

CORA HUNSE, FLYING NURSE*Fragments of her letter*

In her annual newsletter to her relatives and friends all over the world Cora Hunse [188] tells about her fascinating and remarkable job and her eventful experiences as a nurse and a nurse-trainer far from home. Cora is Canadian. Eldest daughter of Jo Hunse-Somsen [63] and Teun Hunse [68]. She was born in St Catharines, Canada, in 1954. We quote several passages from Cora's letter in which she writes about her international work:

"It is 20 below zero here in Poplar Hill, Ontario, Canada. I am continuing to work here in a fly-in aboriginal community as a nurse practitioner for two to three weeks at a time. It continues to be a challenge but one that I enjoy. I am on call every night but some-times only get woken three times a week. Working with our aboriginal people has its ups and downs. One of the challenges is dealing with the dysfunction of alcohol abuse, inhalers (sniffing gas) and in particular the youth suicides. This is a result of several generations of abuse and loss of culture and heritage.

The joy of seeing this community struggle and overcome some of the great obstacles is very rewarding. It is also wonderful to be a trusted outsider. It has been a growing experience not only clinically but spiritually as well.

The year 2000 was very diverse.

The new millennium began for me in a small church in La Mosquitia in Honduras. I made dear friends there, managed not to get bitten by any of the poisonous snakes or scorpions, and provided health care for indigenous people at a mission hospital there.

I returned to Poplar Hill in the summer and was embraced by the people there. I also was thankful to see that two of my colleagues had become Christians. It was great to be able to give them some encouragement.

This fall I joined a wonderful organization that ministers particularly to poor children. It is called CAREFORCE INTERNATIONAL. (Check out their website www.careforceinternational.org for more information).

They work with aboriginal communities in the Dominican Republic, Burkina Faso, Peru, Romania and Mali.

I am their director of integrated health. I do this on a part-time basis as well as my job in Poplar Hill, Canada.

I went to the Dominican Republic for a short week in the fall to visit old friends and the clinic where I spent two years.

In the summer I bought a house of my own! In the neighbourhood of most of my family and at a 25 minute commute to my new job. It is a three bedroom condo in the town of Beamsville, close to Niagara Falls and Toronto. I take possession at the end of January.

In February 2001 I am going to Mali with a medical team. Mali is the fifth poorest country in the world. The life expectancy is only 44 years.

I hope to start training some health educators in the nine days that I am there. I have ideas on some growth monitoring, rehydration and prevention of diarrheal diseases.

I am looking forward to this new challenge."

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By now we are a few month further on and Cora may be just anywhere. A woman with so much dedication, courage, expertise and faith. Terrific!

We wish Cora strength and inspiration in her nurse care without borders.

Editorial Staff