

Greetings from the NCFC Board

Nurses Christian Fellowship Canada and many nurses in British Columbia have been praying for NCFC leadership in BC since Elizabeth Obiri-Darko's retirement and the ensuing dissolution of her committee. We praise God for His faithfulness and provision of our new Chair, Herdis Cownden. She is the fruit of our prayers! Herdis has been obedient to the call in stepping up to take on this role in BC. We

are thrilled to introduce her here to all our members across Canada.

In this edition, we also share with you Essie Golokuma's great inspiration from God. Her words reconfirm that each and every one of us is special to God. It's a beautiful read.

This Easter, may the power of Jesus' resurrection

come upon us to show how much He loves us and incentivizes us to serve Him.

For His unfailing love for us is powerful; the Lord's faithfulness endures forever. Praise the Lord.

Psalm 117:2 (NLT)

My Life in Christ



My name is Herdis Cownden. I live in the beautiful city of Victoria in British Columbia. It has been my home basically for all my life.

My husband is in the restaurant, food and hospitality business. His career

has always focused in this area and it's his passion. He has been thankful that numerous occasions he has been able to use his expertise for Christian ministry opportunities.

We have two married daughters. One lives in town and is blessed with 5 wonderful children. The other lives in North Carolina and is blessed with 3 beautiful children.

We love the role of being grandparents. Over and over again, we are reminded of the heritage children and grandchildren are.

Ministry Life

Through the years the Lord has opened doors in an assortment of ways to use me. It has been humbling as my own feelings of inadequacy can override the call of God. He has taken me, the personal crises, suffering and challenges I've encountered, and

allowed me to journey along with others who share similar episodes in their life. Isn't that how God often works? As the Apostle Paul says, "Bear one another's burdens."

There have been Church opportunities that I, at times with my husband have engaged in. This has ranged from leadership, programs, camp work, and mentoring. It has been rewarding, stretched us in our own faith walk and filled us with purpose to be able to use the gifts God has instilled in us.

Professional Life

I graduated with my RN in 1979 and a few years later carried on with my BScN. I moved to Edinburgh, Scotland after having enrolled in a one-year course in Critical Care nursing. It was a fabulous experience. As my career progressed, I continued enrolling in various certificate courses as they related to my nursing positions and practice. I always envisioned continuing my formal education but other demands in my life took priority. I will admit that at times there is tug on my heart to go back to school. But as it often said, "practical experience is at times the best educational experience."

Nursing Career History

I have always appreciated the fact that our profession is unique because it provides options to choose jobs with many different focuses. This ranges from a wide scope of clinical areas in

bedside nursing, research, education, acute care, long-term care, palliative care, community-based practice, technology, administration and so on.

Initially I worked in acute care on medical/surgical units, neurology/neurosurgical. From there I transferred to critical care nursing for a few years. I was passionate caring for the critically ill and at the same time providing support to loved ones who had been launched into a period of crises. Over the coming years, I pursued administrative positions. This included working as a Patient Care Manager in acute care, establishing Regional Clinical Centres of Expertise (specifically in Neurosciences), being involved in strategic development initiatives, engaging in educational and teaching opportunities, and coordinating an Essential Service Plan between non-contract and contract employees. This project was in preparation for potential strikes and particularly rewarding as agreements could be established in cooperative and non-confrontational manners.

My most recent position involved developing and managing a Regional Bed Utilization program. The hospitals I worked in provided Primary, Secondary and Tertiary care for our province. Coordinating a plan was a daily priority. Our mission was to "Ensure the right care, for right patient and the right time." There was a continuous demand given our stretched health care systems.



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My Life in Christ

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A few years in, I encountered a significant personal health crisis that was critical in nature. It resulted in the end of my career and was very much unexpected. At times it still causes me to feel that it is "unfinished work."

Nurses Christian Fellowship Canada

As I my health restored, I began to explore the Nurses Christian Fellowship Canada organization. I was motivated to learn what their purpose was and their role in the lives of nurses. Their mission statement strongly resonated with my own heart – "Existing to engage, equip, educate and empower nurses in Christ."

I began to learn more about their purpose and look into connecting with NCFC. At this time I began conversations to explore opportunities for my involvement. I attended the AGM in May, 2019. I was impressed by the depth of spirituality and commitment of the Board and National Committee members who individually and collectively desired to exist as a vibrant ministry caring for nurses across our country.

I prayerfully considered my involvement and made the decision to take the lead as Chair for the BC province. I started this role in October 2019. It is very much a pioneering role within our Province which certainly adds a degree of excitement.

I have since participated in a number of events that have allowed me the opportunity to meet nurses and other medical professionals from a variety of backgrounds. There were major themes that I gathered: the majority of nurses I met were

unaware of NCFC; nurses today are confronted with an increasing number of ethical issues; they are stressed and burned out; some deal with employment uncertainties, and many have a desire to connect with other Christian nurses. There was also a strong need for education and learning – many nurses I spoke to wanted to find out how to integrate their faith and practice and how to cope and manage issues that compromised their faith-based perspectives.

I have contemplated what my next steps should be. I would like to: look into the avenues we could take to create stronger awareness of NCFC across BC, create a "Needs Assessment" to mail out to nurses to gather information within the next few weeks, compile the collected feedback to inform what tools would be helpful to support Christian nurses in the workplace, determine the role retired nurses could play in the lives of currently practicing nurses, and leverage these steps as guides on how we can proceed further.

I believe a supportive network is valuable. Although we come from different places, we have a shared experience that enables us to be a great strength to each other.

I do want to make mention of the current Pandemic crisis that we globally and personally find ourselves in. Many nurses are working in very stressful environments, stretched to the limit, anxious over their own exposure to Covid-19 and carrying a great personal cost as they are separated from their loved ones to provide care for others. We are in unprecedented times. Many of the promises God has left us with, more than ever, we need to claim them many times a day.

A couple of weeks ago, my husband and I were

with our grandchildren, two boys, a 10-year old and an 8-year-old, eager on a conversation with us. "Bestamor (that's what they call me) and Bubba, have you heard of the Coronavirus? Because you know what it may mean? Jesus said in the Bible before He comes for us, there will be diseases all over the world. And this is what's happening. And also there will be earthquakes, floods and other terrible things happening. It might mean that we won't even get to your house because Jesus will come back!!!"

I love how profoundly children speak truth, believe it, and live it.

I'm also reminded of a precious moment I experienced just prior to my mother's passing. It is a treasure God in His loving kindness gave our family.

It was Mom's last days. She began to weep uncontrollably. It was hard to understand her. I drew near to her ear and said, "Mom, what is it? What's troubling you?" She replied, "He is too beautiful. Jesus, my Saviour, He is too beautiful. I saw His face. I cannot take it in."

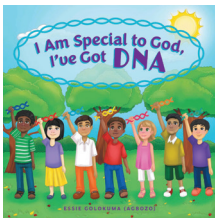
And so dear fellow Christian nurses, that it what we have to look forward to. When Jesus returns and as we gaze at His face and bow at His knee. He will be beautiful to look upon. For me, it fills me unspeakable joy. and yet it fills me with a deep solemnness as I think upon loved ones and friends who are not ready.

**The Lord bless you and keep you,
The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious unto you;**

**The Lord lift up His countenance
upon you,
And give you peace.**

My continued prayers and rich blessings for us all.

Yes, I Am Special!



By Essie Golokuma

My curiosity was piqued when I was fingerprinted at an airport flying out of Africa. I started reading up on the uniqueness of our DNA and fingerprints.

My research clarified two things for me and led me to write a children's book titled, *I am special to God, I've got DNA*. First, the research validates us as parents and grandparents when we tell our children they are special or unique. Second, it answers the question that has been nagging me since I was a little girl. I had always wondered about Luke 15:3-7 where a verse describes the shepherd who loses one out of a hundred sheep. He leaves the rest of the ninety-nine sheep in the open country and goes after the one lost sheep. When he

finds it, he returns and celebrates with his friends and neighbours. We are special to God. The one lost sheep was unique, just like the others, and because no other sheep could replace it, the shepherd had to go and find it to bring it back into his fold. What a lovely feeling it is to know you are loved for being you, someone who is irreplaceable and greatly missed if not around.

At a very early age, our children need to hear and believe in their uniqueness and value.

I hope this book will let our children know that science backs up the fact that they are unique and irreplaceable, and that they will be encouraged by it to learn to love themselves and others for who they are. I believe this book should be a valuable part of every family and Christian educator's library in support of their children.

You can purchase this book online from outlets such as Chapters, Amazon or Barnes & Noble. For

bulk orders (of 21+ copies), please contact Friessen press for discounted pricing at 1 (888) 378-6793 or bookstore-sales@friesenpress.com.

**I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made;
your works are wonderful,
I know that full well.**

Psalm 139:14

Essie Golokuma is a registered nurse in Alberta with 25 years of experience. She currently works as a Primary Care Nurse, teaching clients chronic disease management.

We'd love to hear from you

Contact us at www.ncfcanada.ca or nationalchair@ncfcanada.ca

