



## Transformation of Nurses into Fully Committed Followers of **JESUS** Through Witnessing Communities



### From the National Chair

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

It's Christmas time again and you can hear carols playing everywhere you go, homes are decorated with beautiful ornaments of red, green, and many other colours. The atmosphere is generally a happy one even though many people say that shorter days and the colder weather cause some people to feel sad, depressed and lonely this time of year. Besides all the controversies surrounding the celebrations leading up to Christmas day, what do you think Christmas actually means?

John 3:16-17 says, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him". Does this mean that God loves us all I think He does and I think Christmas is a love story. I'm sure you know it, but I just want us to refresh

our memories as to why it is important to celebrate Christmas. The book of Luke starts with the message the angel Gabriel brought to Mary. She joyfully accepts the news and Joseph, although fearful, agrees to follow God's plan. Jesus is born in a stable and the angel brings the message of Good News to the shepherds in the field. When they saw the baby Jesus they shared the Good News with everyone. There was much singing and praising God for this beautiful gift - the promise of the Saviour.

We remember Jesus' birth and celebrate it on Christmas day. Mary and Joseph went through a hard time to fulfill God's purpose. Mary's labour of love brought salvation to the world through Jesus. His birth brought many people from different walks of life together. There was praising and singing again and worshipping God for His promise: "the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

To many, Christmas is a time for gift-

giving and sharing; for gatherings and get-togethers; for remembering loved ones around us as well as those who have passed on; and for some, like me, trips home from faraway places to spend quality time with family and friends. Let us not forget that Christmas is ultimately a time to celebrate Jesus' birth – the reason we have hope for eternal life, faith to believe in miracles, strength to climb any mountain and love that calms all fears. This is the promise that God has given us through His only son. So if you happen to be preoccupied with many burdens this time of year, may the articles in this Christmas edition of NCF Pulse help you to refocus on Christ and free you from the things that are tying you down.

Let's celebrate the birth of Jesus with much singing and praising!

Have a meaningful Christmas & a Christ-centered 2012.

Yours in His service,  
Judith Fanaken

## Peace on Earth



By Betty Hitchcock



*"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee."*

Isaiah 26:3

It is a favourite hymn that we often sing at our NCF meetings, and we often quote that verse, but what does it really mean?

Do you know the peace of God in your life? Real peace that is so deep and so wonderful that it stills the soul as nothing else can. Not a superficial peace; on top of the world's problems, or a peace from the fighting and war in the world. Rather, a peace like no

other: one that comes from God himself; it permeates our whole being and allows us to experience the calm of God in the midst of any earthly situation. It is a peace that only He can give and it is available to each of us now, this very day. It does not depend on what is happening in our lives. We can be in the midst of earthly turmoil, there can be problems and difficulties surrounding us, and still we can have God's peace within.

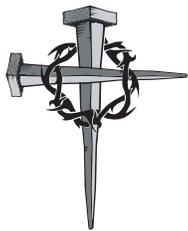
How is that possible? Well, the last half of the verse tells us: "whose mind is stayed on thee". God's perfect peace is available only if our mind is stayed on Him. If our minds are stayed on God, there is no room for negative or evil thoughts, thoughts that can lead us in the wrong direction or cause us anxiety and fear. We can have that perfect peace that only He can give. So when negative thoughts, anxieties, or fears start to enter our minds, we must immediately turn our attention to Him and he will give us what He has promised – that perfect peace. How wonderful and amazing! Jesus is our Prince

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**Have comments or suggestions after reading NCF Pulse?**

**Drop us a line at: [www.ncfcanada.ca](http://www.ncfcanada.ca). We'd love to hear from you!**

# The Challenge of Suffering



By Marilyn Daniels

Suffering hurts! Big time! As we might play with a canker on the tongue, so we mull over the pain we are experiencing to see if it is still as agonizing as the day before. Yes! There it is - as big as ever! Real pain! We pray! We endeavour to find ways to distract ourselves from the pain. We yearn to let go of it, but find ourselves constantly dwelling on the source. We lay the problem at the foot of the cross and then we pick it up again to see if it still hurts. All of this pain saps my strength! Where is God in all of this? Did He not promise to help us go through these traumatic experiences?

The dreaded feeling of being alone often becomes a big part of suffering and pain. We must remember that Jesus suffered alone on the cross - forsaken by the Father because our sin separated them for the first time in the same way as our sin separates us from the Father. What is sin? Let's look again at the problem of playing with the canker on the tongue. Is that not like sin? To keep re-injuring ourselves, by probing and revisiting the situation, when Jesus actually died to set us free? Free from guilt, free from pain, free

**Yet we have been given the gift of suffering so it can be used to bless others...**

from temptation, free to enjoy Him forever! Wow! In the face of all He suffered for us, why are we allowing ourselves to suffer again when the price has already been paid? Isn't it like spitting

in the face of Jesus - informing Him that His sacrifice was not enough? We feel we need to finish the job...and so we persist in toying with the pain. We think about it, we blame ourselves or someone else and in doing so, we continue to be immobilized by our suffering.

Satan laughs! This is exactly where our enemy wants us to be. If rendered useless, what then is the point of our salvation? Certainly the Bible tells us we are saved to be productive, but Satan will employ every possible art to prevent that from happening. Play with the pain and toy with the canker! Drain your energy!

2 The danger is for some folks that pain becomes their identity. Hard

to believe isn't it? Do they really think it will attract genuine sympathy to be so focused on their suffering? Why can't they move beyond the hurt and the memories of the trauma? Why can't they release themselves, or allow God to release them from their ever-present pain? The most certain road to loneliness is to be so bound by our pain that we cannot see beyond our suffering to that of others. Yet we have been given the gift of suffering so it can be used to bless others, once we get it into perspective: God's perspective! 2 Corinthians 1:3-4.

We worship an awesome God! Some have testified, "Thank you Lord for allowing me the privilege of this experience so that You can use it to help others". "My divorce: an unthinkable thing for Christians to go through, yet You walked with me!", "Praise God for release from the guilty feelings over the abortion I had when I was young", "Thank you God that when I was so

**We worship an awesome God!**

terrified someone would find out about my secret life, the gossip with which I ruined someone else's reputation, You turned it around to show me Your love through their love and forgiveness!"

If God truly means for me to reproduce, to disciple others who are coming to faith in Jesus Christ, how can I let go of me and reach out to them? Satan taunts me with his lies, reminding me of how I sin and how I continually miss the mark and of how I am not good enough to serve God. Thankfully the Bible does not dictate that we need to reach perfection in order to reach others with His love. That love with which we have been so blessed is there, ready to flow through us when we empty the channel of self and allow God to prove His righteousness in us is sufficient to accomplish His magnificent purposes!

God wants to validate His life in us - to make us real. Only as we surrender our pride and self-centeredness to Christ can we experience the joy of knowing His power to win over the challenges of suffering, and the passion to pursue that same victory for others.

*Marilyn Daniels is a retired nurse and the Mission Coordinator for MATE/FCC. She is actively engaged in women's ministry and counselling.*



## The Mystery of God

By Ruth Copland

***"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ."***

2 Corinthians 1:3-4 NRSV

Think back over the last few months and ask God to bring to your mind to the places of suffering in your own life. Perhaps you are facing some losses: job changes, aging, relationship changes, or financial challenges. You may be experiencing physical, emotional or spiritual pain yourself and/or you may be accompanying patients, family members or friends who are suffering. How has God the Father, our Lord Jesus and his Holy Spirit (called the Comforter in the gospel of John) been with you in your suffering? How does it look and feel to be consoled by God the Trinity? Take time to be with God there.

The best discovery I made while researching for my D Min. was a greater awareness of the Trinity. I was especially moved by how

the sufferings of Christ and the consolation of the Trinity are abundant for us today. It amazes me to realize that while Jesus was rejected, abandoned, murdered and then spent significant time in hell, the Trinity did not fall apart. The Father suffered the separation from His Son while the Spirit in mysterious ways battled, suffered and raised Jesus from the dead. We struggle with the mystery that God, who is the source of all life and holiness, experienced death and took on all the evil of the world. We struggle with the three unique persons of the Trinity and the space between them to mutually give to and receive from one another while at the same time being fully unified. While I

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# Called to Care



Suffering is inherent to the human condition. Biblical history reveals that it is a consequence of Adam and Eve's disobedience and their subsequent fall from God's gracious presence (Genesis 3:19). Since the fall, all creation has suffered to one extent or another. Believers are not exempt. Sometimes suffering can be attributed to the work of Satan. When Jesus healed the crippled woman, He defended healing her on the Sabbath by asking, "Wasn't it necessary for me, even on the Sabbath day, to free this dear woman from the bondage in which Satan has held her for eighteen years?" (Luke 13:16). At other times, however, we contribute to our own suffering by our choices—such as little or no exercise, poor eating habits, not enough sleep, and substance abuse, even failing to consult early when we have unwanted physical signs and symptoms etc.

Jesus' parable of the weeds reminds us of the work of the enemy who planted weeds among sown seeds. When the servants inquired where the weeds came from, he

By Pauline Martin

exclaimed, "The enemy has done it." The servants then asked if they should pull out the weeds. The farmer replied, "Let both grow until the harvest"—the wheat (believers and the weeds (non-believers) must live side by side (Matthew 13: 24-29).

In his book *Where is God When it Hurts?* Philip Yancey (1990) wrote, "Suffering offers a general message of warning to all humanity that something is wrong with the planet, and that we need radical outside intervention.... But you cannot argue backward and link someone's specific pain to a direct act of God" (p.84).

Nurses are in the strategic position to encounter and care for people who are experiencing suffering of one kind or another, be it physical, emotional, or spiritual. We offer care and support to people who are broken, hurting and weak, frightened, confused, and sometimes angry. We are trained to care, to work to relieve suffering and nurse people to wellness. However, we as carers are not immune from sufferings in this broken world and bear our own share. Oswald Chambers challenges us to give ourselves fully to God. He wrote, "If you are going to be used by God, He will take you through a number of experiences that are

not meant for you personally at all. They are designed to make you useful in his hands and enable you to understand what takes place in the lives of others" (*His Utmost for His Highest*).

When we as believers are in the throes of suffering we often wonder why God allows his children to go through difficult and trying, painful times. We are not aware of, nor do we understand God's purpose beforehand. We go through our pain and suffering in darkness.

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## The Mystery of God



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don't understand these mysteries I find great comfort in knowing that what I am suffering right now, Christ has already suffered (Hebrews 4:15) and was held in the loving care of the Father and Spirit through it all. To access this consolation I come honestly before God, in Christ and through the Spirit, with all my emotions of sadness, anger, powerlessness, fear, longing, hope, anguish and despair. I find they are not shocked or afraid of my outbursts and they are well experienced to eventually "draw me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock." (Psalm 40:2). The best mentors in suffering I have found are those who trust this process. They are not afraid to witness all my feelings in the presence of God without trying to fix it, and in quiet peace, point me back to Jesus.

Paul's words to the Corinthians at the beginning of this article remind us that we can mentor others in suffering through what we ourselves have experienced. I used to think that meant practically that if I suffer divorce then I can help others going through divorce by telling them how I found comfort. That may be of some help but a

closer reading of the passage reminds us that consolation is from God through Christ. As we nurses come to know God more truly in our sufferings, may God equip us to stand with love, faith and peace beside those who suffer and point them to our Friend, the source of all consolation.

Ruth Copland (PhD) is the IVCF Director of Spiritual Formation and Prayer Ministry.



## Peace on Earth



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of Peace. It is as simple and as profound as that. We do not have to be burdened with negative thoughts. God wants us to be joyful at all times, and he has provided the way. If we turn our thoughts to Him, he will take care of the rest. We do not need to carry those burdens. He doesn't want us to labour under them, but be free to experience all the wonderful things He has for us in this life. So, turn your eyes to Him, turn your mind to Him, "He is" and that is enough for me.

## Season of Prayer

He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men; yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

*Ecclesiastes 3:11, (NIV)*

For today in the city of David, there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

*Luke 2:11, (NIV)*

Seek GOD while he's here to be found,  
Pray to him while he's close at hand.  
Let the wicked abandon their way of life and the evil their way of thinking.  
Let them come back to GOD, who is merciful, come back to our God, who is lavish with forgiveness.

*Isaiah 55:6-7 (NIV)*

Jesus said, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep."

*John 10:11 (NIV)*

Betty Hitchcock spent 20 years as a nursing educator before working 20 years with Big Brothers and Big Sisters. She is now retired and remains as active in NCF today as in her student



days. Besides serving on the Atlantic NCF Committee she also produces their newsletter "The Link" four times a year.



However, it is through suffering that we grow. We read in the letter of Epistle of James, "My brothers and sisters, when trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow. So let it grow, for when your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything (James, 1:2-3, New Living Translation Bible).

Another reference to the value of our suffering as believers can be found in Romans 5: 1-5: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have access by faith into this grace in which we stand and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. And not only, but we glory in tribulations, knowing that tribulation produces perseverance and perseverance character and character hope. Now hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who was given to us patience."

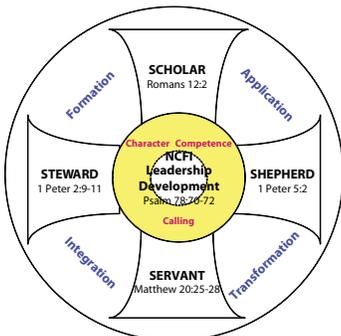
Regardless of the source, our suffering can be regarded as experiences that call on us to exercise faith in God. We need to continue trusting even when we do not understand, and even when we are ready to crumble, our true faith perseveres and thus holds on because God is faithful He promises to "work out everything for good to those whose who love God and are called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28).

Pauline Martin (RN, BA, MA) works as a counsellor and currently serves as the Interim Chair of Quebec NCF.



Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) is a professional organization comprised of National NCFs, a ministry organization that links Christian nurses in many countries around the world.

NCFI Members developed a nursing leadership model, using Jesus as the role model, and launched a four-year program at the 2008 NCFI quadrennial conference in Jos, Nigeria. A leadership team was appointed to develop the curriculum based on the model's key spokes. These include:



# Returning to Haiti

By Sharon Tracy



"The best thing ever is investing yourself into the life of another". These were the words of Haiti Arise Ministries founder, Marc Honorat, as he shared with our medical team shortly after we returned home. Still fresh in mind are thoughts of patients we had invested in who had heartbreaking stories of injury, abandonment and tragic life circumstances. With very little materially and often barely enough food to live on, they were grateful for the medical and physical help we offered. I am reminded that it is "more blessed to give than to receive" as we come back home to Canada; we are so blessed that we can give. Our lives are forever changed as we saw how stoically the people there accepted our help, all the while knowing that if they lived in Canada, they could receive everything they need. It was extremely

difficult to give a mother medicine for her 12 year old son who was dying and in need of heart surgery, knowing that in all likelihood he would die because that is not available in Haiti.

When the disciples saw the masses of people that needed to be fed, Jesus told them "to feed them". They immediately thought it impossible. However, Jesus knew He would supply all that was needed and just wanted the disciples to distribute it. Such a parallel with what we did in Haiti. The need is so great but as we make ourselves available, God will supply needs and we have the privilege of being a part in this work. In March 2012, Saskatchewan NCF will take another medical team back to Haiti to hold another clinic. We trust that God will use us to minister to those in need, and more importantly, to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Sharon Tracy is the Chair of Saskatchewan NCF. Partnering with Haiti Arise, she coordinated a medical team from Canada to Haiti last year to minister to the needy.



# International Program in Leadership Development

By Hope Graham

Phyllis Ferrier, Fronica Yiu, and I are currently in year three of this program. We hold Skype teleconferences almost every month, prior to which reading the next section(s) of the syllabus along with associated Scripture and website(s) is a must. We pray together, share insights, and discuss how the readings and Scripture relate to our respective praxes.

For those interested in future NCFI leadership opportunities, here are some of the subtopics we have discussed so far:

- Reflection of personal leadership styles in comparison to that of Jesus; identifying areas for learning, growth and change of behaviour
- Biblical accounts and qualities of followership
- The role of the Shepherd: encouraging, guiding, setting clear objectives, and providing opportunities for development
- Mentorship, as seen in Jesus and other Biblical examples

As I write this, I am reminded of my profound appreciation of the leadership of my international NCF colleagues who dreamed and worked together to offer this stimulating and challenging program. Not only do I look forward to my personal preparation for the syllabus provided by NCFI, but I find our monthly prayer together and conversations spiritually nourishing.

Hope Graham is part of the nursing faculty at St. Francis Xavier University in Nova Scotia. She is an NCFI Board member representing Canada, and is active in mentoring younger nurses.



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