategies on behalf of children and families and to eventually advocate for new policies and practices (Goodman 1987). However, the climate was changing rapidly and by 1973 there was a growing waiting list of adoption applicants. The Manitoba Adoption Council Committee minutes (1973) mentioned possible guidelines to screen out adopting parents as well as the difficulties involved in choosing the most suitable families for placement. What the minutes also reflected was the growing shortage of caucasian babies. It was acknowledged at this time that the welfare of the child was of prime importance and that agencies have the responsibility of making the best choice of a home for a child.

The movement in the adoption field, which was raising ques-

tions about the veil of secrecy and lack of information available to adoption triad members, was being felt in Manitoba. The Manitoba Adoption Council minutes (1976) addressed the issue of an adoption reunion registry and the growing post-adoption needs of participants in the adoption triad. The efforts of Saskatchewan and their proposed policy in this field were discussed and while there was some agreement about public concern and the issues in this area, there was no clear direction established for the province of Manitoba at this time. It was not to be until 1980 that the first legislative act appeared in Manitoba regarding post-adoption services (Child Welfare Act 1980).

In 1977, the Manitoba Law Reform Commission was requested by the Manitoba government to undertake a review of the confidentiality of adoption records and to indicate possible reforms. The Commissioner's report (1979) indicated that in their reforms, they strove on one hand to preserve anonymity of those who desired it in the adoption triad, while on the other hand ensuring the acquisition of information and contact amongst adoption triad members, where it was desired. The Commission found their task to be complicated by what they saw as conflicting interests of the members of the adoption triad. In 1979, the current situation was governed by strict confidentiality, and the only guideline that courts were given regarding the opening of adoption records was that of compelling circumstances. A birth parent's desire to meet and know their child was not sufficient grounds to constitute compelling circumstances, according to the Manitoba Law Reform Commission (1979).

This wall of confidentiality was breached by adoption agencies and their informal policy of providing non-identifying background information to members of the adoption triad, where it was available. Non-identifying background information refers to such details about a person's background as age, religion, racial and ethnic origin, occupation, education, personality description, hobbies and interests, health, and a description of family members. Information such as names and addresses would not be included as this would allow identification of those involved.

The Manitoba Law Reform Commission (1979) put forth ten major recommendations as part of their efforts for proposed reform to the issue of confidentiality to adoption records. One aspect of the reforms occupied five of the recommendations and dealt with the establishment of a central post-adoption registry. The Commission suggested the registry should have the power to compel agencies to release identifying information from files when the written consent is received from the adult adoptee and the birth parent. It was further recommended that applications for identifying information only be accepted from members of the adoption triad and that parties outside the triad should apply to the Court if they desire identifying information. Another recommendation which stood at the head of the list was that adoption records should not be completely open. This came about out of a desire to balance the needs of the members of the adoption triad. It was further recommended that the practice of open access to non-identifying information be extended to minor adoptees who

have the consent of their adoptive parents.

By 1982 there were signs in Manitoba that the secrecy that existed in the adoption process was being challenged. A semi-open adoption placement occurred in Brandon, Manitoba and involved a face-to-face meeting between the birth mother and the adopting parents at the time of the placement of the baby. There was a personal exchange of non-identifying information between the adoptive and birth parents. There was no exchange of addresses or surnames (Adoption by Semi-Open Placement, 1984). There did not exist at this time any official policy or directive from the Provincial Director regarding such placements. However, it was becoming evident that public attitudes were changing towards the traditional closed and secret view of adoption.

It was out of this climate that the Manitoba Adoption Council (February 1984) established a committee with a mandate to examine issues and implications in the practice of a more open form of adoption in Manitoba. The working paper that was released (Open Adoption, July 1984) involved an examination of the traditional closed adoption practices as well as possible semi-open and open adoption practices. The Committee recommended that open adoption be instituted in Manitoba with a range of options being available to adoption triad members that would include semi-open and open adoption.

The Committee further stated that choices in the system are necessary, with a trust in families and individuals to participate in making the best choice for themselves. In other words, professionals in the system should be consulting members

of the triad as to the adoption practice that would be the most suitable to their situation. It was the belief of this Committee that the recommendations they brought forth recognized that "for the first time the needs and desires of the three parties, adoptee, adopting parents and birth parents are brought into balance". (Open Adoption, July 1984:8). The recommendations of the Committee have yet to be officially implemented.

C. The Effects of Adoption Practice on the Adoptee

Researchers and writers in the field of adoption talk about the three participants in the adoption triad or triangle (Kirk 1981, Marcus 1981, Sorosky et al 1979). Adoption practices, which have been shrouded in secrecy are portrayed at best as a legal arrangement in which the natural parents relinquish all rights and future interest in the child while the adopting parents accept the child into their family as if born to them. The child, who has no part in this decision-making process is viewed as having his best interests served. Marcus (1981) views adoption as a puzzle with missing pieces, where adopting parents are haunted by the elusive presence of the birth parents, and where the birth parents, never forgetting their child, may yearn to come forward. Marcus (1981:31) states that "adoption is not identical to producing one's own child" and that the perpetuation of this myth has poorly served members of the triad, particularly the adoptee. She sees the adoptee being trapped and pulled in conflicting directions.

Adopting parents have received mixed social signals, being

asked to behave as natural parents but at the same time being expected to tell their children about their adoption, and consequently they suffer their own brand of difficulty. Marcus (1981) feels that failure by adoptive parents to recognize that adoption creates a different kind of family from one where children are born into the family naturally, complicates the process of child-rearing and coping with the unique problems that exist in the family by adoption.

Silber and Speedlin (1982:25) maintain that the secrecy in adoption proceedings, "today's most persistently practiced myth" incorporates another myth that has sustained such practices, in the belief that adoption triad members need to be protected. What is being referred to is the belief that birth parents would in time forget about the child they relinquished for adoption. This myth has persisted inspite of evidence from the birth parents that this in fact, is not the case. Silber and Speedlin (1982) feel that adoption workers and intermediaries, families, friends and adoptive parents rationalize and support this stance, each for their own reasons. Each party finds their own brand of comfort in the embracement of this myth, which represents an unfair burden on birth parents who have overwhelmingly declared they have never forgotten their child. The lack of emotional support felt by birth parents, coupled with the need to keep their feelings hidden and closeted have led Silber and Speedlin (1982) to conclude that such people have been seriously handicapped in their ability to rebuild their lives.

The adopted child has been described in many ways in the

literature; the child whose best interests were served; the child who was unwanted by one set of parents and wanted by another set of parents; the child as a central figure in an important decision-making process. Whatever the description, Fales (1985) states that because adoption was seen as a simple solution to three perplexing problems in society, the assumption was that all would be well. What is now known, states Fales (1985) is that all is not well for all three parties in the adoption triad and that adoption must be viewed as a lifelong process.

The adopted adult is a product of a system, where for at least a generation the advice to adoptive parents was to tell the child he was chosen, and therefore special. What this approach served to do, according to Marcus (1981), was to say to the child that likely being chosen by one set of parents meant they were rejected by another set, and that because of the special chosen status, adopted children were placed in the position of feeling they had to reject the birth parents. Marcus (1981) maintains that profound questions stalk the adopted child as he is growing up, and that the years only serve to multiply the questions which eventually merge with a curiosity about roots and ancestry. The timing of the questions and the curiosity about parentage is dependent Marcus (1981) claims on individual lifestyles, needs and life events. The birth of a child to the adopted adult may serve as the stimulus to the curiosity and the need to know. Marcus (1981) also contends that this need to question and to know may surface during adolescence.

When adopted persons challenge the conspiracy of silence

that has encompassed adoption practices, they are often made to feel guilty and ungrateful. Their inquiries and the need to know more information about their origins are viewed as actions designed to hurt one set of parents and to intrude and disrupt the lives of another set of parents. Marcus (1981) cites Jean Paton who has written that the lack of honest response to the adopted adult has caused such persons to doubt themselves and to diminish their own security and self-worth. Out of her own experience as an adopted adult searching for answers to her past, and from the many adopted adults interviewed in this process, Marcus (1981) portrays the quest for information and truth as an obstacle course.

Roles (1984) says that knowing our past provides all of us with some sense of who we are today. While some adopted adults have little curiosity about their past, others have a desire for information that may drive them to seek out their birth parents. This need to search for their roots contends Roles (1984), is tied to their own sense of identity and which is often especially significant during adolescence. For those who decide to try to find their birth parents, they face a long struggle with which they often become obsessed.

Erik Erikson, who has contributed significantly to our understanding of adolescent identity conflicts, describes identity issues in terms of "an unconscious striving for a continuity of personal character" (Stein and Hoopes 1985:3) which are also anchored in a sense of one's past, present and future. Erikson was a product of family where there was a divorce, a stepparent adop-

tion and a lack of openness about the adoption. Erikson views the secretiveness by his family around issues of his origin as a major force in causing him to collude in this game, to feel different, and to eventually dwell on fantasies about his background history (Sorosky, Baron and Pannor, 1978). When one considers Erikson's description of identity issues and the conflicts in this area that are often common to adolescent development, one realizes the importance of the adoptee having information about his origins and having such information as early in his development as possible.

According to Sorosky, Baron and Pannor (1978) fantasizing is a natural part of childhood development, but they cite Sigmund Freud who sees unique problems for some adopted children because their reality is different from the biological child and the fantasizing about parents cannot be resolved easily and can lead to personality adjustment problems. Sorosky et al (1978:96) support the notion that adopted children "have unique areas of vulnerability". These areas of vulnerability, which can also be described as areas of special needs are the result of the adoption experience. This does not mean that adoption in itself is the source of problems or difficulties for the child. What is important is the adoptive parents' ability to be secure and confident in their role as parents and to respond positively and openly to their adopted child's questions and concerns.

Stein and Hoopes (1985) conducted an exploratory study to determine the factors that influence identity issues in the adopted adult. This study, unlike other research in this area

which has been based on psychiatric and clinical populations, compared ninety-one fifteen to eighteen year old adopted adolescents and nonadoptees, both groups being drawn from a nonclinical population. It was found that adoptive status, in and of itself was not predictive of identity resolution difficulties. In fact, the adopted adolescents in this study were found to be doing quite well in this area. Norwell and Guys' research on identity issues in adoptees and nonadoptees resulted in similar findings (Aumend and Barrett, 1984). These findings are in sharp contrast to the bulk of adoption literature which has found adopted adolescents to have intense identity-related issues. However, many of these studies have been based on patient populations.

Other findings reported by Stein and Hoopes (1985) suggest that seeking out birth parents was not seen as a great need or a general rule and that a major factor affecting positive identity-formation was the quality of family relationships. Also, the need to seek out birth parents was found to be more prevalent among adoptees who saw marked physical differences between themselves and their adoptive parents. Stein and Hoopes (1985) however, caution on the generalizability of these findings, given that the subjects in the sample were white and predominantly middle-class children placed for adoption before the age of 2.

Hoopes (1982) conducted a longitudinal study of adoptive and biological families in 1962 involving placements of newborn infants. Her findings suggested that adoption does present a slight risk factor for the child, and that adopted children appear prone to feeling less secure than biological children in-

spite of as good or better parenting and membership in a well-functioning family. Hoopes (1982) reported a vulnerability factor for the adopted child, based on the child's adoptive status. She found that self-esteem and identity-formation were very much affected by the adoptive status. The need for assistance to families and children was felt by Hoopes (1982) to be the greatest during late childhood and early adolescence, and she saw a crucial need for formalized post-adoption services to such families and their children.

Hartman (1984) contends that a key issue in the adoption process for the child and adoptive family is their acceptance of the difference between adoption and building a family biologically. She states that where this difference is not noted and accepted, serious problems will develop and the child is likely to have identity-formation problems based on lack of information about his history. "No matter how early the adoption or how total the cut-off from the family, an important part of an adoptee's identity is deeply rooted in that biological system" (Hartman 1984:51). There are also likely to be relationship problems between the adoptive parents and the child due to lack of communication around the child's biological background. Hartman (1984) sees the major tasks of the adoptive family as that of integration, whereby the child becomes a part of the family without denying the child's past or its importance to the child's overall well-being and future growth. She refers to this concept as being "entitlement" and describes it as a process, that while being taken for granted in biological families,

presents issues for the members of the adoptive family. These types of issues must be addressed by the adoptive family if the child and family are to be committed to each other, according to Hartman (1984).

Lifton (1979) describes adoption as a game in which until as recently as the 1960's, the adoptee was the silent minority in a game where questions were not asked. Lifton (1979) believes adoptees lead a double existence, forced into a position where on the surface they belong to one family but they know also that they belong to a secret family about which little is known. The fantasies experienced about the biological heritage are not able to be tested out against the realities. Lifton (1979:24) cites an adoptee as saying, "When you don't know how you were born, you don't exist. It muddles everything".

Marshall Schecter, a child psychiatrist, is quoted by Lifton (1979) as finding a disproportionate number of adoptees in his clinic and that they seemed more prone to emotional problems than nonadopted children. Lifton (1979) acknowledges that there is a lack of consensus as to whether adoptees have special problems not experienced by nonadoptees growing up in their own families, but she does say that a growing body of researchers like Alexis McWhinnie and John Triseliotis of Scotland are coming to believe the adoptees do have special difficulties not experienced by their counterparts.

Lifton (1986) cites Dr. Kirschner's "adopted child syndrome" as an example of the results that confusion and lack of knowledge about heritage can have on some adoptees. Kirschner, a

psychologist who has worked widely with many adoptees describes this syndrome as including such traits and behaviors as preoccupation with excessive fantasies, conflict with authority, lack of impulse control, lying, stealing and running away from home. While most adopted children adjust to the lack of information about their biological heritage, a small group develop such feelings of rejection and abandonment that their behaviour becomes a serious clinical problem. Lifton (1986) believes that adoptees can only work through their problems when they know their biological heritage, understand why they were relinquished by their birth parents and learn what has transpired with these parents in the intervening years.

Kowal (1984), in a study of twenty young adopted adults who were matched with twenty nonadopted young adults reported that there were no differences between the two groups regarding identity issues or ease of transition into adult life. She did find however that adoptees more frequently viewed themselves as not being loyal to their adoptive family, and that they needed to integrate the fact of their adoption.

In concluding this section, there is a major theme that prevails in the current literature. The secrecy in the adoption proceedings has served triad members very poorly, especially the adoptee. For the adoptee, the veil of secrecy about the biological family and the resulting difficulty in obtaining information about this family of origin has created a situation where adoptees feel confused and torn. Their need to know their genealogical heritage is a part of understanding what has hap-

pened to them and of better understanding themselves through this process.

D. The Adoptee's Interest in The Biological Family

Conchelos concludes that the adoption experience has been gradually recast as a lifelong process and that part of the post-adoption need for many adoptees is to talk about their natural parents. For some, Conchelos states there may even be the need to meet their natural parents (Maidman, 1984).

Krementz (1982) acknowledges that adoption is less secretive than fifty years ago and that today most children know they are adopted. Out of 19 interviews with adoptees ages eight to sixteen, Krementz (1982) states that many adoptees have little information about their biological heritage and this fact, combined with the more open attitude towards adoption has created questions regarding the adoptee's right to know about his or her background. The majority of adoptees interviewed by Krementz (1982) had pondered questions earlier in their lives about their biological parents.

Smith (1976) describes the contribution adoptees can make to the body of knowledge about adoption as unique and valuable. Their desire for knowledge of their heritage, at times demonstrated through a search for birth parents represents a request for help in obtaining information or in dealing with personal pain and distress.

In assessing group sessions with thirteen adolescent adoptees, Pannor and Nerlove (1977) found adoptees revealing

pain, anger and uncertainty over issues around their adoption. Some adoptees had found communication blocked with their adoptive parents because the adoptee's questions were viewed as threatening or embarrassing, while others found they could not talk at all about issues because they were too personally painful.

Thompson's (1979) report on a study involving 133 adult adoptees, supports findings of Pannor and Nerlove (1977), in that while adoptive parents told their children about the fact of adoption, communication became blocked. Thirty percent of adoptees felt a need for further information to fill in biological background gaps, while seventy percent viewed the information as one step towards eventually meeting the birth parents and this need existed regardless of the relationship with the adoptive family.

Rohr (1971) indicates that the way an adopted child can come to terms with his background is to have his or her questions answered by adopting parents in a truthful way that will ensure understanding.

Knowledge and identity of parents, aunts, uncles, siblings and grandparents is common for those of us who are not adopted. Klibanoff (1977) says that adoptees, to a varying degree are curious about that which is common to the majority of society. "There is no reason to assume that the adoptee's need to know about his or her genealogy should be any less than any other child's desire to know of his or her ancestors" (Klibanoff, 1977:38). Triseliotis' study of Scottish adoptees, as cited by Klibanoff (1977), found that eighty percent of the adoptees found

either their inquiries or their contact with biological parents helpful. His study of 70 adoptees who did apply to obtain access to their original birth records (McWhinnie 1985) showed that adoptees had strong feelings about their need to know their origins. Triseliotis also found in his study that it was the less well adjusted who went on to seek the birth parents.

According to McWhinnie (1985), research shows that adoptees have a curiosity towards their biological parents, about them as people but not a feeling for them as parents. She states that ideally this curiosity should be satisfied from within the adoptive family, but where the adoptive family are vague or even avoid the issue, then "the adoptee comes to feel there is something here to hide" (McWhinnie 1985:8). This results often in feelings of doubt and uncertainty. McWhinnie (1985:22) further states there is a need "for the adults in a child's life to be tuned into the child's need for genealogical certainty". She acknowledges the clear but controversial policy implications.

Crook (1986) states that society has reasons as to why biological information on the adoptee's background was not kept well nor readily shared. However, regardless of the reasons she says "Our understanding of your needs was imperfect" (Crook 1986:15). Out of her experiences in interviewing adopted teenagers, she found the majority of these teenagers were not wanting to replace their adoptive parents but rather to gain knowledge of their beginnings.

Results of research by Children's Home Society of California (Lindsay 1980) regarding adult adoptees indicate that out of the

three hundred nine adult adoptees surveyed, almost half were totally or generally satisfied with the information they had received on their backgrounds. This information had been received mainly from their adopting parents and the adoption agency. However, about two-thirds of those responding said they would like more information, mainly about why they had been placed for adoption and there was a desire for current facts about birth parents and possible biological siblings. Almost one-third of those surveyed thought "often" or "all the time" about finding their birth parents. Their main concerns were related to identity issues, having a curiosity about their birth parents and their biological siblings if there were any, and wanting birth parents to know they were all right. About three-quarters of those adopted adults responding to the survey by Children's Home Society of California (Lindsay 1980) said that they were either "usually" or "totally" at ease in discussing their adoption with their adoptive parents. Also, it found that the younger the adult adoptee, the easier it was to discuss this topic with the parents.

E. A Summary of Existing Post-Adoption Services

The North American Post-Legal Adoption Committee (1984:2) describe post-legal adoption services "as those available to all participants in the adoption process (adopted person, adoptive parents, and birth parents) beyond the point when the adoption is legally finalized". Adoption is viewed in such a context as a lifelong process with the needed services being provided at vary-

ing times and, according to the North American Post-Legal Adoption Committee (1984) can even be the extension of services begun before the adoption was legalized.

Post-legal adoption services include such things as:

- (1) factual information pertinent to the adoption when requested and as permitted by legal statute;
- 2) counselling concerning adoption issues, including search and contact;
- (3) help in joining or developing support groups; and
- (4) general information about current adoption issues, concepts, laws and practices (North American Post-Legal Adoption Committee, 1984:2).

The following material to be presented will deal with post-adoption service programs which are currently operating in the United States and Canada.

The Children's Home Society of Minnesota has developed a program to meet the post-adoption needs of members of the adoption triad. These services are described as Intermediary Services to members of the adoption triad (April 1983).

Children's Home Society, a private agency, has received state and national recognition for its efforts to expand services to meet the needs of adoptees. A special department, the Post-Legal Adoption Department was established in May 1974 to handle the demands created by this emerging service. These services are defined as professional go-between contracts between members of the adoption triad, designed to allow an exchange of information, to provide counselling and to attempt to ensure confidentiality

where desired. Children's Home Society acknowledged that the traditional practices wherein confidentiality was of paramount importance and where little or no information was provided to birth parents and adoptive parents, have gradually evolved to a more open approach to the adoption process. This, they claim has been brought about by new insights into the needs of adoption triad members. In terms of Children's Home Society practice, openness can include such options as information sharing, gifts, updates to all members of the triad, birth parent and adoptive parent participation in the placement of the child and face-to-face meetings. Such services are legally mandated under Minnesota State Law, Chapter No. 584. Wishard and Wishard (1979) cite Minnesota as the first state to respond legislatively to the issue of open adoption records.

In 1982, there were important revisions in the Minnesota law regarding disclosure of information between members of the adoption triad. Birth parents and adopted adults had the right to request from the agency information and/or contact with each other. If the adopted adult was under the age of nineteen, then the consent of the adopting parents was required. Under the changes in the law, the adoptive parents could request information on the birth parents. The law also provided for these services to go through a licensed child placing agency which provides post-adoption services. Further provisions in these changes allowed for adopted adults age twenty-one or older to request a copy of their original birth certificate. Along with this would be accompanied identifying information contained in the agency

records on the birth parents. This could be achieved with the consent of birth parents or through a court order. While the adoptive parents had no right to prevent such disclosure, the birth parents could do so by filing an affidavit of non-disclosure.

Children's Home Society developed policies and procedures to guide this new service. There are guidelines in terms of how services are to be approached regarding each member of the triad and these services are demonstrated graphically in terms of flow charts. There are also written policy statements which clarify the respective roles of the three departments involved in this services, these being the Adoption, Pregnancy Counselling, and Post-Legal Adoption Departments. The fees for such services are clearly set out and there is a result sheet which is used to research and access the provision of these services.

Lutheran Social Services of Texas, Inc., in their adoption literature, *Open Adoption: The New Option* (1982) describe the expansion of their adoption service to include not only the time the adoption placement occurs, but also to encompass the years that follow. The new dimension in their program, developed in the early 1980's, which is the option of a face-to-face meeting at the agency between birth parents and adoptive parents around the time of the adoption placement, reinforces the conviction that adoption is a lifelong process. Lutheran Social Services believes it is up to the adopting and birth parents who meet each other to decide how much and how fully they will share with each other. This agency encourages the adoption triad members to

maintain communication with the agency in order to provide updated information to all concerned parties. They see such practices as a form of preventative mental health.

In Canada, Saskatchewan led the way in the development of post-adoption services. Saskatchewan Social Services published an Information Paper on Post-Adoption Intermediary Services in 1982. The purpose of this paper was to focus discussion on the Post-Adoption Care Services program which was established in that same year. This paper outlined the policy that existed prior to 1982 which was such that only non-identifying information was released to members of the adoption triad unless the request for identifying information and/or contact contained a corresponding request from all the concerned parties. Some exceptions were made to this policy in cases of dire medical circumstances. The policy changes occurred in 1982 as a result of various stages of evolution in the United States and Canada in attitudes towards adoption services and adoption records. The information paper cited increased honesty and openness in adopting families and a wider understanding and acceptance of adoption within society, as the basis for a desire and interest among adult adoptees, and to some degree birth parents to explore their biological relationship and history.

Saskatchewan Social Services stated that for four years prior to 1982 a study indicated 300 requests per year for adoption reunion information and/or assistance, and that two-thirds of these requests were from adult adoptees. The balance of the requests came from birth parents, birth siblings and adoptive

parents. While the activity for search was as flourishing in the private sector, the study reported that persons making the requests to Saskatchewan Social Services specifically stated they wished an adoption agency to handle their requests rather than a private group or individual. Social Services' goal in proposing policy changes was not to encourage search and reunion activity but to respond in a sensitive and professional way to the growing demand for this service.

The established policy, as of 1982, continues to address requests involving non-identifying information. Identifying information is released to adopted adults and to birth parents only where there is written consent from the concerned parties. An active outreach to birth parents by Social Services is acted on by written requests from adult adoptees only. Medical information is sought out and released to medical personnel, with the consent of the involved parties, where there is a confirmed serious medical problem.

Jacob, Program Supervisor for Saskatchewan Central Adoption and Post-Care Services (October 1986) stated that between August 1982 and March 31, 1986, some 597 searches had been undertaken with 315 reunions being completed. As of April 1, 1986, there was 218 requests under active search and 211 requests waiting for a search to begin. Jacob further reported that the decision to search was triggered by such life events as marriage, death of adoptive parents, and childbirth. Regarding requests for non-identifying information, approximately 185 requests per year are received from adoptees, wards and adoptive parents with one-third

of all service requests from adoptees involving non-identifying information only.

Jacob (October 1986) indicates that their assessment of the requests received from adoptees suggests that the majority are not looking for substitute parents. Further, adoptees appear to be looking for a connection to their past and for reasons as to why they were placed for adoption. He states that through their program, adoptees are encouraged to tell their adoptive parents about their request for information and/or contact with biological parents and about three-quarters of them do tell their parents. It has been found that generally those adoptive parents who acknowledge that adoptive parenting is different from biological parenting are able to empathize with the adoptee's interest.

Exchange (1986) reports various Canadian province's efforts in the field of post-adoption services. In Ontario, the Adoption Disclosure Registry is responsible for post-adoption services and is authorized to undertake searches on behalf of adult adoptees only. Even though recommendations were made to the Ontario government to allow adopted adults access to their birth records, they have decided to not allow this type of access. The following amendments to the disclosure provision of Ontario's Child and Family Services Act made in 1986 are as follows: adopted adults will have greater access to non-identifying and identifying information; birth parents, birth grandparents and other birth relatives including siblings will be able to register for access to identifying information; and counselling will be available for

anyone receiving identifying information from the adoption records. Exchange (1986) does report that a voluntary disclosure registry has existed in Ontario since 1978 which has eased the secrecy surrounding adoption records somewhat. Any disclosure requires the consent of adopting parents, birth parents and the adopted adult.

In the province of Quebec, Exchange (1986) reports that there is no central reunion registry. There are 14 Social Service Centres in Quebec which are mandated by government to provide social services, which include adoption services and these centres are permitted to contact birth parents and adult adoptees regarding a reunion.

Exchange (1986) cites British Columbia and Prince Edward Island as being the only two provinces who do not have a policy to provide linking information on adoption information disclosure. The province of British Columbia has been providing non-identifying information to members of the adoption triad but has been resisting the release of identifying data to consenting adults. The B.C. government is undergoing a study to determine whether they should operate a passive disclosure registry, an active registry that would allow a search for birth parents at the request of the adopted adult (19 in B.C.), or continue on with the present policy.

The province of Alberta according to Exchange (1986) has an adoption disclosure registry service and reports twenty-three reunions between July 1, 1985 and June 1986. This registry has been advertising their services in the province as well as alert-

ing all provincial registries in Canada as to their services.

According to Adoption Disclosure 1988, Newfoundland and New Brunswick both operate passive registries. This means that in addition to providing non-identifying information to members of the triad, identifying information will also be provided when the concerned parties have registered for such service and have given their mutual consent. Nova Scotia operates a semi-active registry. The passive registry was enacted in 1981. Non-identifying information was provided to adult adoptees, natural family members and adopting parents. If the adoptee's adoption order was granted after January 1, 1984, an outreach to the biological parents on behalf of the adoptee will be done. This however will not be done until one year after the date of the request.

The general thrust of the literature review indicates that the adult adoptee has a right and a need to his biological background and that adoption should be viewed as a lifelong process. Face-to-face contact between the adoptee and the biological parent(s), where it is desired, still depends on the prevailing legislation and to some extent the ingenuity and commitment of the individuals involved to having that face-to-face contact. This practicum will focus on the rights of the adoptee to full information on their biological background, as allowed under Manitoba Legislation, and to assisting the adult adoptee, where it is desired, in making contact with the biological family.

The practicum is based on the assumption that adoptees have very little information on their family of origin because of the

secrecy that has existed in adoption practices. The curiosity and desire for information on the part of the adoptees is for many a stepping stone to personal contact with members of their biological family. It is further assumed that adoptees do not view their need for post-adoption service as a problem. They see the problem existing in a system that has denied them their right to know their genealogy, a right that is common to the majority of society.

CHAPTER TWO
THE PRACTICUM

A. Setting:

The practicum took place at Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, which is a non-profit organization serving a population of 114,000 people in 12,000 square miles of southwestern Manitoba. The area served is primarily rural with Brandon being the only centre having a population approximating that of a city. The agency's main office is located in Brandon with there being satellite offices in several small towns in the Westman area.

The Agency's mandate, provided for under the Child and Family Services Act is to provide services to children and their families. The agency is divided into three main areas of service; family service, preventative programs, as well as resource development and permanency planning. This practicum falls under the jurisdiction of Resource Development and Permanency Planning. The resource development and permanency planning team is responsible for providing adoption and post-adoption services, foster home recruitment, training and ongoing monitoring and support to active foster homes, and permanency planning for children under the care of the agency.

The Post-Adoption Service is defined in the Child and Family Services Act under Part V, Section 74. The agency at this time has allotted one half a position to meet the needs of this service. The post-adoption service program recognizes service to

adult adopted persons, birth parents of the adoptee, adult biological siblings of the adopted person and adoptive parents. The post-adoption program provides a provincial registry whereby the previously mentioned individuals can register their desire for the sharing of identifying information and contact between the adult adopted person and the corresponding birth parents and/or adult biological siblings (Guidelines for Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry Reunions, 1986).

B. Clients

For the purpose of this practicum, the clients were adopted adults requesting post-adoption service from Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba. The adopted adults who received service either resided in the area served by the agency or else the adoption records pertaining to their request for service were held by the agency. In the case of the latter, the agency holding the records either provides the service needed or else forwards the required information from the records to the appropriate agency within the province in the area where the adopted adult lives. In the case of an adopted adult living out of province, the agency holding the adoption record would provide the service.

The adopted adult's request for service involves two main components which are non-identifying information and/or direct contact with biological parents. Both of these components are permissible under the current Child and Family Services Act. Direct contact between the adopted adult and biological parent(s)

involves mutual consent.

The request for non-identifying information involves a search of the adoption records of the adopted adult in order to prepare a social history of the biological parent(s). This would include such information as birthdate, religion, racial and ethnic origin, educational and occupational details, physical description, health history, personality assessment, hobbies and interest, details on the biological parents' own parents and siblings, a description of the relationship between the biological parents and a description of the details regarding the circumstances around the biological parent(s)' decision to relinquish their child for adoption. What cannot be included in this social history are names, addresses and any information which might identify the persons concerned. The information, once compiled, is released to the adopted adults in typed form, with a copy being retained for the client's post-adoption file and for possible future reference on the part of the adopted adult.

The second component of this service, the direct contact between the biological parent(s) and the adopted adult, is arranged through co-ordinated efforts on the part of the Provincial Post-Adoption Registry and the Agency.

Participation in the practicum was on a voluntary basis and it was emphasized to the clients that their request for service under the post-adoption program was in no way related to their participation in the practicum.

C. Practicum Personnel

The personnel in this practicum consisted of the author. The daily activities at the agency involved in the practicum fell under the jurisdiction of the supervisor of the resource development and permanency planning team.

D. Procedures

The objectives of this practicum were met by obtaining information from the records of adult adoptees who had received post-adoption services from Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba from April 1986 to February 1987. Following this step, the author was involved in meeting the service requests of adult adoptees who were currently requesting post-adoption service from the agency. A Post-Adoption questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was developed by the author and was utilized to collect the data needed in order to provide a valid description of the target population, and to better understand the service needs of this group.

METHODS

1. Review of Files

78 files of adopted adults who registered for post-adoption service between April 1, 1986 and February 28, 1987 were reviewed. This represented all the adoptee cases in this period of time. The post-adoption questionnaire (Appendix 1) was used

to collect the data on these 78 cases. This group of clients represents 59.09% of the total post-adoption cases in this period of time requesting service. The different categories under the post-adoption program are shown in Table 2.1. The birth parents, adoptive parents and adult adoptees are the major participants in the adoptive process. The "other" category refers to inquiries and service requests from biological or adoptive siblings.

As some of the 78 cases were no longer active and were considered to be closed records by the agency, in order to have access to these records, it was necessary to obtain the written permission of the Director of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba as well as that of the Provincial Director of Child Welfare. Access to such records is permitted under Section 76(18) of the Child and Family Services Act (Child and Family Services Act, 1985).

TABLE 2.1Post-Adoption Service Cases

	Adult Adoptees	Birth Parents	Adoptive Parents	Other
April 1986	4	-	1	-
May 1986	4	4	2	1
June 1986	6	2	1	1
July 1986	5	2	-	3
Aug. 1986	4	-	-	-
Sept. 1986	10	6	1	1
Oct. 1986	15	1	-	1
Nov. 198	8	4	6	2
Dec. 198	3	4	1	-
Jan. 1986	8	1	1	1
Feb. 1987	11	4	-	13
TOTAL	78	28	13	13 = 132

2. The Provision of Direct Service to Adopted Adults

Time was spent in counselling and meeting the requests for service from seventeen adopted adults. These cases were selected using a simple random sampling procedure.

Service to adopted adults involved two main areas. The first was the provision of non-identifying social history information on the biological family. This area involved determining where such information would be kept. After obtaining the adopted adult's written permission to obtain and search the records, the records had to then be located. Then a request was

made to the appropriate authorities to open, search and compile such information from the records as was requested by the adopted adult, and in keeping with current provincial legislation.

The second part of the service was preparing the client for the information and for some of the ramifications which can result from traumatic or unexpected historical details. Those fantasies about background history, described by Erikson (Sorosky, Baron and Pannor, 1978) can differ significantly from the reality and can cause considerable pain and adjustment. The importance of the biological perspective has merit in this service as the awareness of one's origins, at whatever stage in life has a ripple effect throughout the individual's total environment and system. Hartman (1984) contends that depending on how much and how early information on the adopted adult's biological family has been imparted by the adoptive family, a sense of one's self and one's identity is a major issue.

Receiving and digesting the biological history is a complex process which requires varying amounts of time and often clarification and a further searching of the records. The counsellor in this area must be certain that the adoptee has all the information available and that he or she is as clear as possible about the biological history. The importance of clarity and accuracy is highlighted when one realizes that the next stage for the adopted adult may be a meeting with birth parents.

A case assessment and recording format was developed by the author. (See Appendix II.) This outline contributed to the organization and analysis of the information gathered from the in-

interviews with the adoptees. It also assisted in focusing on the pertinent issues for the adoptee, i.e. their motivation regarding their request for service, the adoptive family's knowledge of and attitude towards the adoptee's service request, and the adoptee's expectations of a reunion. These issues need to be addressed by the adoptee as they can impact significantly on the attitude and adjustment to the biological history and family contact.

It was assumed that for some individuals there was a sequential nature in terms of how they see their needs being met through the post-adoption service. This was exemplified in situations where a request was made by an individual for only non-identifying biological information and over time, there was a desire to register for contact with the birth parent. Some adoptees wished to register their desire for such contact at the same time as they were requesting the non-identifying history. Whatever the case, the second area of the direct service to adopted adults involved those cases where there was a face-to-face meeting with the birth parent(s). In the cases dealt with in this practicum, such face-to-face meetings involved only the birth mother.

The first step involved in a request by the adoptee to meet the birth parent was the registration of such desire and intent with the provincial post-adoption registry on the prescribed form. (See Appendix III, Registration By Adopted Adult, Form 2.) This is in keeping with Section 74(1) of the Child and Family Services Act (Child and Family Services Act, 1985). However such desired face-to-face meetings can also in certain circumstances

take place through private arrangements and in such cases, the provincial jurisdiction is ignored. For example, the adoptee might use a private search organization to seek out the birth parent and the wishes and rights of the birth parent would not necessarily receive the same consideration as spelled out under provincial legislation. Once the registration was received by the post-adoption registry, the records were searched to determine if a corresponding registration has been received from the birth parents. If there had not been such a registration, then the adopted adult and the counselling agency were accordingly advised. At this time, the adoptee was also advised that an outreach would be done for the birth parent. The timing of the outreach was dependent on the date of the adoptee's registration and the numbers waiting, and the adoptee was advised by registered mail once the outreach by the post-adoption registry had begun. Once the birth parent was found, the adoptee was asked to abide by the wishes of the birth parent in terms of their position about a face-to-face meeting. The preparation for the actual contact was turned over to the appropriate agency serving the areas where the adoptee and birth parent were resident. In some cases, the birth parent had registered with the post-adoption registry prior to that of the adoptee and so the proceedings were considerably hastened in those circumstances. It is important for the older adoptee who wishes a face-to-face meeting to know that practice in Manitoba has found that very frequently birth parents approaching the age of 65 and over are refusing to meet with the adoptee.

While the steps involved in negotiating the face-to-face meeting or reunion between the adoptee and the biological parent were set out in the provincial guidelines for such reunions, they tended to become highly individual and particular to each situation. The pre-meeting preparation in the cases in this practicum involved an exchange of letters, telephone calls and meetings between the author and the birth mother, and counselling sessions with the adoptee. In the counselling area, it was necessary to assist the adoptee in getting some material organized for the letter to the birth mother. The value in such a letter was to provide information about oneself to the other party in order to lessen the tension and anxiety involved in the face-to-face meeting. The adoptee's concern about how he or she would be perceived by the birth mother was a source of anxiety and at times an inhibiting factor in terms of getting thoughts down on paper and being ready for the letter exchange.

E. EVALUATION

The purpose of this practicum was to assess and describe the needs of one of the participants in the adoption triad, the adult adoptee. The needs were to be examined in the context of the request for post-adoption service. It was assumed that through a knowledge and understanding of these needs, such clients can be better served by the post-adoption program. The model of this practicum was based on a needs assessment, which was a commonly used approach in human services planning (Grinnell 1981). This process determined the main needs to be understood, specified and

to then be more appropriately addressed by the post-adoption program. (Isaac and Michael 1981). This practicum was descriptive in its nature and aims to secure detailed data about adopted adults and their needs. The process used to achieve this goal was case studies and the first step involved the examination of 78 case files of adopted adults who had received post-adoption service. Following this stage, the student was involved in 17 case situations where post-adoption service was offered to adopted adults.

Participation in the practicum on the part of the adoptee was voluntary, and all the clients approached were generally agreeable and interested in such a study. Because the service being requested by the clients involved a sensitive and significant area of their lives, care was taken to ensure that clients in no way saw their participation linked to the fulfillment of their request for service.

A strength in the design and approach to this field of study was the flexibility and comprehensiveness which occurred. Information was obtained from a large number of case records as well as from a small number of randomly selected cases. Another strength was the feedback process, allowing for the client's service request and needs to be utilized in the ongoing planning of the post-adoption service which was dependent on a knowledge and understanding of the client's circumstances and motivating factors around their request for service (Grinnell 1981).

There was a limitation in this study in terms of the assessment of the client's needs within the time frame of this

practicum. It is possible the results of this study could provide the basis for Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba to consider a longitudinal study. Many of the clients who received direct service were still awaiting the opportunity for a face-to-face meeting with their birth parents at the close of this practicum.

F. EVALUATION INSTRUMENTS

The means of evaluating this practicum and its objectives were three-fold and included the use of the author's self-developed 22 item questionnaire (Appendix I), a client satisfaction questionnaire (Appendix IV) and supervision and consultation.

The questionnaire was developed by the author whose familiarity with the post-adoption legislation and past and present work experiences with birth mothers assisted in this process. A further guiding factor was the need for basic descriptive data which would assist in describing the target population and also input from several colleagues who had experience in this field. The Provincial Guidelines for Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry Reunions provided a further basis for the development of the questionnaire. It was pre-tested on 9 adults, some of whom were adoptees and others who were present or past Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba personnel, experienced in the adoption and post-adoption field. These people assisted in making the necessary changes in the questionnaire resulting in further clarity in this instrument.

Questions 20 and 21 of the questionnaire (Appendix I) are open-ended questions as it was felt that the adult adoptee might have comments or responses that could not be pre-determined or elicited through specific questions.

This questionnaire was used to collect data from the 78 files of adopted adults who received service from Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba from April 1986 to February 1987. It was also used with 11 adopted adult clients who received direct service and who voluntarily participated in this practicum.

The data from the questionnaire was used to develop a profile of the adopted adults who were being served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Pertinent details to this profile were age, sex, marital status, nature of request for service and adoption experience. Correlations were examined between

(a) age and sex and the following: nature of request, awareness of adoptive parents of this request for service, what triggered the request, relationship with adoptive parents now, relationship with adoptive parents while growing up, discussion of adoption while growing up and how much information was available on birth family while growing up.

(b) nature of request for service and the following: awareness of adoptive parents of this request for service, approval of adoptive parents, relationship with adoptive parents now, relationship with adoptive parents while growing up, discussion of adoption while growing up and how much information was

available on birth family while growing up.

(c) what triggered request for service and the following: awareness of adoptive parents of this request for service, approval of adoptive parents, relationship with adoptive parents now, relationship with adoptive parents while growing up, discussion of adoption while growing up and how much information was available on birth family while growing up.

(d) the relationship with your adoptive parents now by discussion of the subject of adoption with your parents.

(e) the relationship with your adoptive parents while growing up by discussion of the subject of adoption with your parents.

The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (CSQ-8) (Appendix IV) was administered to 11 adopted adults who received post-adoption service. It was administered by the author to the adoptees who completed the questionnaire either in the office of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba or in a location of the adoptee's choice. Uniformity in this area was not possible as some of the adoptees lived out of province. The adoptees completed the questionnaire either at the completion of the reunion with the birth parent or in the case of those adoptees still awaiting a reunion, after they had received their non-identifying biological history.

The Client Satisfaction Questionnaire was designed to measure client satisfaction with services. The CSQ is an unidimensional scale with the items being selected by mental health professionals on the basis of ratings of a number of items that

could be related to the client's perspective on the value of services received. This questionnaire, which has been extensively studied has been used with a number of populations which included both sexes and numerous ethnic groups as well as other demographic variables. It was found that the CSQ seems to operate about the same across all ethnic groups. While it is an 8 item questionnaire, items 3, 7 and 8 can be used as a shorter scale (Corcoran and Fisher, 1987).

The adoptee's basic fundamental right to know his or her biological background is an important premise (Pannor and Baron 1984). This knowledge is a valuable frame of reference to have as a professional offering post-adoption service to adoptees. It was with this information in mind, that only seven items of the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire were used. Question 6 was eliminated because of the reference to the client having a problem, whereas many clients in this area would see the problem belonging to the system.

The third evaluation procedure involved a form of monitoring the experiences with clients, and was that of supervision and consultation (Grinnell 1981). Case recordings, using the Intervention-Case Assessment and Recording Format (Appendix II) as a basis for organizing the interviews, and the information emerging from the interviews were valuable in supervisory discussions. The case recording was also a useful aid in the consultation process where the author required clarification and direction in either procedural steps or case work practice techniques. Parts of the service to adopted adults involved a

set of practices and a philosophy that had hitherto been secret and forbidden. To know or even expect to meet a birth parents was for years unthinkable. In these circumstances, the significance and impact of such knowledge and experience on the part of the participants, including the adoptive family, cannot be understated. Therefore the supervision and consultation process, as well as monitoring the practice of the author and providing direction, also assisted in ensuring vigilance and care to the dynamics involved in the human processes.

CHAPTER THREEPROFILE OF ADOPTEES DEVELOPED FROM THE FILE REVIEW

This chapter will deal with the results obtained from an examination of the records of 78 adoptees who received post adoption service from Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba from April 1986 to February 1987. These cases represent the total number of adoptees to receive service in this period of time. Some of the records that were searched were still open and active, with service not yet complete. In other cases, the service had been completed and the records closed.

The post adoption file data provides a description of the adoptee population seeking post adoption service. In addition, it also provides some understanding of the service needs of the adoptees through an analysis of their request for post-adoption service. The questionnaire that was used to collect the data can be found in Appendix I. This chapter will highlight the most significant findings and the remaining information can be found in Appendix VI.

A. Examination of File Review Data

The age breakdown of the adoptees as reflected in Table 3.1 shows that slightly over 50 per cent of the population of adult adoptees were between the ages of 21 and 30. Of these 78 cases, 64.1% were female and 35.9 were male. The greater percentage of requests from females reflects the overall provincial statistics.

TABLE 3.1Age Breakdown of Adoptees

Age	Per Cent
20 and under	17.9
21 - 25	25.6
26 - 30	25.6
31 - 35	14.2
36 and up	16.7
TOTAL	100.0
	(n=78)

Regarding the marital status of the 78 adoptees, 39.7% were single and 43.6% were married. See Appendix VI (Table 1) for further breakdown of the data.

The addresses of the adoptees showed that 35.9% were from Brandon and 30.8% from rural Westman. Thus 66.7% of the adoptees requesting post-adoption service were from the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba. (Also refer to Appendix VI, Table 2.)

Table 3.2 shows that 71.% of the requests came to the agency via telephone and office interview. These statistics give some indication of the kind of demands that are made on the post-adoption service and on the intake department of the agency.

TABLE 3.2

Type of First Agency Contact with Adoptee

Type	Per Cent
Telephone	42.3
Letter	12.8
Office Interview	29.5
Other Agency	<u>15.4</u>
TOTAL	100.0
	(n=78)

60.3% of the adoptees making post-adoption inquiries were placed for adoption at 6 months of age and younger. Table 3.3 shows the breakdown for the 78 adoptees in terms of their ages at the time of their adoption placement.

TABLE 3.3

Age of Adoptee When Placed For Adoption

Age	Per Cent
Under 6 weeks	37.2
6 weeks to 6 months	23.1
Over 6 months to 1 year	15.4
Over 1 year to 2 years	9.0
Over 2 years	10.3
Not known	<u>5.1</u>
TOTAL	100.0
	(n=78)

The nature or type of request for post-adoption service made by the adoptee was broken down into 9 categories. It was possible for the adoptee to make a single specific request or to make a combination of requests. In 75.6% of the cases, adoptees had made a combination of requests for service.

The request for non-identifying information from the file occurred 65.4% of the time while assistance in making contact with the birth mother was requested 64.1% of the time. 55.1% of the time the request was for assistance in making contact with the birth father and 32.1% of the time for assistance in making contact with birth siblings. There were 19 single requests and in 42% of the cases it was for non-identifying information from the file. Other categories with smaller responses from adoptees included such things as a request for medical information only from the file, wishing to provide information to the record, requesting any current information available, requesting counselling and wanting information for one's horiscope.

The highest percentage of adoptees requesting non-identifying information is comparable to the adoptees in research done by Children's Home Society of California (Lindsay 1980). In this project two-thirds of the adoptees wished more information on their biological background. It would appear that the adoptees in this study had received very little information from their adoptive parents on their biological family. What is not known is whether the adoptive parents had the information to give to the adoptees, whether they had the information but did not share it, or whether the information shared by the adoptive

parents was not well integrated by the adoptee. Also, some adoptees might have wanted to confirm the accuracy or completeness of the information shared with them by the adopting parents. Whatever the case, it is now known that adoptees have questions about their origins similar to the majority of society (Klibanoff 1977). This area is then an important one to explore further not only because of the impact on the adoptees' well-being but because it appears to be an expectation on the part of adoptees that they have information on their family of origin.

Seventy-five per cent of adoptees had made no previous requests for post-adoption service while 23.1% had made one or more previous requests. Experience in the field suggests that adoptees may make more than one service request over a period of time. For some individuals there is a sequential nature as to how they see their service needs being met. They often need time to digest and consider information before moving on to the next stage.

Only in 51.3% of the cases was there information on the record as to what triggered the request for service. The results are as follows:

- (a) a need to know - 12.8%
- (b) birth of a child - 2.6%
- (c) a need for medical information - 15.4%
- (d) marriage - no requests for this reason
- (e) death of adoptive parent(s) - 1.3%
- (f) curiosity - 1.3%
- (g) reasons not known - 48.7%

(h) other reasons - 22%

The category of "other reasons" included such things as a desire to update the adoption records, just finding out about the adoption status, watching own children grow, awareness of new legislation, a desire to share information for one's horiscope. Jacob (Act 1986), a Program Supervisor for Saskatchewan Central Adoption and Post-Care Services stated that the decision to search out the biological family was triggered by such life events as marriage, death of adoptive parents and childbirth. The statistics from this study show that only 3.9% of adoptees requested post-adoption service for these reasons. A need to know and a need for medical information were cited far more frequently and were also cited in combination several times. This need to know is common amongst those of us who are not adopted according to Klibanoff (1977). He states that such feelings are also common among adoptees and we should not assume the desire to know one's genealogy to be any less in the case of the adoptee as opposed to any other individual.

In 65.4% of the cases, there was not information on the record as to whether adopting parents were aware of the adoptee's request for post adoption service. In the case where such information was available, 36.9% of adoptive parents were aware while in 29.7% they were not aware. In 14.7% of the cases both adoptive parents were deceased. In 18.7% of the cases there were combinations of one parent being deceased and the other parent either being aware or unaware. In those cases where the adoptive parents were aware of the request for post-adoption service,

36.5% approved of the request and 4.6% did not. In 9.2% of the cases the parents were indifferent to the adoptee's request.

Information on the relationship between the adoptee and the adoptive parents now and while the adoptee was growing up was not recorded on the files in 89.7% and 92.3% of the cases. In those few cases where the information was available the relationships were satisfactory to very satisfactory in 10.3% and 7.7% of the cases respectively.

In terms of the adoptee being able to discuss their adoptive status with their adoptive parents, in 84.6% of the cases this information was not on the record. Of those cases where there was such information, 24.8% said they could discuss freely while 16.9% said only occasionally and 24.8% said they could discuss the topic only carefully. 33.3% said they could not discuss the topic of adoption at all and in this category one adoptee did not learn of his adoptive status until adulthood. From the data that was available, more adoptees had difficulty discussing the subject of adoption with their adoptive parents than those adoptees who could discuss their adoption freely. This finding is consistent with the adoption literature which suggests that the aura of secrecy which has existed in adoption practices has not been conducive to open and honest sharing in the adoptive family. Pannor and Nerlove (1971), and Thompson (1979) talk about communication being blocked between the adoptive parents and the adoptee on the subject of the biological family. The author has found in her experience in working with adoptees that questions are asked of the adopting parents carefully and sparingly and that adoptees

are worried that their questions might upset their relationship with their parents.

In 64.1% of the cases, there was not information on the file about the amount of biological history the adoptee had while growing up. In the cases where such information was available, 35.6% said they had none of the information they wanted while 14.2% said they had all the information they wanted. 46.5% said they had some of the information they wanted and 3.6% said they did not know of their adoptive status.

The agency's response time was examined with regard to the adoptee's request for service. 70.5% of the cases had their initial request for service responded to in under one month's time while 28.2% had their request fully met with service still being in progress in 60.3% of the cases.

The data from the file review has provided some important descriptive details on the adoptee. A greater number of adoptees who requested post-adoption service were female (64.1%). Slightly over 50% of adoptees were between the ages of 21 and 30 and 43.6% of adoptees were married. About 60% of the adoptees were placed for adoption at 6 months of age or younger. The most frequent types of request for service was for non-identifying information on the biological family and for assistance in making contact with the birth mother. On the basis of available data, the greatest number of responses involving the motivating factors for service involved a need to know and a need for medical information. The lack of consistently recorded information on the files has limited our understanding in the areas of the relation-

ship between the adoptee and the adopting parents regarding the adoptee's adoptive status.

B. Relationship Between Questionnaire Items

Pertinent details from the profile on the adoptee such as age, sex, nature of the request for service and adoption experience will now be examined in terms of their relationship with each other. The basis that was used for a significant association between the inter-items was Pearson's r and chi-square at .05 level.

Item 9 of the questionnaire (Appendix I) dealt with the nature of the request for service. This question was made up of nine components which outlined the various possible service requests the adoptee might make. It included requests from or the provision of information to the file, and requests for assistance in contacting various members of the biological family. There was an "other" category allowing for requests to be made that had not been provided for in the other categories. It was found that 65.4% of the time the request was for non-identifying information (Item 9a). This choice appeared in combinations with other choices as well as being requested on a single basis 10.2% of the time. The relationship between Item 9 and sex (item 3) showed that 6.7% of males tended to request non-identifying information from the file with only slightly greater frequency than females (4.0%). However, this finding did not approach a level of significance.

The "need to know" was one factor which triggered the

adoptivee's request for service. It appeared 12.8% of the time. It was examined in relation to sex, age, "the request for medical information only", "the request for assistance in contacting birth mother", "the request for assistance in contacting birth father" and "the request for assistance in contacting birth siblings". There was only found to be very low correlations between the need to know and the requests for assistance in contacting birth mother, father and siblings. These relationships did not approach a level of significance.

The relationship between "the need to know" (item 13a) and "the request for assistance in contacting the birth mother" (item 13f) was found to be low positive. A slightly greater percentage of adoptees who need to know also wished assistance in contacting the birth mother versus those who had no need to know and who were also wishing contact with the birth mother. (See Appendix VI for data.)

There was a low negative relationship between "the need to know" and "assistance in contacting birth father and birth siblings". A slightly greater percentage of those adoptees who said they had no need to know wished assistance in making contact with the birth father and birth siblings as opposed to those adoptees who had a need to know. (See Appendix VI, Tables 4 and 5 for data.)

The relationship between age of the adoptee and "the request for assistance in contacting the birth mother" showed a slight positive correlation. There was not found to be at a statistical significance however. There was a slight increase in requests

for such contact up to age 30 with the increase to be evident again from age 36 and up. See Appendix VI, Table 7 for data.

One of the requests for service which appeared with greatest frequency was the "request for assistance in contacting the birth mother". Table 3.4 shows a low non-statistically significant correlation between sex (item 3) and request for assistance in contacting birth mother (item 9f). It was found that males (67.9%) were more likely to request assistance in contacting birth mother than females (62%).

TABLE 3.4

The Request for Assistance to
Contact Birth Mother by Sex of Adoptee

Contact	Male	Female
No	32.1	38.0
Yes	67.9	62.0
Column Total	35.9	64.1

(n=78)

There was found to be a low positive non-significant correlation between sex (item 3) and "the request for assistance in contacting birth siblings" (item 9h). Further, it was found that females (34%) showed a slightly greater tendency to request assistance in contacting birth siblings than males (28.6%).

In concluding the discussion about the relationship between the various questionnaire items, it was found that age and sex were not strongly associated with the type of request the adoptee

might make or as to the factors that triggered the request for service. It is to be further noted that there was not a clear relationship between the type of request made by the adoptee and what triggered the adoptee's request for service. Further, since the data was not available from the records of the 78 cases on various aspects of the adoptee-adoptive parent relationship, these areas could not be examined.

The file review of the 78 adoptee cases has been an important first step in this practicum. It provided demographic information about the adoptees and gave some insight into the nature of the adoptee's request for post-adoption service. What is known from the data is that more females applied for service than males and that over half of the adoptees were between the ages of 21 and 30. Slightly less than half were married and about 60% were placed for adoption as infants 6 months of age or younger. The most frequent types of request for service were for non-identifying history on the biological family and for assistance in making contact with the birth mother. The absence of information from the record on the motivating factors regarding the request for service and various aspects of the adoptee-adoptive parent relationship resulted in careful focus on interviewing and recording techniques. The knowledge gained from this stage of this study became the basis for the intervention with adoptees and the provision of direct service to them.

CHAPTER FOUR

An Analysis of the Provision of Direct Service to Adoptees and Post-Adoption Reunions

This chapter will examine the results of the findings from the provision of direct service to adoptees. It presents a detailed examination of five of the cases of the adoptees who received direct service. Summaries of the remaining twelve cases are to be found in Appendix VII. Further, the chapter will present a synopsis of details on 10 post-adoption reunions that occurred through Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

A major part of this practicum involved counselling and meeting the service requests of seventeen adopted adults. Only eleven of the seventeen adoptees required direct service from the student within the time frame of this practicum. The eleven adoptees agreed to complete the post-adoption questionnaire (Appendix I) and the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire (Appendix IV). Two adoptees did not return the two sets of questionnaires. The information that will now be presented is an analysis of the data obtained from the post-adoption questionnaire. It is recognized that with this small sample size the ability to generalize is limited. However, this author feels descriptive data provides an important contribution to the body of knowledge about adoptees and their post-adoption needs.

A. Post-adoption questionnaire data. The number of questionnaires from which data was obtained is 9, 33.3% (3) were males

and 66.7% (6) females. The greater number of females requesting post-adoption service is similar to the findings in the file review analysis and to the provincial statistics.

The age breakdown as reflected in Table 4.1 shows that 55.5% or 5 of the adoptees were under age 25. 55.6% or 5 of the adoptees were single and 44.4% or 4 were married.

TABLE 4.1

Age Breakdown of Adopted Adults

Age Category	Frequency	Per Cent
Lowest through 19	2	22.2
20 - 25	3	33.3
26 - 35	2	22.2
36 through highest	2	<u>22.2</u>
TOTAL		100.0
		(n=9)

Six of the adoptees resided in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba while 3 resided outside the province of Manitoba.

Seven of adoptees had their first contact with the agency either by telephone or through an office interview. These statistics are similar to those found in the file review and again reflect the kind of demands that are made on the intake department and post-adoption social worker.

A major portion or 66.6% (n=6) of the adoptees were under 6 months when placed for adoption.

Regarding the nature of the request for service, the breakdown was as follows:

- (a) non-identifying birth history - 33.3% (n=3)
- (e) any current information available - 11.1% (n=1)
- (f) assistance in contacting birth mother - 100.0% (n=9)
- (g) assistance in contacting birth father - 33.3% (n=3)
- (h) assistance in contacting birth siblings - 22.2% (n=2)

It is important to note that while only three adoptees checked non-identifying information as a part of their request for service, in fact 7 adoptees completing the questionnaire requested a non-identifying history and these histories were accordingly completed by the author. Many of the adoptees would have liked identifying information on their biological histories such as names and addresses and it is possible that this factor is reflected in their response in this category.

The author did not find evidence or comments in the literature to explain the significant difference between the request for contact with birth mother as opposed to birth father. Thompson (1979) comments on seventy per cent of 133 adoptees wishing to meet the biological parents which implies the request is for both parents. The author's experience in dealing with the post-adoption service suggests that the birth father has not been historically viewed as a prominent part of the triad. There has been an assumption that because his role in the whole adoption process has been either limited or non-existent there would in

fact be very little information available about him. The statistics from the file review show a greater percentage of requests for contact with the birth mother as opposed to the birth father but the difference between the two is only 9%.

Regarding the number of previous requests for service, 77.8% (n=7) had made no previous requests while 22.2% (n=2) had made one or more previous requests for service. In 5 or 55.5% of the cases, adoptive parent(s) were aware of the adoptee's request for post-adoption service. In 4 or 44.4% of the cases, adoptive parent(s) were unaware of the adoptee's request. In those cases where the adoptive parents were aware of the adoptee's request for post-adoptive service, they approved of the adoptee's actions.

Table 4.2 demonstrates that most adoptees usually had a combination of reasons for requesting services. The significant percentage of adoptees expressing curiosity about their biological family is similar to McWhinnie's research. His research showed that adoptees have a curiosity towards their biological parents (McWhinnie, 1985).

TABLE 4.2

What Triggered The Request For Services

Reasons	Frequency	Per Cent
(a) a need to know	5	55.6
(b) birth of a child	1	11.1
(c) a need for medical information	4	44.4
(e) death of adoptive parent(s)	1	11.1
(f) curiosity	8	88.9
(g) other reasons	1	11.1
(adoptive father's encouragement)		(n=9)

Table 4.3 suggests that adoptees saw their relationship with their adoptive parents improving over time and being better as adults as opposed to in childhood. The literature does not comment on this aspect. Kowal (1984) does talk about loyalty to adoptive parents being an issue for some young adult adoptees. How this might influence the way they would rate their relationship with adoptive parents is not known.

TABLE 4.3

Adoptee's Relationship With Adoptive Parents

Categories	While Growing Up	Presently
Poor	-	-
Satisfactory	66.7	33.3
Very Satisfactory	33.3	66.7
TOTAL	100.0	100.0
(n=9)		

Regarding the amount of discussion between adoptive parents and the adoptees over their adoptive status, 22.2% (n=2) said they could discuss freely while 77.7% or 7 adoptees said discussion occurred occasionally or only carefully. These findings would appear to support research done by Pannor and Nerlove (1977) and Thompson (1979). They found that some adoptees described communication with adoptive parents being blocked because of the questions they asked about their adoption status and their biological family. However research done by Children's Home Society of California (Lindsay 1980) produced different results. Three quarters of the adult adoptees in that study reported they were either usually or totally at ease in discussing adoption with their adoptive parents. Results from this study also indicated that the younger the adult adoptee, the easier the discussions were. None of these studies presented data about the ages of the adoptees. This could be an important variable in affecting the ease of discussion and could account for the different findings, as an individual's responses and reactions will vary over time, depending on the life experiences they have had.

Of the adoptees in the study, 3 had most or all the information they wanted on their birth family while they were growing up. Three said they had only some of the information they wanted while three said they had none of the information they wanted. Thus 6 or 66.6% of the adoptees either had none or only a portion of the information on their birth family. Out of this group one of the adoptees said they didn't care as they did not

wish to have the information. Some research demonstrates the hesitancy on the part of adoptees and adoptive parents to discuss adoption issues openly. Traditional attitudes and practices in the adoption field have contributed significantly to adoptive parents' lack of information on the biological family and so their ability to share openly with the adoptee has been severely hampered. For some adoptive parents, discussions with the adoptee about the biological family have been embarrassing and threatening (Pannor and Nerlove 1971). Dukette's (1982) position is that the secrecy in adoption has created a nightmare for triad members and prohibited open sharing of information.

In terms of the service component, 44.4% (n=4) of the adoptees had some response to their request in under one month's time while 33.3% (n=3) waited for one to three months. In one case the response time was over 3 months while in another case the adoptee did not specify a time. 7 or 77.8% of adoptees said their service request was met while 2 said it was not. In these cases, one adoptee was still waiting for information on his birth family, while the other adoptee undertook his own search for the biological parents.

What the data suggests from this sample of adoptees is that a greater number of females received service with slightly more than half of the adoptees being under age 25 and slightly more than half being married. Many of the adoptees (66.6%) were under age 6 months when placed for adoption. The most frequent request for service was for assistance in contacting the birth mother with all the adoptees (100.0% or 9) making this request. In

slightly over half the cases the adopting parents were aware of the adoptees request for post-adoption service and they all approved of the adoptee's actions. For nearly all the adoptees, the major factor that prompted their request for service was curiosity. Most adoptees said they could discuss their adoptive status with their adoptive parents occasionally or only carefully. Two-thirds of the adoptees said they had either only some or none of the information they wished on their biological family while they were growing up.

Adoptee's Personal Comments:

The last two questions on the post-adoption questionnaire were open ended questions allowing for individual responses from the adoptees. Question 20 was responded to by 77.7% or 7 of the 9 adoptees. The question was "what advice would you give prospective adoptive parents based on your experiences as an adopted person?". The comments generally indicated that communication between the adoptive parents and the adoptee should be open and honest regarding adoption issues and that as much information as possible should be shared with the adoptee. Some of the comments were as follows:

"Always discuss adoption openly with your child and give him or her all the information you can";

"Let them find out everything they can about their birth parents";

"Be prepared to be open about the adoption and help your child find his or her birth family if the desire arises";

"Be totally honest with the adopted child about the adoption right from the start. Give all the information you can".

Question 21 stated "What additional comments would you like to make?". 66.6% or 6 of the 9 adoptees responded to this question. Three responses indicated the excellence of the service and the assistance given by the agency. Two of the responses were positive in terms of the experience of being adopted and that the birth parent made the best possible decision for them. Also in this context comments were made about the similarity between the adoptee and the birth family in terms of interests and that the adoptee bore no resentment towards the birth parents for the decision they made. One adoptee stated her impatience at having to wait for her request to meet her birth parent to be dealt with.

In summary, the comments made by the adoptees were generally positive statements. The main theme that emerged was the need for the adoptee to have as much information as possible on the biological family and for their questions to be answered openly and honestly. The adoptees were positive about the experience of being adopted but recognized their own genetic roots, and the similarities between they and the biological family. The adoptees present a clear statement of the value and need for the post-adoption service with openness and honesty in sharing information on the biological family being stressed by the adoptees. Lifton (1979) says that in order for adoption to survive, the trend towards openness and honesty must continue.

B. Relationship Between Questionnaire Items

There was found to be a positive correlation between age and the adoptive parents' awareness of request. Table 6 (Appendix VI) shows that as age increases, the adoptive parents are more likely to be aware of the adoptee's request for service. Jacob (October 1986) reported that of the adult adoptees offered service between 1982 and 1986, three-quarters told their adoptive parents of their post-adoption request. However no information was available as to the ages of the adoptees.

The sex of the adoptee was examined in relation to various concepts. It was found that males were more likely to request assistance in contacting birth siblings than females. Two of the three males requested such contact while there was no such request from females. Males (66.%, n=2) had a greater need to know about their biological family than females (50%, n=3). All of the males (n=3) also reported their present relationship with adoptive parents to be more satisfactory compared to only 50% of the females. Males were also able to discuss adoption more freely with their adoptive parents than females, one out of three males as opposed to one out of 6 females. However females tended to have more information on their birth family while growing up as opposed to males. 50.0% or three of the females reported having all or most of the information they wanted while no males reported in either of these categories. This finding would appear to be contradictory with the trend that seemed to be developing. However the numbers in this study were very small so that it is not possible to make any generalizations.

In examining the motivating factors underlying "the request for service", 88% (n=8) of the adoptees stated curiosity as one of their reasons for their post-adoption inquiry. The direction of the relationship involving curiosity and the discussion of the subject of adoption did suggest that as discussions tended to occur less freely there was a greater concentration of adoptees expressing curiosity.

Table 4.4 presents data about the relationship between curiosity and the information the adoptee had on the birth family while growing up. Five of the eight adoptees only had some or none of the information they wished and they all expressed curiosity as a factor triggering their request for service.

TABLE 4.4

Curiosity & Information on the Birth Family
While Growing Up

Birth Family Information	Curiosity		Row Total
	No	Yes	
All the information I wanted	(1) 50%	(1) 50%	2
Most of the information I wanted		(1) 100%	1
Some or none of the information I wanted		(5) 100%	5
Other (none but I didn't care)		(1) 100%	1
Column Total	1	8	9
	11.1%	88.9%	

The data from Table 4.4 would seem to indicate that where adoptees have little or no information on their biological family, they are likely to be curious. Klibanoff (1977) says that adoptees are curious about their genealogy and about that which is common knowledge to the majority of society. McWhinnie's (1985) research also showed that adoptees have a curiosity towards their biological family and where that curiosity is not satisfied, the adoptee comes to believe that there is something to hide.

There was found to be a correlation between the way the adoptees described their relationship with their adoptive parents and the type of discussions about adoption that occurred. In the adoptee's present relationship, where discussions occurred only very carefully, out of 4 adoptees, 3 reported the relationship with their adoptive parents as only satisfactory as opposed to 1 who reported the relationship as very satisfactory. While adoptees were growing up, four of the nine reported discussions with their adoptive parents occurred only very carefully and all four adoptees reported the relationship as only satisfactory. Thus, the adoptees, as children and as adults, with less satisfaction in their relationship with adoptive parents, had greater difficulty in discussing the subject of adoption with their parents. These findings are supported by Hartman (1984) who contends that where there is a lack of communication around the child's biological background, there is a correlation with relationship problems between the child and the adoptive parents.

The five case illustrations which are outlined in the next section highlight some of the descriptive data resulting from this study.

C.

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

Five case illustrations will now be presented. These cases were drawn from those adoptees who received post-adoption service during this practicum. The criteria that was used in the selection of cases attempted to have representation from the following: adoptees of both sexes, adoptees representative of the various age categories and some adoptees who had experienced a reunion.

The case illustrations will describe the client's request, the motivating factors in their circumstances and their relationship with their adoptive family.

CASE A

CASE A is a single 19 year old female who lives with her adoptive father. At the time of requesting post-adoption service, CASE A was also requesting service as a single expectant mother. She was considering a plan of adoption for her infant.

Request for Service

CASE A's request for post-adoption service evolved out of her planning for the baby she is expecting. As she considered a plan of adoption for her infant, she decided she should have more information on her own biological background. She acknowledged she only had a few pieces of information about her biological history and that as well, this was all her adoptive parents had received. She requested a non-identifying history be prepared for her and signed the appropriate agency form (see Appendix V)

allowing records to be requested, opened and searched on her behalf. As well, CASE A completed the provincial registration form (see Appendix III) which stated her desire for a face-to-face meeting with her birth mother.

Motivating_Circumstances

CASE A said that her pregnancy and her own health during her pregnancy thus far moved her to request post-adoption service. As well as assisting in her adoption plans for her baby, she has felt a curiosity about her own biological history and it was curiosity that prompted her to register for contact with her birth mother. She has wondered why she has so little background on her birth family and does trust her adoptive parents when they say that they have given her all the information they have. CASE A would like her biological family to know she was raised in a good home and that the decision to place her for adoption was a good one as far as she is concerned.

Adoptive_Experience

CASE A says she grew up knowing she was adopted and this knowledge has always been a part of her. She believes she was told of her adoption before she commenced school. In her recollection, her parents told her brief information about her biological mother but beyond that, they had not received further information to share with her. CASE A said she did not view this gap as a problem at the time but recently has wondered about the lack of information.

CASE A's adoptive parents are divorced. She is an only child and says she has always felt loved, wanted and protected by her parents. She feels she was raised in an excellent home, in spite of the divorce and that even after her parents' separation, they were able to negotiate with each other towards her best interests.

The adoptive parents are aware of CASE A's request for post-adoption service and support her totally in this venture. She shared the biological history with them and they generally approve of her move towards a reunion with the birth mother. CASE A feels her adoptive family have been supportive of her during her pregnancy and believe the decision she is making regarding her infant is hers alone to make.

Areas of Service

CASE A requested and received her biological history. It was researched, prepared and presented by the author. CASE A received the information with interest and commented on areas of similarity between she and her biological mother. Because the history contained little information about her father, CASE A had little to say in this area. It did bear some similarity to her own situation.

After receiving her non-identifying biological history, CASE A registered for contact with her birth mother. At the time of writing this report, she has yet to hear from the post-adoption registry as to whether there has been a corresponding registration from her biological mother or whether an outreach must be

done. CASE A is looking forward to such a meeting with her biological mother, as much for her mother's sake as her own. She says she is merely curious while she feels that there might be some peace and sense of relief for her biological mother to meet her and to know that she has had a good and loving adoptive family. CASE A feels the fact that her adoptive parents separated was regrettable, but their overriding love, support and concern for her was always evident and this is what she wishes her biological mother to know.

What remains in this case for service is to facilitate the meeting between CASE A and her biological mother. If the biological mother, once located, does not wish to meet with CASE A, this would need to be interpreted to her and counselling and support provided to her in adjusting to this decision.

What is clear, is that for whatever reason, the adoptive parents did not have a non-identifying biological history, outlining health information to share with their daughter.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Scores

Client A's responses were very positive. Although no additional comments were made, Client A's responses indicated she was very satisfied with the help she received and she felt she would return to the program for help, if necessary in the future.

CASE B

CASE B is a single 20 year old female who had been living with her adoptive parents but shortly after beginning the preparation for contact with her birth mother, moved away to another area in order to further her program of studies. She is an only child.

Request for Service

CASE B had received her non-identifying background information in 1986 and had registered for contact with her biological parents at that time. She was awaiting her turn to come up for a search to be done by the provincial Post-Adoption Registry, when her biological mother registered voluntarily with the Registry for contact with her daughter. As the biological mother resided in the same area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, the author provided service to CASE B as well as her mother.

CASE B's initial request for service arose out of a lack of information about her biological family. She felt she was given all the information her adoptive parents had but it was never enough. She described herself as a curious, independent type of person who always wanted to know more.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE B said she has known from an early age that she would try to find out more about her past and attributes this in part to her curious nature. In addition, she feels that the strain in

her adoptive home around the area of adoption, partly due to her inquiring nature, fueled her desire to reach out for further knowledge and information. She wished to know about her first family, who she was like and whether she has biological siblings. She also wished her biological mother to know that she has been in a good home and that "I do not hate her for giving me up". She would like to know if her mom has been okay with the decision she made and whether she was able to get on with her life. CASE B wasn't sure what to expect of a reunion - "maybe a meeting and that will be it".

Adoptive Experience

CASE B said she has always known she was adopted. She was not sure at what age she was told but has felt this knowledge has always been a part of her. When she was young, adoption meant to her that "I was like a doll that was just made". She believed she had been stored on a shelf, waiting for someone to take her home. CASE B described her family as a good one but said her home situation was one where the subject of adoption was uncomfortable. She always felt she had to ask her questions carefully and that when asked, the questions caused her parents a lot of anxiety. She has not told her parents of her request for post-adoption service and believes they would be hurt by this knowledge and would feel that they were losing her. She could see the complications in her life in keeping her actions a secret from her parents but strongly believed she had no other alternative.

Areas of Service

CASE B was delighted to hear that her biological mother had registered (nearly a year after CASE B) for contact with her. The area of service in this case for the author was to prepare CASE B for this meeting. She was agreeable to the procedures in this preparation and stated that she liked the idea of being prepared as she was anxious about the face-to-face meeting and about what the outcome might be.

The preparation consisted of a letter exchange between CASE B and her biological mother. The author was involved in a series of meetings with both parties, assisting them in composing their letters and then in dealing with the contents of the letters. CASE B found that putting her thoughts on paper was very difficult for her, even though she is a verbal person. She worried about what to say, saying it right and then about how it would be received. There were two things she wished to be clear about. First, she wished her biological mother to respect her privacy and to not do or say anything that would alert CASE B's adoptive parents to what was happening. It soon became apparent that the biological mother had these concerns as well, as her spouse was aware of what was happening but she had not told her school age children. This area was clarified with both parties by the author prior to the exchange of the letter and both were relieved to note that each had similar concerns. The second point which CASE B wished to make was that she did not hate her mother for the decision she made regarding the adoption placement and she very much wished her to know this before they ever met.

The biological mother, in this case, found the decision she had made years ago regarding the adoption placement to be a suitable one for her. She said she always felt she had done the right thing, and believed her daughter had been placed in a good home. She told her husband about this period of her life and found when she wished to register for contact that she had his support. She decided to register for contact with her daughter as she believed she had a responsibility to her to do so, to be available to explain the decision she made and to answer any questions she might have.

Both CASE B and the birth mother found preparatory steps to the meeting to be valuable in that they allowed time to adjust to the idea of the meeting and as well provided information that assisted in the adjustment. Both felt the information about what was happening in each other's lives at this time and what some of the feelings were around the decision so many years ago assisted in easing the tension and anxiety that was felt by both over the pending reunion.

CASE B still awaits an outreach to be done for her biological father.

The Reunion

The face-to-face meeting between CASE B and her mother took place at a location away from the home residence of both parties. They were ensured privacy and as much time as they required at this first meeting. The author accompanied CASE B to the location and introduced her to her mother. They were both nervous

and tense initially and the flow of the conversation was assisted by the author. Initial discussions centered around feelings leading up to the meeting and then, whom CASE B looked like in the family of birth. At this point, CASE B and her mother were left on their own for a period of time and they were advised the author would check in with them to see if they had questions or concerns. On returning, the parties were found to be considerably relaxed and were chatting away about mutual areas of interest. They were left on their own at this point and it was later learned that they spent over five hours together.

CASE B and her mother have continued to maintain contact and plan to be a part of each other's lives. They are still conscious of the need to respect the privacy of each other. CASE B's adoptive parents still are unaware of what has been happening and she does not plan to advise them of her recent experiences, at least in the foreseeable future. The biological mother decided she would tell her children as she wished them to know her first child. She also hoped to introduce her daughter to her parents.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

Client B rated all areas of the service in the most positive category with the exception of one area. In that case, the response was "yes, generally" rather than "yes, definitely" to the question about receiving the kind of service you wanted. Additional comments were made supporting the positive responses and noting Client B's satisfaction with the help she received. These comments included statements such as "I was very happy with the

help I received", "If it weren't for her extra effort, we may still not have met" and "I also appreciated her willingness to help with anything after the meeting".

CASE C

CASE C is a 21 year old single female who resides in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

When CASE C requested post-adoption service, she wished non-identifying information on her biological family, and she also registered with the provincial registry for personal contact with the biological parents and siblings.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE C indicated that when she approached her 18th birthday, she decided she would like to find out more about her background. She said she received from her adoptive parents all the information they had on her background, but it was very limited. She said that while she was curious and wished fuller details on her family or origin, she mainly wished to let her biological mother know that she was okay and that she had been raised in a very good home. CASE C was hopeful that a friendship and perhaps lasting relationships would develop out of a personal contact with her family of origin.

Adoptive Experience

CASE C felt she has been fortunate to have the parents she does and described her relationship with them as very close. Her adoptive parents have several biological children and CASE C has a close and supportive relationship with her siblings.

CASE C said she grew up with the knowledge of her adoption and has felt the topic of adoption has been very open in her household. Her adoptive family were supportive of her post-adoption inquiry and she has been open with them about her intentions. She believes they have not felt threatened in any way by her desire to meet her biological family.

Areas of Service

CASE C received non-identifying information on her background. She was advised by the provincial post-adoption registry several weeks after her registration that her biological mother was also registered for personal contact. CASE C was very excited and somewhat taken aback by this news as she had anticipated a lengthy wait and the need for an outreach to be done. While she was anxious and slightly nervous about the reunion, she was looking forward to it and to having many of her questions finally answered.

The author began the steps of preparing CASE C for the reunion with her mother. CASE C wrote a lengthy letter to her mother and received an equally lengthy letter at the point her mother received hers. CASE C had no trouble writing her letter and found it difficult to contain her thoughts. She was agreeable with the steps leading up to the reunion but was not entirely convinced that such preparation was necessary. After the initial letter exchange, and counselling regarding issues related to the reunion, both CASE C and her mother wished to move directly to a personal meeting. The night before the meeting,

the author spoke by telephone with the biological mother. She found this call reassuring and said she had high hopes that she and her daughter could be friends. She said she had never stopped thinking about her daughter and had always hoped she could meet her someday. As the biological mother resided in an area outside the jurisdiction of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba, she received counselling and direction from the agency covering her area. The author and her social worker consulted frequently by telephone during the preparation stage.

CASE C is still registered for contact with her biological father. She has received details from her biological mother on him and she has also offered to help CASE C get in touch with him. However, CASE C has said she is not ready for this at this time.

The Reunion

The meeting between CASE C and her mother lasted nearly 1 1/2 hours after which they left the meeting place and spent the next 24 hours together. The author introduced CASE C and her mother and they began to talk quite freely about feelings and emotions leading up to this meeting. They were then left on their own for 3/4 of an hour at which time the author rejoined them. The biological mother then talked about how she had registered her desire to meet her daughter and what her feelings had been over the years. She told CASE C she had never stopped wondering about her and felt someday she would see her again. After leaving this meeting, mother and daughter went on to meet

other extended family members over the course of the next 24 hours.

CASE C indicated that in the days and weeks following the reunion, she experienced a lot of excitement about "being found". However, life did begin to settle down as such a meeting and the knowledge it brings does not answer the day-to-day problems in life, according to CASE C. She has been grateful for some very basic questions that have been answered for her. She said "I know who I look like" and "I'll never walk down the street again and look at someone wondering if she is my mother". CASE C has met her biological mother's spouse and the children from this marriage. She has developed a close relationship with this family but said that they are not like her adoptive family and can never have the same meaning for her. She acknowledged that sometimes keeping the two family relationships focused to the degree that they do not interfere with each other is complicated. She thinks that someday, she might introduce the families to each other.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

CASE C responded with the most positive values in all questions. She viewed the service and the benefits from it to be of considerable value and made additional notes to this effect. She stated that "Child and Family Services has been a great help to me in finding my birth mother. Without the service the happiness and completeness that I now feel would not be possible. There was nothing more that they could have possibly done for me".

CASE_D

CASE D is a single 23 year old male who lives in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE D requested non-identifying information on his biological family. He also registered with the Provincial Post-Adoption Registry for personal contact with his biological mother, father and siblings.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE D requested post-adoption service as he was curious about his family of origin. He had very little information on his biological background and besides wishing full medical details, he wished to know everything he could about his birth family.

Adoptive Experience

CASE D indicated his adoptive parents are aware of his request for post-adoption service and they support him fully in this area. They have shared with him what details they were given on his biological family. CASE D described a very satisfactory relationship with his adoptive family.

Area of Service

CASE D's non-identifying history was compiled by the author and shared with CASE D. The contact with CASE D was done by let-

ter and by telephone as he was unable to be available for personal interviews due to his job demands and travelling distance.

There was considerable discussion with CASE D around various details of his biological history and in an attempt to provide further clarification for this adoptee, correspondence was forwarded to another province. CASE D would have liked identifying information from the records but accepted the fact that the legislation did not allow for the release of such details.

At the time of writing this report, CASE D awaits an outreach to be done to his biological family.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

CASE D responded very favorably to the service he received through the post-adoption program. His ratings on the questionnaire reflect his desire to meet his birth family and he still awaits the opportunity to do this. CASE D rated the quality of service as excellent and said he was "mostly satisfied" with the service he received. When asked if he were to seek help again, would he come back to the program, he responded "yes, definitely".

When asked if the program had met his needs, CASE D responded with "only a few of my needs have been met". This response indicates that CASE D still is awaiting for a search to be done on his biological family. He also would have liked identifying information from his record such as the names of the educational institutes that his parents attended. This information was not able to be released to him, in keeping with the

current legislation. He was very disappointed when he was not able to obtain this information.

CASE E

The adoptee in this case is a married 35 year old male who resides out of the province. Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba were involved with this adoptee as his adoption records were held by the agency.

Request for Service

CASE E requested non-identifying information on his biological family and he also registered for personal contact with his biological parents and siblings.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE E indicated that having his own children played a major role in precipitating his request for post-adoption service. He then felt he should have information on his family of origin, for medical reasons, should issues in this area arise, and because he felt he should be able to share information with his children as they were growing up. As he began to consider his request, he indicated he began to develop a curiosity he had not previously experienced.

Adoptive Experience

CASE E described his relationship with his adoptive family as very satisfactory. They are aware of his post-adoption request and they approve of his actions in this area. However, CASE E said they have felt threatened but he has reassured them that no one can take their place as his family. He has a sibling

who is also adopted but who does not share his interest and curiosity about her biological family. She finds it difficult to comprehend his pursuit in this area.

CASE E said he was told early in his life that he was adopted but he received very limited information on his biological family. He felt he received all the information that his adoptive family had.

Areas of Service

CASE E initially contacted the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry and it was through them that he registered for personal contact with his biological parents and adult siblings. He also wished his biological non-identifying history to be completed and he was referred to Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba for this service.

CASE E's registration was received and he was advised that a half-brother had also registered. As they both resided in the same province, that province's post-adoption service was contacted and they were asked to facilitate contact between the two concerned parties. This process was taking place at the same time as the author was preparing the non-identifying history for CASE E. There were numerous telephone calls with CASE E at which time he expressed his appreciation for the service but also was politely insistent about the urgency in his history being compiled and mailed to him at the earliest possible date. He indicated he was making inquiries on his own about the whereabouts of his biological parents as he felt he could not wait for an out-

reach to be done by Manitoba on his behalf. His half-brother with whom he was recently re-united was assisting him in this process.

The Reunion

CASE E advised the author that "through good detective work he located his biological mother". He flew to the province where she resided and described his meeting with her as going very well. He had met other family members and also learned from his mother that his biological father was deceased. He had traced a paternal uncle in yet another province and flew there to hopefully receive more information on this side of his family. He decided to proceed no further than his paternal uncle as he was certain that other family members were not aware of his existence.

CASE E indicated that once he had begun making his post-adoption inquiries, he became consumed with an urgency that would not tolerate inactivity on his part and so he felt compelled to do his own search. Since finding his biological family, he has felt satisfied but has found life complicated. He said there are now a lot of pieces in his life that do not necessarily fit together and that juggling his different families is not easy. He felt he could not have handled this whole process as a teenager and it was best for him to have waited to make his inquiries until his present age. For CASE E, this whole process from start to finish took fourteen months.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

CASE E's rating on the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire was very positive in all the questions. He rated the quality of service he received as "good" and said that he was "very satisfied" with the amount of help he received. If he were to seek help again, CASE E said that "yes definitely he would return to the program for help". When asked to what extent the program had met his needs, CASE E responded that "almost all of my needs have been met".

CASE E did not write in any additional comments.

D. An Overview of Adoptee's Satisfaction Data

A client satisfaction questionnaire was completed by nine of the eleven adoptees who received direct post-adoption service. This questionnaire dealt with the client's attitude towards the service they received and their level of satisfaction with this service. It also provided the opportunity for individual comments.

There are seven items on the questionnaire. Table 4.5 examines each item in terms of the total response for that item. A response of 4 indicates the most positive while 1 would be the least positive. Items 3, 5 and 7 relate more directly to the client's needs being met through the program. The greater percentage of responses in these areas were most positive with the total means being 10.5 out of a possible 12. The remaining items dealt directly with client satisfaction in terms of the service that was offered. The responses were again most positive with the means total 14.6 out of a possible 16. Overall the results from this questionnaire reflect strong client satisfaction with the post-adoption service. The means total for all 7 questionnaire items was 25.1 out of a possible 28.

44.4% or 4 of the adoptees made additional comments in the space provided on their questionnaires. Their comments were very positive and included such statements as "there was nothing more that they could have done for me - I am so grateful"; "I was very happy with the help I received"; "Child and Family Services has been a great help to me"; and, "The one-on-one conversation between myself and the counsellor was incredible". One client com-

mented on overall satisfaction to that point but indicated the service was not yet completed. These comments support the overall score results which indicate that the service was positive and very much valued. It is important to recognize that there may have been other factors affecting the responses that were received, such as the desire to give positive feedback in exchange for a needed service. It is not known how effective the author's efforts were in reassuring the adoptees that their participation in this practicum was not dependent on their receipt of service.

TABLE 4.5

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Analysis

Item	Low Positive		High Positive		Means
	Response		Summaries in Per Cent		
	1	2	3	4	
1			44.4	55.6	3.6
2			55.6	44.4	3.4
3		22.2	22.2	55.6	3.3
4			11.1	88.9	3.9
5	11.1		33.3	55.6	3.3
6			33.3	66.9	3.7
7			11.1	88.9	<u>3.9</u>
TOTAL					25.1

E. Post-Adoption Reunions

The information to follow is a condensation of details regarding 10 reunions that occurred through Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.* One or more of the participants involved in each of the reunions was a client of the agency at the time of the reunion. Table 4.6 gives the age and sex breakdown of the ten adoptees involved in the reunions.

TABLE 4.6

Age and Sex of Participants

Age	Male Adult Adoptees	Female Adult Adoptees	Birth Mother	Birth Father
Age 18 - 25		4		
Age 26 - 35	1	3	2	
Age 36 - 50		1	4	2
Age 51 & up		1	3	1

*In addition to reunions in which the author was involved, all reunions involving adult adoptees within the time frame of this practicum to January 1988 have been included in order to exemplify the total picture at Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Just as a far greater percentage of female adult adoptees made post-adoption inquiries, so do the statistics in the area of post-adoption reunions reflect greater numbers of females. Table 4.6 shows only one male adult adoptee was involved in a reunion as opposed to 9 females. The total number of reunions was 10.

Regarding the number of birth parents, in two cases the birth parents married each other which explains why there are 12 birth parents listed while there are only 10 reunions.

Summary of Involvement of Participant's Families

The families of the adoptees and birth parents had varying degrees of involvement and knowledge about the reunion activities.

Regarding the adoptees, in six of the ten cases the adoptive families were aware of the reunion activities and were supportive of the adoptee. In two cases, the adoptive parents were not aware of the adoptee's reunion activities. In one case, the adoptive parents were deceased while in another case, one adoptive parent was deceased and the other parent became aware after the reunion occurred.

In the case of the birth mothers, in 5 situations the birth mother's family were aware of what she was doing and were supportive of her. In one case, the birth mother kept her activities to herself and did not share with her family while in another case, the birth mother's family became aware of the reunion only after it happened and at that point they were supportive of her.

There was only one case where the birth father was involved.

The birth mother was deceased in this case. The birth father did not share any information with his own family as to his activities.

In two cases the birth parents of the adoptee married each other. In one family, the children were involved in the reunion and were supportive of their parents. In the other case, the children were not told of the reunion.

Pre-Reunion Activity

Two of the reunions were achieved with minimal involvement on the part of Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba. The adoptees in these cases used a private search consultant and combined with their own efforts, arrangements for the reunions were achieved through letters and telephone calls between the participants. The adoptees used the support of an agency social worker for a period of time following the reunion.

In one case, the adoptee located his biological family through his own search techniques and arranged his own reunion. He shared this experience and his feelings with the agency.

In 6 cases, Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba acted as an intermediary for these reunions. There were letter exchanges between the participants prior to the actual meeting as well as preparatory counselling with an agency social worker.

In one case, there was no letter exchange or telephone activity prior to the reunion. There was preparatory counselling between an agency social worker and the participants.

Motivating Factors Behind Reunion Activity

The following list is a summation of the main reasons why adoptees wished to meet their biological parents:

- The birth of the adoptee's children sparked a curiosity and a desire to meet the biological parent(s);
- A need to know more about one's own self;
- To meet the biological parent(s) was a validation of being born;
- The death of adoptive parent(s) created a need to find the biological parent(s);
- There was always that intense feeling and need to know about the biological history and to eventually meet the parent(s).

On the part of the biological parent the reasons were as follows:

- A sense of duty and responsibility to the adoptee;
- A desire to see the adoptee and explain the decision they made;
- The need to see the adoptee and determine that the decision they made was okay;
- The desire to see the adoptee had been a part of the biological parent(s) for years and the hope was that a friendship could develop.

Circumstances of Registration

In 7 of the cases, the adoptees registered their desire for personal contact with the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry prior

to their biological parent(s). In three of these cases, the adoptees achieved their own reunions either through their own search techniques or else through the efforts of a private search consultant. Only in one case was it necessary for the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry to do an outreach to the biological parent(s) in order that a reunion be achieved. Aside from the 3 cases where the adoptees did their own searches, in the remaining 6, the biological parent(s) eventually registered for personal contact.

In the case of the adoptees, 7 of them learned of their right to register for personal contact through an agency social worker. In two cases, the knowledge was acquired through their own efforts of inquiry. In one case, the adoptee obtained the information through another adoptee.

In the cases where the biological parent(s) registered for personal contact with the Registry before the adoptee, they learned of their right to do so through the media (newspaper advertising, radio talk shows, magazine articles).

Reactions to the Reunion

The adoptees expressed a variety of reactions and feelings which occurred after the personal contact with the biological parent(s). The majority of the feelings were positive and were expressed within a 2 month period following the reunion. The following represents some of the views, at times expressed in the words used by the adoptee:

- "It's like having in-laws"

- Being found was very exciting and there is a feeling of being very special;
- A sense of having some pieces fall in place;
- A feeling of being more complete;
- It wasn't the answer to everything. "You still have the same day-to-day problems."
- A feeling of being overwhelmed at first.
- "My head is no longer cluttered or fogged over questions of who I am."
- Life became complicated in terms of having another family to consider.

In 9 of the reunions, there has been some form of ongoing contact, either through personal meetings, letters, cards or by telephone. In none of these cases was there simply one meeting with no further contact of any kind. One reunion was only recently achieved so that it is not possible to assess the future consequences.

The experience of offering post-adoption service has provided valuable insights into the needs of the adoptee in this area of service and into the complexities involved in their situations. The adoptee has lacked details on his family of origin and so has needed full and comprehensive information on the biological family. This need has usually included the desire for a face-to-face contact with some members of the biological family. It has also been evident that while the adoptees felt concern for their adoptive parents' reactions they also felt a curiosity and compelling desire to know about their family of

origin. This creates a complex situation where one is faced with protecting and preserving one set of relationships while at the same time being strongly propelled to search out another important set of relationships. Overall, the feedback from the adoptees in this practicum has been positive. They have felt that in spite of the complications in their lives due to their search for more knowledge about their genealogy, the benefits have made it worthwhile. Knowing more fully about themselves has stopped the torrent of questions and has brought a measure of self-worth. As one adoptee said after reading her biological history, "I am somebody".

This chapter focused on the direct provision of post-adoption service to adult adoptees. As well, this chapter provided an analysis of the reunions that occurred between the adoptees and their biological parent(s). What has been evident in the study of this population of adoptees is that families formed by adoption face unique adjustments. Adoptees have clearly identified a strong need to know about their biological family. They also identified the need for adoptive parents to communicate openly and honestly with them about their adoptive status. The post-adoption service was valued by the adoptees because it afforded the opportunity to not only obtain information but to meet with the birth family. The information that has resulted from this study raises concerns and questions about the post-adoption services that are needed and about the post-adoption services that should be offered. Whatever conclusions are drawn, they need to be done so carefully and with the

knowledge that post-adoption service must be an available flexible service to the adoptee and to the other members of the adoption triad.

CHAPTER FIVECommon Themes, Conclusions and RecommendationsA. Common Themes:

There are two major themes emerging from this practicum. One was the value that was placed on the post-adoption service by the adoptees who received the direct service. The second theme was the positive learning experience that was available to the author and the valuable insights that were gained through the provision of direct post-adoption service.

The Valued Post-Adoption Service:

Adoptees who received direct service placed considerable value on the service and this attitude was reflected in the high positive ratings on the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire. The adoptees gave an especially high positive response when asked if they would refer a friend who was in need of a similar service. 88.9% of the responses were for the most positive scores which in itself speaks highly of the service. All the adoptees who received the service gained information on their biological families that they had not previously had. While this was only a part of what they wanted, the benefits to that point were evident to the adoptee and the author. This service has been a way of accessing information to the adoptee that has in the past been denied. Children's Home Society has recognized the importance of such a service and has been developing their program since 1974. Hoopes (1982) also saw a crucial need for post-adoption service

and particularly felt this need was great when the adoptee was in late childhood and early adolescence.

The Learning Experience

The most outstanding benefit that has emerged in the provision of direct service to adoptees has been an understanding of the impact the adoption status has had on the life of the adoptee. Marcus (1981) believes that profound questions about biological heritage stalk the adoptee in childhood and that the years serve to multiply the questions. This was true about the adoptees who participated in this practicum. They had a need to know why they had been given up for adoption, whom they looked like, why they had a certain color of hair, who they were like in terms of their interests and what the relationship was like between their birth parents. Their questions were numerous and confirmed Roles' (1984) belief that knowing one's past provides a sense of who we are today. One adoptee said that full disclosure of her biological heritage confirmed for her that she was born like anyone else. She said that she believed for many of her childhood years that she was not born like others but "made like a doll". Smith (1976) says that adoptees' contribution to the body of knowledge about the adoption experience is valuable and unique. This belief has been borne out in this learning experience. What must be acknowledged however, is that it is not known what percentage of adoptees per the total adoptee population are seeking post-adoption services. This fact must be kept in mind in the development of programs and services for this population.

General Themes

Some major characteristics emerged about the adoptees who applied for post-adoption service. 66.6% were female and 49.5% of all the adoptees were age 25 and under. They were almost equally likely to be single or married with a slightly higher proportion being single. Close to 66.6% of the adoptees were placed for adoption at 6 months of age or younger. The most frequent request for service was for assistance in making contact with the birth mother. 66.6% of requests came from adoptees residing in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba and 72.4% of all initial requests came via telephone or office interview.

There are other characteristics about the adoptee population which provide further descriptive details. While there was no clear important pattern emerging about differences in request regarding the age or sex of the adoptee, the data from the provision of direct service to adoptees indicated that males, as adults tended to report more satisfying relationships with their adoptive parents. They also reported being able to discuss adoption issues more freely than their female counterparts. Generally, it was found that regardless of sex that there was likely to be greater difficulty in discussing adoption where there was less satisfaction in the adoptee-adoptive parent relationship. These findings were not substantiated by the file review due to the lack of data on the record in these areas.

There was a common theme in the comments the adoptees made

on the post-adoption questionnaire. 77.7% of adoptees responded and they emphasized the need for adoptive parents to be open and honest with their adopted child about his questions and concerns. Some of the advice the adoptees gave to prospective adoptive parents was as follows:

"Share as much information as possible";

"Always discuss adoption openly with your child";

"Be prepared to be open about the adoption";

"Be totally honest with the adopted child about the adoption right from the start";

"Keep level of communication open between the parents and the individual".

Adoptee's advice on the importance of openness and honesty in the adoptive family was found to be prevalent in the literature. Pannor and Baron (1984) support such an approach to adoption and they say this implies an acceptance of Kirk's (1964) view that adoptive kinship is not the same as consanguineous kinship. Kirk's (1981) assessment was that if an adoptive family accepted such a position there would be good communication with the child on his biological family.

In the discussions with adoptees about their adoptive parents' knowledge of the adoptee's request for service, many adoptees were very concerned that their adoptive parents not be hurt by the inquiries they were making. Sometimes the concern was also that adoptive parents would feel threatened in their relationship with the adoptee. For some adoptees there were feelings of guilt about what they were doing and whether they

really had the right to be asking questions about their biological family. This conflict for the adoptee was recognized by Marcus (1981) who saw the adoptee being pulled in conflicting directions. The protective position taken by some adoptees towards their adoptive parents is reflected in comments by adoptees such as "they might be hurt by what I am doing" and "they might think I don't want them as my family anymore". Four of the adoptees, or 44.4% who completed the post-adoption questionnaire did not tell their adoptive parent(s) of their inquiries. The adoptees recognized the complications for them in keeping such information from their families and most said they would eventually share with their adoptive families what they had done. "Finding the right time" was not an uncommon phrase to be heard from the adoptee. This is an important issue in providing post-adoption service to adoptees as the concealment of such information is a serious and complicating factor in the adoptee's life. It needs to be fully addressed with the adoptee and as adoptees face the reality of a reunion with their biological family, so they can fully appreciate the difficulties this area presents. The conflict that results is characterized by guilt over the concealment, guilt because some adoptees feel they are betraying the adoptive parents and concern that adoptive parents may feel rejected.

Themes from the Post-Adoption Reunions

There were common factors that prevailed from the examination of the post-adoption reunions that occurred through Child

and Family Services of Western Manitoba. These will now be discussed.

It was found that 90% of the adoptees were female. 60% of the adoptees reported that their adoptive parents were aware of the reunion activities and were supportive. Adoptees tended to register their desire for personal contact with the Post-Adoption Registry prior to their biological parent(s) and this occurred 70% of the time.

The prevalent theme that emerged regarding the reasons why adoptees wished to meet their biological parent(s) was increased knowledge about themselves through knowing and understanding their past. This again confirms Roles' (1984) belief that knowing one's past gives us a sense of who we are today.

The overall feeling for adoptees from the reunions was positive with a feeling of being more complete. In 90% of the reunions there has been some form of ongoing contact such as personal meetings, letters, cards and telephone calls. For most of the adoptees who experienced a reunion, the wondering and questioning was finally over. As one adoptee said "My head is no longer cluttered or fogged over questions of who I am". Sanders & Sitterly (1981) report similar findings and they say that the end of a search is like the end of a long tunnel where there is the long awaited answers. What is not known is the long term implications and effects of such reunions on not only the adoptee, but other members of the triad.

Common Problem Areas

There were aspects of the post-adoption program that were frustrating for the adoptees. Once they knew that an outreach would be done on their behalf for their biological family, they were anxious for matters to proceed as quickly as possible. To hear that their names went on a waiting list in terms of an outreach being done was a source of frustration for some and for others merely resignation that their wait and struggle for their reconnection was far from over. For those adoptees over age 36 who had registered for an outreach, there was the concern that the search might come too late and that the biological parents could die in the meantime. The fact that time could be running out for many on the waiting list does not change the policy which while understood by adoptees was nonetheless frustrating. At this point in time, outreaches are being undertaken by the provincial registry on behalf of those adoptees who registered in 1981. Exceptions do occur in that if information comes to the attention of the registry about a registration current to 1981, then work is done on the case at that time.

Adoptees understood the terms of the legislation regarding the release of information on the biological family. For some however the non-identifying information raised curiosity and interest even further and prompted detailed questions about names and places that could not be answered. This was found to be frustrating and discouraging especially given the lengthy wait that adoptees were prepared for regarding an outreach being done to their biological family. Helping the adoptee cope with this

area of concern is a difficult task and one readily identifies with the adoptee's sense of frustration. This sense of frustration at being denied that information which many see as rightfully theirs impels some adoptees to move out of the system to search privately. In the case of the one adoptee who proceeded to do a private search, after finding his biological family and finally having all the details he wanted, he conceded that he wished he had proceeded more slowly and allowed someone else to pave the way for him. At least in his situation, he wished he had been better prepared for having full disclosure of his background. It is important that the biological history that is researched for the adoptee be as full and as detailed as possible. As well, adoptees need to be encouraged to digest and discuss the history in a counselling setting and to adjust to the many implications the history may have for them in their life setting.

Some adoptees were disappointed that records seldom had current information and that almost consistently little was recorded or noted after the finalization of their adoption which usually meant 1 year after the adoption placement. Dukette (1982) contends that social agencies and professionals have the responsibility to update the records with the passage of time.

The author found the post-adoption files dealing with current and recent requests lacking in a clear recording format. Thus information was absent from the record and there was inconsistency from one record to the next in terms of what information was likely to be there.

In examining closed adoption records for the purpose of preparing biological histories for the adoptees, the records were again incomplete and inconsistent in terms of format and the information that was available. This meant considerable time and energy was expended in searching out the needed details. Other files had to be accessed and read and information compiled from them in order to obtain as complete a history as possible for the adoptee. Frequently the source and date of the information was not recorded so that one did not know who was responsible for the information or at what point in time it was given or compiled. Especially missing from the records was a clear description of why the biological parent(s) had relinquished their child for adoption. As well there was often very limited information about the relationship between the birth parents and reasons as to why the birth father's history was not available when that happened to be the case. Such incompleteness in the records ultimately creates a problem for not only the adoptee but for other members of the triad as well. For example, adopting parents may find themselves faced with the situation where the information they were given in terms of birth history and what the adoptee finds out through the post-adoption inquiry could be inconsistent.

Dukette (1982) strongly supports good record keeping and sees it as one way of acknowledging genealogy in constructive ways.

B. Concluding Remarks

The educational objectives of this practicum were achieved with the overall outcome being positive.

(1) There was a special focus on the adoptee, to obtain a knowledge and understanding of the needs of this member of the adoption triad. This was achieved, with the impact of such knowledge being of greater depth due to the personal provision of service. It was learned that the life of the adoptee is very much affected by the adoption experience. There are ties that bind the adoptee to his biological family and no amount of secrecy or concealment can sever these ties. The adoptee's curiosity, their need to know and their outreach for contact with their biological families are a testament to this philosophy. Adoption is a lifelong process for all members of the adoption triad (Baron and Pannor 1979).

(2) There was experience gained through the direct provision of post-adoption service. This service differs significantly from other child welfare services. Adoptees are requesting information and a service that they feel is rightfully theirs and which has been either denied them in the past or else has been fraught with complications. They do not see themselves as having a problem but rather the problem lying in the system. Learning and understanding the legislative requirements, the provincial procedures and guidelines and then being adaptable and flexible in meeting the uniqueness involved in each of the adoptee's situations has been a valuable experiences.

Perhaps the most outstanding knowledge to be gained through this experience has been to hear directly that adoptees need to know about their genealogy and that they have had lifelong questions that need to be answered. "No matter how early the adoption or how total the cut-off from the family, an important part of an adoptee's identity is deeply rooted in that biological system" (Hartman 1984:51).

(3) The development of counselling skills in the provision of post-adoption service to adoptees has been a natural outgrowth from this valuable experience. Helping the adoptee focus on the adoptive experience with a view to reconnecting with the biological information and family has expanded and developed the author's counselling skills. Organizing and participating in post-adoption reunions has contributed in a major way to this development. The awareness of vital concerns to the adoptee as well as the biological parent(s) and the knowledge of the impact such a meeting could have on the lives of the participants combined and promoted a sensitive and delicate approach. The timing of the meeting, the place, and the introduction are only a few of the important elements which needed to be addressed with the participants, so that the outcome would be conducive to the most positive experience for everyone. It was found to be important to be able to help the adoptee accept the legal parameters and to focus on the major factors in the least intrusive way possible.

Videotaping a session with an adoptee was a benefit to the author as it allowed the author and supervisor to critique the counselling component.

The overall assessment of the adoptees involved in the direct provision of service was positive. They valued the service and the manner in which it was provided. This attitude prevailed inspite of some frustration with legal and procedural policies.

The experience for the author has been invaluable. There has been much to learn from the adoptee, about their feelings regarding the adoption experience and about the whole adoption and single parent service in general. The perpetuation of the myth that adoption is like producing one's own child has not served members of the triad well according to Marcus (1981). This is valuable information for the professional who works with prospective adopting parents and birth parents who are considering relinquishment. Foles (1985) views adoption as a lifelong process, and triad members need to be prepared for this eventuality.

It was found that approximately 58 or 66.6% of the adoptees from the file review and from the numbers who participated directly, resided in the area served by Child & Family Services. 63 or 72.4% of adoptees' requests came to the agency via telephone and office interview. This places a heavy demand on the intake department and the post-adoption service worker at the Agency. Considering these statistics plus the heavy file research and written component necessary in this service, all these factors need to be assessed in planning a valid, effective and responsive program.

Finally, good record keeping is an essential component in the provision of this service. Records need to be complete and to contain the information relevant to the major issues pertaining to the adoptee's request. Further, the records on the adoptee's biological parents need to be complete, detailed and able to provide the information the adoptee will eventually need. If the legal and social services institutions are going to continue to hold the legal and moral authority in the lives of triad members, then the professionals involved must gather full biological information and must see that it is consistently, accurately and fully recorded.

In concluding, Kirk's (1981) Shared Fate Theory has been a stimulus to adoption practices. As post-adoption services expand and develop, there appears to be an increasing validation of the questions and concerns expressed by adoptees about their biological family. The struggle and search of the adoptees who participated in this practicum for the truth about their genealogy have contributed greatly to the author's knowledge about the whole field of adoption, about pregnancy and birth parent services, and about human needs. Kirk was very clear that building a family biologically is not equatable to building a family by adoption. We must then agree with Klibanoff (1977) who says that adoptees are to a varying degree curious about that which is common to the majority of society, their genealogy.

C. Recommendations

The following recommendations address not only the post-adoption program but have implications for the adoption and pregnancy and birth parent counselling service.

(1) It is recommended that adoption be considered a life long process for all members of the triad. To this end, there needs to be clear guidelines for agencies regarding their respective roles in the adoption, pregnancy and birth parent counselling and post-legal adoption services. Agency policy and practice should reflect the conviction that any member of the adoption triad has a right to service with respect to adoptive issues particular to their situation.

(2) The recognition that adoptive kinship is not the same as consanguineous kinship should be reinforced in the adoption and pregnancy and birth parent counselling service. A major outcome should be the promotion of more open sharing and honesty between adoptive parents and adoptees regarding the biological family.

(3) Full and comprehensive biological histories should be available on the record of each child in agency care. These histories should appear on the record in a clear, complete and prescribed manner. The histories should be dated, signed by the author and there should be a statement on this record as to the source of the information.

(4) It is recommended that a full detailed non-identifying history on the biological family be given to the adopting parents before the adoption order is issued. It should be imparted in a

clear prescribed manner with a copy retained for the records, including the adoptee's file. This procedure should be fully discussed with the adopting parents during their homestudy and they may require assistance in this matter over the course of the time, i.e. counselling, self-help groups.

(5) There should be clear guidelines set up as to pertinent information to be contained in the child's biological history.

(6) A standardized recording format is necessary for post-adoption files.

(7) Policy and practice in the adoption program should reflect the value in adoptee's biological histories being kept current with information critical to members of the triad such as health data and other significant life events. There should be a standard practice to the dissemination of such information to members of the adoption triad.

(8) Provincial guidelines and the waiting period for adoptees regarding outreaches to their biological parents needs to be addressed. These guidelines need to be reassessed with some consideration for adoptees whose biological parents are in the older age categories.

(9) The provincial government has a responsibility and commitment to provide funds to agencies in support of the provision of post-adoption services, these services being clearly defined in the Child and Family Services Act.

(10) It is recommended that Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba consider a longitudinal study involving those adoptees who have had a reunion. The purpose of such a study

would be to determine the specific outcomes of post-adoption reunions over time.

The historical view of adoption as a simple solution to three of society's perplexing problems is no longer valid. This solution, and the secretiveness in the adoption process seems to have created complex problems for not only the adoptee, but as well the other triad members. The movement to more openness and honesty in adoption has created a demand for post-adoption services. This service will need to be flexible and able to adapt to the complex needs of all triad members. Dukette (1982) indicates that legal practices have been slow in keeping pace with the changing times. She stresses the importance of rethinking our values and supporting the movement to openly acknowledging genealogy in constructive ways.

APPENDIX I

POST-ADOPTION QUESTIONNAIRE

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Client's Number _____
2. Date of Intake _____
3. Sex
 - (a) _____ male
 - (b) _____ female
4. Age in years _____
5. Marital status
 - (a) _____ single
 - (b) _____ married
 - (c) _____ common-law
 - (d) _____ widowed
 - (e) _____ divorced/separated
 - (f) _____ unable to determine (Explain _____)

6. Address
 - (a) _____ Brandon
 - (b) _____ Rural Westman
 - (c) _____ Other parts of Manitoba
 - (d) _____ Out of Manitoba
 - (e) _____ Out of Canada
7. Type of first contact with Agency
 - (a) _____ telephone
 - (b) _____ letter
 - (c) _____ office interview
 - (d) _____ request for service through another agency or department
8. Age when placed for adoption
 - (a) _____ under 6 weeks
 - (b) _____ 6 weeks to 6 months

(continued on following page)

8. Age when placed for adoption (continued)

- (c) _____ 6 months to 1 year
 (d) _____ 1 year to 2 years
 (e) _____ over 2 years
 (f) _____ not known (Explain _____

9. Nature of Request

- (a) _____ non-identifying information from the file
 (b) _____ to provide updated information for the file
 (c) _____ to retrieve medical information only
 (d) _____ counselling (Explain _____

 (e) _____ to request any current information available
 (f) _____ assistance in making contact with birth mother
 (g) _____ assistance in making contact with birth father
 (h) _____ assistance in making contact with biological siblings
 (i) _____ other (Specify _____

10. Number of previous requests for post-adoption service

- (a) _____ one previous request
 (b) _____ more than one previous request
 (c) _____ none
 (d) _____ other (Explain _____

11. Are adoptive parents aware of this request for service?

- (a) _____ yes, both adoptive parents know
 (b) _____ no, adoptive parents are not aware
 (c) _____ only adoptive mother knows
 (d) _____ only adoptive father knows
 (e) _____ only other adoptive relatives know
 (f) _____ adoptive mother deceased
 (g) _____ adoptive father deceased
 (h) _____ not known (Explain _____

12. If adoptive parents are aware of this request for service, do they approve?
- (a) _____ yes, they both approve
- (b) _____ no, they both do not approve
- (c) _____ only the adoptive mother approves
- (d) _____ only the adoptive father approves
- (e) _____ no information available (Explain) _____

- (f) _____ other _____
13. What triggered request for service?
- (a) _____ a need to know
- (b) _____ birth of a child
- (c) _____ need for medical information
- (d) _____ marriage
- (e) _____ death of adoptive parent(s)
- (f) _____ curiosity
- (g) _____ not known
- (h) _____ other (Specify) _____

14. How would you describe the relationship with your adoptive parents now (or the adoptive experience)?
- (a) _____ poor
- (b) _____ satisfactory
- (c) _____ very satisfactory
- (d) _____ no information available (Explain) _____

15. How would you describe the relationship with your adoptive parents when you were growing up?
- (a) _____ poor
- (b) _____ satisfactory
- (c) _____ very satisfactory
- (d) _____ no information available (Explain) _____

16. Was the subject of adoption something you could discuss with your parents?
- (a) _____ freely
- (b) _____ occasionally

(continued on following page)

16. Was the subject of adoption something you could discuss with your parents?
(continued)

(c) _____ only very carefully

(d) _____ not at all

(e) _____ other (Explain) _____

17. How much information did you have on your family of birth when you were growing up?

(a) _____ all the information my adoptive parents had

(b) _____ all the information I wanted

(c) _____ most of the information I wanted

(d) _____ some of the information I wanted

(e) _____ none of the information I wanted

(f) _____ other (Explain) _____

18. Length of time it took to respond to request for service

(a) _____ under one week

(b) _____ under one month

(c) _____ from one to three months

(d) _____ over three months

(e) _____ other (Explain) _____

19. Was client's request able to be met?

(a) _____ yes

(b) _____ no (Specify why not) _____

(c) _____ other _____

20. What advice would you give prospective adoptive parents based on your experience as an adopted person? _____

21. What additional comments would you like to make? _____

APPENDIX II

INTERVENTION-CASE ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

INTERVENTION - CASE ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING FORMAT

Client's Name:

Birthdate:

Address:

Marital Status:

Children:

Occupation:

Initial Intake:

Description of Request for Service:

Physical Description of Client:

Adoption Experience:

- (a) Describe relationship with adoptive parents now and while growing up. Include relationship with siblings.
- (b) Describe client's knowledge of her adoption, its completeness or lack of, and how and when this information was shared with her.
- (c) What do adoptive parents know of client's post-adoption request? What is their reaction? How does this impact on client?

Motivating Circumstances Re Request for Service:

- (a) Why is the request being made?
- (b) Is there any significance to the timing?

Documentation and Procedural Steps Re Legislation:

Significant Issues and Concerns:

- (a) For client.
- (b) For worker.

Post-Reunion Evaluation:

- (1) Impact on client's life (changes, adjustments, complications)
 - (a) Immediately after reunion
 - (b) In time.
- (2) What is the nature of the relationship
 - (a) With birth mother?
 - (b) Her family?
- (3) Effect on the adoptive family (change, adjustments).
- (4) If married, what has the effect been with spouse and children?

APPENDIX III

REGISTRATION BY ADOPTED ADULT

FORM: PAR-1

Registration by Adopted Adult

MANITOBA POST-ADOPTION REGISTRY
The Child and Family Services Act

Manitoba
Community
Services

Services
communautaires
Manitoba



FORMULE : RRSÀ-1

Enregistrement par un adulte adopté

REGISTRE DES RENSEIGNEMENTS OBTENUS SUITE À L'ADOPTION (MANITOBA)
Loi sur les services à l'enfant et à la famille

I/Je, soussigné(e) _____, of the/du (de la) _____
of/de _____, in/dans la province d _____, do hereby declare as follows:/
déclare ce qui suit :

1. I am the full age of eighteen years and I was born on the/J'ai atteint l'âge de dix-huit ans révolus et je suis né(e) le _____
day of/jour de _____, 19__.
2. My name by adoption is/Mon nom d'adoption est _____,
and I was adopted by/et j'ai été adopté(e) par _____ and/et
_____ of the/du (de la) _____ of/de
_____, in/dans la province d _____.
3. To the best of my knowledge I was placed with my adoptive parent(s) on or about the/Autant que je sache, j'ai
été confié(e) à mes parents adoptifs le _____ day of/jour de _____, 19__, by/par
_____.
4. This registration represents my request to the Director of Child and Family Services, Province of Manitoba, to register my
desire to share identifying information/have personal contact with the following person(s):/
Le présent enregistrement constitue une demande que je dépose auprès du Directeur des services à l'enfant et à la famille le
prieant de consigner mon intention d'échanger des renseignements signalétiques ou d'avoir des contacts personnels avec les
personnes suivantes :

5. **I do/do not want the Director to carry out an active search on my behalf for my/Je demande au Directeur d'entreprendre (de
ne pas entreprendre) une recherche active en mon nom afin de retrouver la personne suivante :**

6. I hereby acknowledge and accept that the sharing of identifying information or personal contact will not occur unless
all registered parties have indicated on a prescribed form their desire to share identifying information or to have
personal contact./
J'accepte qu'aucun échange de renseignements signalétiques ni aucun contact personnel ne puisse avoir lieu si toutes les
personnes inscrites n'ont pas fait connaître, en remplissant la formule prescrite, leur intention d'échanger des renseignements
signalétiques ou d'avoir des contacts personnels.

Declared before me at the/Déclaré devant moi dans le (la) _____

of/de _____,
in the Province of/dans la province d _____,
this/le _____ day of/jour de _____ 19__.

Signature/signature

Address/adresse

Postal Code/code postal

Phone No.(s)/n° de téléphone

A Barrister-at-law, or a Notary Public, or a Commissioner for Oaths./
Avocat, notaire public ou commissaire à l'assermentation

My Commission expires/Fin de mon mandat _____

White — The Director
Blue — The Registrant
Yellow — The Agency
MG-8182 (Rev. 87)

Exemplaire blanc réservé au Directeur
Exemplaire bleu réservé au requérant
Exemplaire jaune réservé à l'office

APPENDIX IV

CLIENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE

THE CLIENT SATISFACTION QUESTIONNAIRE (CSQ)

Please help us improve our program by answering some questions about the services you have received. We are interested in your honest opinions, whether they are positive or negative. Please answer all of the questions. We also welcome your comments and suggestions. Thank you very much; we appreciate your help.

CIRCLE YOUR ANSWER

1. How would you rate the quality of service you received?

4	3	2	1
Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor

2. Did you get the kind of service you wanted?

4	3	2	1
No, definitely not	No, not really	Yes, generally	Yes, definitely

3. To what extent has our program met your needs?

4	3	2	1
Almost all of my needs have been met	Most of my needs have been met	Only a few of my needs have been met	None of my needs have been met

4. If a friend were in need of similar help, would you recommend our program to him/her?

4	3	2	1
No, definitely not	No, I don't so	Yes, I think so	Yes, definitely

5. How satisfied are you with the amount of help you received?

4	3	2	1
Quite dissatisfied	Indifferent or mildly dissatisfied	Mostly satisfied	Very Satisfied

6. In an overall, general sense, how satisfied are you with the service you received?

4	3	2	1
Very satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Indifferent or mildly dissatisfied	Quite dissatisfied

7. If you were to seek help again in this area, would you come back to our program?

4	3	2	1
No, definitely not	No, I don't think so	Yes, I think so	Yes, definitely

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

APPENDIX V

REQUEST BY AN ADULT FOR INFORMATION

FROM HIS OR HER OWN RECORD

The Child and Family Services Act

REQUEST BY AN ADULT FOR INFORMATION
FROM HIS OR HER OWN RECORD

1. I _____
(First, Middle and Last Name)

_____ of _____
(Occupation) (Street Address)

in _____, _____, do hereby declare that
(City/Town) (Province)

I am the full age of eighteen years or over and that my birthdate is _____
_____.

2. That this represents my request to the Director of Child and Family Services,
Province of Manitoba or the Director 's delegate for the following information:

3. That to the best of my knowledge services were provided at _____
(Name of Agency)
of _____ from _____ to _____
(Address) (Date) (Date)

4. I give my permission for the agency to obtain information from another child
and family services agency where necessary.

5. I agree to abide by the decision of the Director of Child and Family Services
or the Director's delegate and to permit the presence of a social worker when
the record is being examined, if required.

Signature

Phone Number

Witness

Date

FOR WORKER ONLY: Indicate how identity was confirmed.

APPENDIX VI

TABLES OF DATA

1 - 7

TABLE 1

MARITAL STATUS OF ADOPTEES

Marital Status	Per Cent
Single	39.7
Married	43.6
Common-law	1.3
Widowed	1.3
Separated	2.6
Unknown	<u>11.5</u>
TOTAL	100.0
	(n=78)

TABLE 2

ADDRESS OF THE ADOPTEES

Location	Per Cent
Brandon	35.9
Rural Western Manitoba	30.8
Other Parts of Manitoba	12.8
Out of Manitoba	17.9
Out of Canada	<u>2.6</u>
TOTAL	100.0
	(n=78)

TABLE 3

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO CONTACTBIRTH MOTHER BY NEED TO KNOW

		Need to Know		
		No	Yes	
Contact Birth Mother	No	25	3	
		89.3	10.7	28
		36.8	30.0	35.9
		32.1	3.8	
Yes	Yes	43	7	
		86.0	14.0	50
		63.2	70.0	64.1
		55.5	9.0	
n =		68	10	= 78
		87.2	12.8	100.0

TABLE 4

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO CONTACTBIRTH FATHER BY NEED TO KNOW

Contact Birth Father

Need To Know

		No	Yes	
No		29	.6	
		82.9	17.1	35
		42.6	60.0	44.9
		37.2	7.7	
Yes		39	4	
		90.7	9.3	43
		57.4	40.0	55.1
		50.0	5.1	
n =		68	10	= 78
		87.2	12.8	100.0

TABLE 5

REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO CONTACTBIRTH SIBLINGS BY NEED TO KNOW

Contact Birth Siblings

Need to Know

		No	Yes	
No		45	8	
		84.9	15.1	53
		66.2	80.0	67.9
		57.7	10.3	
Yes		23	2	
		92.0	8.0	25
		33.8	20.0	32.1
		29.5	2.6	
n =		68	10	= 78
		87.2	12.8	100.0

TABLE 6

ARE ADOPTIVE PARENTS AWARE OF

REQUEST BY AGE OF ADOPTEE

Awareness	Age				
	Less than 20	20-25	26-35	36+	
Both Parents Aware		3 75.0 100.0 33.3	1 25.0 50.0 11.1		4 44.4
Both Parents Unaware	2 66.7 100.0 22.2			1 33.3 50.0 11.1	3 33.3
Only Mother Knows Father Deceased			1 100.0 50.0 11.1		1 11.1
Only Father Knows Mother Deceased				1 100.0 50.0 11.1	1 11.1
	2	3		2	9
	22.2	33.3	22.2	22.2	100.0

TABLE 7

<u>REQUEST FOR ASSISTANCE TO</u>						
<u>CONTACT BIRTH MOTHER BY AGE OF ADOPTEE</u>						
	20 &	21 -	26 -	31 -	36 &	
Contact	Under	25	30	35	Up	Total
No	17.9	32.1	25.0	14.3	10.7	35.9
Yes	18.0	22.0	26.0	14.0	20.0	64.1
						(n=78)

APPENDIX VII

CASE ILLUSTRATIONS

F - Q

CASE F

The adoptee in this case is a 50 year old married male. He resides in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE F indicated that he wished to have personal contact with his biological mother. He was also interested in what non-identifying background information there would be.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE F indicated he had a mild curiosity about his biological background and as he thought about it, he decided he should try to obtain some information. He indicated he had no details at all on his family of origin. He began to realize that time might be running out for him as his biological mother could be deceased or possibly in very poor health as she was likely now in her 70's.

Adoptive Experience

CASE F's adoptive father is deceased. His adoptive mother suggested at one point that CASE F should try to find out about his biological family. She had received no information to share with him. In spite of her encouragement, CASE F has not advised her of the inquiries he has made.

CASE F described his relationship with his adoptive parents as very satisfactory. He indicated he was able to discuss his

adoption freely with his parents and they told him what they knew about the circumstances of his placement with them.

Areas of Service

CASE F was assisted in registering for personal contact with his biological mother (see Appendix III) and in completing the Authorization for Release of Confidential Information (see Appendix IV). The records were searched for details on CASE F's background but very limited information was available for him. It was explained to CASE F that in the era of his birth, records were often found to be very sketchy and lacking in detail.

Due to CASE F's concern about the age of his biological mother and his wait for an outreach to be done as his mother had not registered for contact with him, the author contacted the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry outlining CASE F's concerns. They were asked to consider expediting his case. They responded this was not possible due to the number of other similar cases and this response was relayed to CASE F.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

The responses of CASE F in all the questions has been the most positive category. CASE F rated the quality of service he received as "excellent". He indicated if he was to seek help again in this area, he would "yes definitely" come back to the post-adoption program. He was "very satisfied" with the amount of help he received and indicated that the program met "almost all of my needs".

CASE F did not write in any additional comments.

CASE_G

CASE G is a single 18 year old female who lives in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba. She resides with her adoptive family.

Request for Service

The adoptee in this case contacted Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba directly indicating she wished to receive as much information on her biological family as possible. She also wished to be able to meet them.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE G indicated that she has known for a long time that she wished to meet her biological parents and that she would try to do something about it. After seeing a local T.V. program about adoption, she sought out the adoptee on the program, asking how to go about getting the help she desired. It was through this means that she learned of the post-adoption service and subsequently contacted the agency.

CASE G describes herself as a deeply curious person who asks lots of questions and has a need to know. The lack of information on her background and her adoptive parents' reticence about dealing with her concerns only served to fuel her desire to find out more about her family of origin. She wishes to find out who she is really like and to let her biological parents know that she is "a good person" and "has turned out okay".

Adoptive Experience

The relationship with adoptive parents is described by CASE G as satisfactory and at times poor. She has found her parents' hesitation and discomfort at handling her questions very difficult to accept. They have wished she would be less inquisitive and more accepting of their attitude, like her other adopted siblings, while she has wished they could recognize her individual and unique desires and needs in this area.

CASE G's family are not aware of her request for post-adoption service. She believes she will likely tell them about her inquiries at some point but she isn't certain when this will be.

Areas of Service

The author assisted CASE G in registering with the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry her desire for contact with her biological mother and father.

CASE G completed the forms allowing for her adoption records to be opened and searched for non-identifying information on her behalf. The author assisted CASE G in this process and compiled her biological history, sharing it with her. CASE G found the information in her biological history "incredible". She could not believe the extent of the information available to her and was delighted to have information on her birth father. She commented on how much her self-esteem would now rise to know that "I didn't result from a one-night stand". CASE G was amazed at the similarities between she and her birth mother and was very

satisfied with this area of information as she said she has always wondered who she looked like. She was also very pleased to read that her parents were high achievers and felt this would further boost her self confidence. CASE G's reaction to her history was a mixture of delight and relief. She was delighted with the extent of the information. She was relieved to receive a history that appeared to her to be so very positive. She said she had read somewhere that a person's life script is determined by your biological parents' history. CASE G agonized over this information and has at times really wondered why she should bother trying to achieve anything. She said the not knowing what was in her background caused her many times to fantasize the worst.

There has been counselling with CASE G in the area of her expectations of a reunion with her biological parents and the possible outcomes. CASE G wishes to satisfy her curiosity and her questions fully through this process and is looking for friendships in her biological family. The concern about the adoptive family's reactions should they find out has been raised with CASE G plus the complications involved should the adoptive family not be advised. This remains an ongoing area to be dealt with by CASE G who is beginning to comprehend fully the task she faces with the adoptive parents and she has been receptive to counselling and support from the author. CASE G feels she will tell her adoptive parents of her post-adoption inquiries but has not decided on the time.

At the time of writing this report, CASE G awaits an outreach to her biological parents to be done on her behalf.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

Client G responded with the most positive score in all categories. The additional comments supported the score results. She rated the service as "excellent" and that she was "very satisfied" with the service she received. She said that "almost all my needs have been met".

The additional comments further indicated CASE G's satisfaction with the service. She said "The one-to-one conversation between myself and the counsellor was incredible. It was good that someone could pick up on your feelings and feel free to discuss it. Having this service makes the experience a lot easier to be dealt with as you can discuss your history with someone and get some feedback".

CASE H

The adoptee in this case is a 29 year old female. She resides in the area served by Child & Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE H indicated that she wished to register for personal contact with her birth parents and adult siblings. She also requested a non-identifying biological history. She had received a history many years ago and was wondering if there was additional information for her.

Areas of Service

CASE H completed a registration form with the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry signifying her desire for contact with her biological mother, father and adult siblings. She also completed an authorization form for release of confidential information. This was her consent for her closed adoption records to be requested, opened and searched for non-identifying information on her behalf.

The author completed CASE H's non-identifying history and presented it to her.

At the time of writing this report, CASE H awaits an outreach to her biological family to be done on her behalf.

CASE I

The adoptee in this case is a married 23 year old male. He resides in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE I wrote the Manitoba Provincial Post-Adoption Registry indicating his desire for information on his biological family. He was subsequently advised that Child and Family Services would be able to assist him with his inquiries. He was contacted by the agency and registered with the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry for personal contact with his biological mother, father and adult biological siblings.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE I indicated that once he began contemplating marriage and sharing his life with someone else, he thought he should know more about his own background. He did not proceed with his inquiries until after his marriage and his wife has been fully supportive of the steps he has taken. He felt that an important piece that has been missing for him has been health history. He has no information on his biological family and is not certain at what age he was placed for adoption.

CASE I's adoptive parents separated when he was quite young and he stayed with his adoptive father who later remarried. He was adopted by his step-mother.

The subject of adoption was not open for discussion at all

in CASE I's family. Since leaving home, CASE I has not maintained contact with his parents and he has not advised them of his post-adoption inquiries.

Areas of Service

The author assisted CASE I in completing his registration for personal contact with his biological family. As well CASE I completed the form for allowing his adoption records to be opened and searched for information on his behalf. The author compiled CASE I's biological history and shared this information with him.

Once CASE I received his biological history, he did not attend the follow-up interview and did not respond to additional attempts by the author to determine if there were any points re clarification about his background information that he requested.

At the time of writing this report, CASE I awaits an outreach to be done on his behalf for his biological family. CASE I is aware that he does have biological siblings and that where age permits, they will be included in the outreach.

CASE J

The adoptee in this case is a married 32 year old female. She resides out of the province of Manitoba but her adoption records are held by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE J wrote the Provincial Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry requesting information on her family of origin and also expressed her desire to meet her family. She was forwarded the appropriate forms for registering for personal contact and was advised that Child and Family Services would be completing her biological history. CASE J subsequently registered with the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry for personal contact with her biological mother and father.

Motivating Circumstances

CASE J had a curiosity about her biological background and a need to have her questions answered about her background. She had limited information when she was growing up about her biological family and her curiosity only served to grow over the years to the point where she wished to meet her birth parents herself.

Adoptive Experience

CASE J described her relationship with her adoptive parents as satisfactory. Her father is now deceased and her mother is

aware and approves of her request for post-adoption service.

CASE J indicated she had to proceed carefully when questioning her adoptive family about her biological background and that it wasn't always a topic she could pursue with them.

Areas of Service

The biological history was compiled by the author and forwarded to CASE J. There was correspondence between CASE J and the author and clarification around procedures was required by CASE J.

At the time of writing this report, CASE J awaits notification from the Provincial Post-Adoption Registry that they are ready to begin an outreach on her behalf.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

The responses by CASE J were mostly positive on the Client Satisfaction Questionnaire. She anxiously awaits a search to be done on her behalf and this need is reflected in some of her responses on the questionnaire. For example when the question was asked as to what extent the program had met her needs, CASE J responded that "only a few of my needs have been met".

CASE J rated the quality of service she received as "good" and that she was "mostly satisfied" with the service she received.

CASE J did not make any additional comments on her questionnaire.

CASE K

CASE K is a 36 year old married female who resides in a province other than Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE K wrote Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba requesting non-identifying information on her biological family. She contacted Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba as her adoptive family lived in the Westman area at the time of the adoption placement and the adoption was finalized through Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Area of Service

CASE K received her non-identifying information on her biological family. It was compiled by the author and forwarded to her by mail. As well, CASE K was advised about the functions of the Manitoba Post-Adoption Registry and she was forwarded the appropriate forms for registering for personal contact with members of her biological family, should she so wish to do so.

At the time of writing this report, there has been no response from CASE K in terms of registering for personal contact.

Client Satisfaction Questionnaire Results

Client K was "mostly satisfied" with the quality of the service she received and if she were to seek help again in this area that "yes, definitely" she would come back to the program.

She indicated in the comment section that she could not comment fully as she still awaited an outreach to be done to her biological parents. She did write that "I am satisfied with your overall program".

CASE L

CASE L is a single 19 year old female who resides in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba. She described her relationship with her adoptive family as being very close. Her parents are aware of her request for post-adoption service and in fact encouraged her to make inquires.

Request for Service

CASE L has requested a detailed non-identifying biological history. She has a hearing loss in one ear and is particularly concerned about her medical history. She would like to have her biological history before she makes a decision about registering for personal contact.

Areas of Service

CASE L was born in a province other than Manitoba. She completed forms signifying her desire for her biological history and they were forwarded to the appropriate province along with a letter outlining CASE L's circumstances and her medical concerns. There has not been a response to this letter at the time of writing this report and a further letter of inquiry has been forwarded to the province in question.

CASE M

CASE M is a married 41 year old female. She resides in Manitoba but not in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba. Her adoptive parents however reside in the area served by the agency.

Request For Service

CASE M requested a non-identifying biological history and also registered for contact with her biological mother and siblings. She was advised by the provincial registry that the records show that she has two biological siblings.

Areas of Service

Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba will be advised when an outreach begins on behalf of CASE M or if any member of her biological family registers for contact before the outreach begins. The agency would only have involvement if information was needed from the adoption file or if contact with the adoptive family was required for some reason.

CASE N

CASE N is a female adoptee who resides in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE N contacted the Provincial Post-Adoption Registry, registering for contact with her biological family. An active outreach by the provincial registry has begun and will be in effect until July of 1988.

Areas of Service

Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba will be notified once CASE N's biological family have been located. If the biological family are interested in meeting CASE N, then it is the responsibility of Child and Family Services to make whatever pre-reunion arrangements are needed. If, however, the biological family do not wish to have personal contact with CASE N, then it is the responsibility of the agency to interpret this information to CASE N. If the biological family have not been located after efforts have been made over the period of a year, the outreach ceases, and this information is to be interpreted to CASE N by the agency.

CASE O

CASE O is a married woman who resides in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE O contacted the Provincial Post-Adoption Registry, registering for contact with her biological family. An active outreach by the provincial registry has begun and will be in effect until July of 1988.

Areas of Service

Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba will be notified once CASE O's biological family have been located. If the biological family are interested in meeting CASE O, then it is the responsibility of Child and Family Services to make whatever arrangements are needed. If, however, the biological family do not wish to have personal contact with CASE O, then it will be the responsibility of the agency to interpret this information to CASE O. If the biological family have not been located after efforts over a period of a year, the outreach ceases and this information as well is to be interpreted to CASE O by the agency.

CASE P

CASE P is a single 21 year old woman who has an infant daughter. She resides in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE P requested non-identifying information on her biological parents and she also registered for personal contact with her biological mother. However, shortly after the registration she failed to respond to efforts to arrange an interview with her.

Areas of Service

CASE P awaits an outreach to be done to her biological mother.

CASE P has not received her non-identifying biological history as she has not responded to efforts made by the author to arrange an interview.

CASE Q

CASE Q is a 37 year old female who resides out of the country. Her adoptive family live in the area served by Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba.

Request for Service

CASE Q contacted the Provincial Post-Adoption Registry, requesting information on her family of origin. As well, she indicated her desire for personal contact with her biological family.

Areas of Service

The provincial registry completed and forwarded to CASE Q her biological history and also assisted her in registering for personal contact with her biological parents and adult siblings. She was later advised of the need to do an outreach for her biological parents and that there was no mention on the record of any siblings.

At the time of writing this report, CASE Q awaits an outreach to be done on her behalf. Child and Family Services of Western Manitoba will be advised, along with CASE Q, once the outreach has begun. The agency's involvement will depend on the results of the outreach.

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