

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

a Message from the National Chair

I suggest that as you begin reading this edition of *NCF Pulse*, you pause to sing the hymn "Blessed Assurance". Think about the words as you sing it slowly. You will know why as you read further. Now when you have sung the hymn with your eyes closed, maybe with hands lifted up, and/or tears in your eyes, I want you to know that Jesus is watching you as you have just reaffirmed your faith in Him through this hymn. I firmly believe that it is because of Him, that you and I along with the rest of the world have a "story" to tell.

So what is your story today? Is it about the craziness at work; the clients that tested your

patience; or the unfairness of the management? On the flip side, is your story about the kind words from your colleague/friend; the precious time you spent encouraging a patient or parent? Is it the blessings of just having a job, or is it the time you spent alone asking God for His wisdom and grace for the day? What is your story today my friend?

This publication is all about nurses sharing their stories of God and His abounding love; wisdom and grace; nurses who go out to do His work amongst His people while living in a world filled with sorrow, hopelessness, strife and heartache. These stories are shared by nurses who want to encourage you and support you through your nursing career. They want to tell you that God is with you as He himself has promised in Zephaniah 3:17 "The Lord your

God is with you, he is mighty to save. He will take great delight in you, he will quiet you with his love, he will rejoice over you with singing." The purpose of *NCF Pulse* is to tell you that you are not alone! There are many brothers and sisters in Christ who share the same vision and passion that God has placed in your heart. Cheer up and be strong for the Lord God is with you and goes with you! Amen!

Yours in His service,

Judith Fanaken
NCF National Chair



Care to share your story?
I'm here to listen. E-mail
me via the **Connect to
National Chair** link on
www.ncfcanada.ca.

Nurses Caring for Nurses

by Terry Martens

Among my Christmas mail last year was a very special greeting from a friend I had lost touch with. Her comment was priceless: "It's been 40 years since we saw each other, full of joy, sorrow, challenges and growth – and through it all, Emmanuel, God with us, in mercy, grace and love. It has been a rich 40 years!" What a wonderful summation and great tribute to our loving Lord!

She made another comment saying, "what a wonderful time we had at Bloor and St. George. It was the soil for a life of hospitality as we shared our home with so many".

That brought back a flood of memories of the years during which we shared an apartment in Toronto along with a third nurse. We lived within walking distance of most hospitals which had schools of nursing. It had a large

living room, dining room, a cozy fireplace and an open door to everyone for meetings and informal gatherings. We even hosted a weekend retreat for students – they brought their sleeping bags and slept on the floor.

At one point hospitals in Toronto were advertising for nurses from foreign countries. We decided to open our apartment to any who needed a temporary place to stay since we had a spare bedroom. We sent copies of an open letter to Directors of Nursing so we could reach prospective nurses.

The letter acknowledged this offer as part of a Nurses Christian Fellowship initiative to give the invitation some authenticity. Our letter welcomed nurses to Canada, offered them temporary accommodation, and help in settling into Toronto. And so they came! We

had nurses from the U.K., South Africa, Korea, China, etc. It was such a rich experience! Some were Christians and some were not. For all it was an opportunity for us to serve, to love and to offer friendship. It was an expression of our faith in God and gratitude for the ultimate sacrifice Christ paid for us.

Part of the reason this worked was because the people who came were nurses and so were we. I believe there is a very special bond between nurses because of the work we do. We involve ourselves personally in life and death situations as we give to those who suffer loss, pain, trauma, and disability. Whether the situation is life threatening or not, there are elements in every illness that present fear and loss. In it all there is an added dimension to our work. We remember how Jesus had compassion healing the sick, and His words, "As you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me".

...continued on page 2

Have comments or suggestions after reading NCF Pulse?

Drop us a line at: www.ncfcanada.ca. We'd love to hear from you!

To Know Christ and To Make Him Known

by Bonnie Hartley



How do I summarize all I have gained from Nurses Christian Fellowship in 50 years on one page? As I contemplate this topic, I realize that there have been two main benefits and these are as important today as they were any time in the past. The first is the habit of daily Quiet Time and the second is learning the difference between a Christian Nurse and a nurse who is a Christian.

Very early in my student days, the leaders at NCF talked about daily times with our Lord. We never attended a camp, weekend retreat or any other overnight activity without Morning Devotions appearing on the agenda. The coffee pot was always on and usually a devotion outline that tied in with the theme for the occasion was provided. I believe there is no way to grow in the Lord without spending time in the Bible and listening and talking to Him each day.

Through countless hours spent in Bible study usually with specific NCF material, I came to

realize that Jesus had to be the centre of each and every thing I did in life, including nursing. No nursing task was outside His domain. Even charting fell into Christ's realm. His presence had to be in each and every thing I did all the time.

I conclude with the NCF motto which I attempt to maintain in my life today ... "to know Christ and make Him known". NCF gave me that vision and the tools to carry it out.



After graduating from the School of Nursing, Kingston General Hospital and working in Kingston, Bonnie went to India as a CUSO (Canadian University Services Overseas) volunteer. Upon her return to Canada, she worked at the Hospital for Sick Children in Toronto and finished her career as a professor at Ryerson University. She is a member of Blythwood Rd. Baptist Church.

Nurses Caring for Nurses ...continued from page 1

Nurses Christian Fellowship has been and continues to be an effective resource for those in nursing careers and beyond. It is not meant to take the place of your church – where you experience fellowship, communion and teaching. Rather, it is a means of coming together with colleagues, a "soil" that can bring growth and encouragement, both spiritually and professionally; a place to share with other nurses and make the most of the bond that exists between you.

Ask God to show you how. The options are endless: meet for prayer, gather with a group for Bible study, share personally at a meal together, and always look for ways to draw unbelieving nurses to Jesus Christ. May God bless you in your service and your pursuit of Him.



Terry Martens graduated with a nursing diploma from Saskatoon City Hospital. She has been on staff with NCF for 19 years and served in pastoral care for a long-term hospital in Toronto for 4 years under the Presbyterian Church. She also organized and managed a nursing service in Regina offering private care in hospitals and a home for 19 years. Terry is now retired in Regina.

God's readiness to give and forgive is now public. Salvation's available for everyone! We're being shown how to turn our backs on a godless, indulgent life, and how to take on a God-filled, God-honouring life. This new life is starting right now, and is whetting our appetites for the glorious day when our great God and Saviour, Jesus Christ, appears. He offered himself as a sacrifice to free us from a dark, rebellious life into this good, pure life, making us a people he can be proud of, energetic in goodness. (Titus 2:11-14 NLT)

Do you want to know more about Jesus, and the new life that He promised to us?

Contact us by visiting www.ncfcanada.ca and e-mail nationalchair@ncfcanada.ca



Continue reading if you are interested in...

- ...visiting South America!
- ...listening to great speakers!
- ...meeting fellow nurses from around the globe!

Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) is pleased to invite you to the next Quadrennial International Conference **PARTNERS IN CARE – Unity In Diversity Through Christ**

Date: November 5 - 10, 2012
 Location: Padre Hurtado, Santiago, Chile
 Keynote Speaker: Patricia Benner Professor Emerita, University of California, San Francisco



Complete conference brochure and registration details available at www.ncfi.org

Reflections from a Nurse Working in the North

by Sacha Jarvis



I work in an isolated First Nations community that is located on an island near James Bay in Northeastern Ontario. Getting to work involves a boat, a skidoo or a helicopter, depending on what season it is and whether or not there is ice on the river. The learning curve has been quite steep as I familiarize myself with life and work in a rural environment that is regularly understaffed and nurses are often expected to wear many different professional hats. Depending on one's perspective and expectations, the realities of working in the north can be viewed as either

challenges to overcome or as opportunities. For example, having only one hospital ward that encompasses obstetrics, long-term care, medical-surgical and consults from up the coast could be seen as a challenge, as the nurse has to be familiar with all the different aspects of caring for each of these patient populations, or it can be seen as an opportunity for the nurse to become proficient in multiple specialties.

As one nurse recently asked me after a long night shift, is the IV bag half full or half empty? Having recently graduated from McGill University and studied the McGill Model of Nursing (MMN) which calls for a collaborative, strengths-based, patient-centered approach

...continued on page 4

Transformed by the Word

by Mary Dewar



We all long to be transformed and be made "whole". For me, NCF has been a place of learning, a source of this transformation and of seeing it modeled by

those who have chosen to live out what God is teaching them through His word and through their commitment to Jesus, the incarnate word.

"The word was made flesh and dwelt among us"

This transformation is a process taking place day by day as we follow what we are learning. We see the evidence in the fruit of the Spirit. We are transformed as we yield to the Holy Spirit. The Spirit reveals the truths in the written word and as we obey that Word transforms us. We are being changed from "glory to glory" as we take on the likeness of Christ. We are being transformed into His image. The fruit of the spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness and self-control (Galatians 5:22,23).

It is our future hope that one day this transformation will be complete and we will be like Him for we shall see Him face to face

Philippians 3:12-14 reads, "I do not consider myself to have "arrived" nor do I consider myself already perfect. But I keep going on, grasping ever more firmly that purpose for which Christ also grasped me."

*Love Divine, All Loves Excelling
Finish, then, Thy new creation Pure and
Spotless let it be. Let us see Thy great
salvation Perfectly restored in Thee;
Changed from glory into glory,
Till is heaven we take our place,
Till we cast our crowns before Thee,
Lost in wonder, love and praise.*

Charles Wesley (1747)

Mary graduated with a nursing degree from Royal Jubilee Hospital and UVIC. She has also completed a year of study at Emmaus Bible College. Mary has worked with University



and nursing students in Winnipeg as part of IVCF for the past 28 years. She has been a mentor and a coach to many grad nurses since her retirement.

Season of Prayer

Jesus – the Divine Christ! He experienced a life-giving birth and a death-killing death. Not only birth from the womb, but baptismal birth of his ministry and sacrificial death.

1 John 5:6 (NLT)

By his death, Jesus opened a new and life-giving way through the curtain into the Most Holy Place.

Hebrews 10:20 (NLT)

What a God we have! And how fortunate we are to have him, this Father of our Master Jesus! Because Jesus was raised from the dead, we've been given a brand-new life and have everything to live for, including a future in heaven—and the future starts now! God is keeping careful watch over us and the future. The Day is coming when you'll have it all – life healed and whole.

1 Peter 1:3-5 (NLT)

He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD... Great is the LORD!

Psalms 40:3, 16b (ESV)

Learning to Live by Faith

by Julie Desjardins

I was raised a Christian but found excuse enough to walk away from God. After a modern re-enactment of the prodigal son, I repented. Blessed with a loving husband and son, God led us from southern Ontario to northern Manitoba. I confess to a certain amount of resistance on my part. I fantasized about serving God somewhere more exciting, like Africa or South America. Frankly, I hate the cold and I have no heart for northern Canada but I had enough faith in God to believe that in His will is my peace. So we moved to a First Nations reserve where as a relatively new nurse, I was diagnosing, prescribing, suturing, taking and interpreting x-rays, performing paps, managing etoh seizures, sexual assaults, stabbings, panic attacks, suicide attempts – you name it, it happened, at all times of day or night. I worked long hours, often for many weeks straight. Overwhelmed, I struggled through that year. I experienced a crushing attack on my self-esteem and abilities as a nurse. It became impossible stay; the workload

was unmanageable and my husband had no job. We moved to a nearby city, and because of unexpected debt, decided to sell our house. We tithed faithfully and believed God would honour our faithfulness (Malachi 3:10). Instead, our tenants sabotaged any efforts to sell, threatened us, doubled the utility bills we were paying, and caused damage. We were forced to accept an offer \$14,000 less than what we owed. My husband was still not working, we had been paying for two properties, and all available credit was used up. We were constantly on the brink of financial ruin.

I might have thought we were being attacked by the enemy if we were holding tent meetings and throngs of people were being saved. But none of that was happening; there were no dramatic healings or miracles. Where was God? Were the heavens deaf to our cries? Ah but you see, we were being changed! "We live by faith and not by sight" (2 Corinthians 5:7). This verse was being worked out in us as we struggled,

cried and learned to surrender and trust Him. Was it painful? You bet! Did we throw tantrums and at times act in a completely ungodly fashion? Oh yes! Was God faithful, merciful and His love unconditional? Let the redeemed of the Lord say so! God is shaping us to serve Him however He wants – "I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of the wicked" (Psalms 84:10) – and His discipline allows us to live more faithfully. So though there are no dramatic events of Biblical proportion or large-scale multi-media ministries, we are learning to listen for the "still small voice" (1 Kings 19:11), calling us to imitate the humble life of the Saviour. If we boast, let us boast in Christ alone (2 Corinthians 10:17).



Julie Desjardins is a Primary Health Care Nurse in Thompson, Manitoba where she lives with her husband and 3 year-old son. She is working on learning to love winter.

Reflections from a Nurse Working in the North

...continued from page 3

to care, I am inclined to see the bag as half full. I also find that a strengths-based, judgment-free approach in general aligns very closely with Biblical precepts and my personal worldview. As I was reflecting further on the notion of strength-based care which involves focusing on a patient's strengths rather than weaknesses, I thought of how this concept should also be applied with colleagues. As nurses we should be encouraging and supporting one another rather than tearing each other down or being critical of each other, regardless of where we are working. I have heard the excuses and agree, nurses are generally overworked, underpaid and their work environment is often extremely stressful; all the more reason I think we should be lifting one another up.

I caught myself one day at a shift change coming onto a night shift. It had been a very busy day and as the nurse who was giving me the report failed to give me some pertinent data I immediately found myself thinking, "What kind of nurse are you? What did you actually do today? How could you have

forgotten this, or not done that?" I had to shake my head and ask myself, "Who am I to judge?" It is so easy to find fault in someone else's actions. In that thirty-second span of introspection I could see how my attitude, if left unchecked would eventually negatively impact my working and personal relationship with

As nurses we should be encouraging and supporting one another rather than tearing each other down or being critical of each other, regardless of where we are working.

this nurse. Had I been thinking more 'strengths-based', I would have acknowledged that nurse's busy day, asked for clarification about the missing data, commended the nurse on how much she was able to get done given the fact that she had six high-needs patients and a critically ill baby to look after and would have asked

if there was anything I could do to make the shift change smoother for her. Easier said than done. May God grant me the grace to always see the best in people and circumstances and to be slow to judge and quick to offer support and encouragement. It is only in His strength that I will be able to practice in such a way.



Sacha Jarvis currently works in Moosonee Ontario specializing in mental health. She enjoys travelling and learning about different cultures. Her work and missions have taken her around the world from East

Africa, Peru, Mexico, Tahiti, to the James Bay coast of northern Ontario.

Contact Us

Judith Fanaken
visit ncfcanada.ca, and click on
nationalchair@ncfcanada.ca

Visit Us

www.ncfcanada.ca

Newsletter
Designed by
Dora Yiu

copyright © 2012 NCF