

To Engage, Equip and Empower Nurses in Christ

From the Editor

The invitation of the Lord is an invitation to suffering and death. We do not like to think of our relationship with the Lord in these terms. We like to think of His love, grace and mercy; and we like to think of His blessings. We see blessings in terms of health and wealth, good jobs, warm homes, happy relationships. And these are truly blessings. But there are deeper, abiding blessings to be had, blessings that can only be birthed out of suffering and death. Salvation is a free gift that cost our Lord everything but purity, sanctification, deep intimacy and communion with the Lord are deeper, abiding blessings that will cost us, and we must choose whether or not we will pursue them. Scripture warns us of this; to be His disciple means we must deny ourselves, take up our cross and follow Him, that we must lose our lives in order to find them (Matthew 16:24,25; Luke 9:23). We will all face suffering to one degree or another but suffering itself will not bring about these deeper blessings. To reap a harvest from a season of suffering, we need to change what we see and what we seek. Our natural instinct in hardship is to cry out for the Lord to deliver us and what a mighty miracle and time of rejoicing when He does! But what if there is a deeper blessing to be had by walking through our season of suffering. When I was told 2-1/2 years ago that I had to undergo surgery for cancer, the Lord spoke into my heart, "ask for more of Me"; not for healing but for more of Him. In October of this year, when the test results were abnormal again, the Lord was speaking to me, "Jesus is on the

throne". The Lord did not bring disease or suffering but He would use it to bring about a more intimate relationship with Him, a relationship that can sustain me in every season but I had to choose what I was seeing and whom I was seeking. I would walk through that season regardless but how I went through it and what blessings would come were up to me; the invitation was there, I just had to choose my response.

As the Christmas season approaches, with the invitation to come and behold Him who was to suffer and die, we bring you stories of others who have walked through suffering and found a deeper blessing in their trial. You will also read about the Saline process, a course that encourages and equips health care workers to be salt and light at work so that our patients might have the opportunity to be blessed in the midst of their suffering. It can be hard to seek the blessings of a truly

intimate relationship with the Lord. God is holy. To enter His presence requires that we become holy and this means we need to crucify our flesh so that the Spirit of God might live in us (Galatians 2:20). And if you are anything like me, your flesh is like a scene from a bad horror movie: you think you've killed it but it keeps on rising up again. Intimacy with God is not a one-time decision. It is a daily, sometimes hourly, sometimes minute-by-minute, decision. The good news is, no matter how many times we fail, the invitation to come remains.



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. May you be blessed in every season.

Julie A Desjardins

Moment from a NCFC Director

by Hope Graham

"Peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."

Luke 2.14

God promises His Creation justice and righteousness. In Scripture the prophets of old remind us of this promise over and over again.

Yet when we view the body of a small boy washed up on a beach or the photos of millions fleeing violence, our hearts are broken and we feel paralyzed. In our communities, cries for justice and righteousness ring loud and clear. What should one do? What can one do?

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Have comments or suggestions for NCFC Pulse?

Drop us a line at ncfcares@gmail.com. We'd love to hear from you!

God's Faithfulness in Detours and Setbacks

by Jenny Na

In the spring of 2013 I graduated from McMaster University School of Nursing filled with hopes and expectations of what life would look like as a new graduate. I was eager to write and pass my Canadian Registered Nursing Examination (CRNE) that June. I also hoped to find a nursing job and applied for numerous new graduate positions. I prayed that God would help me find a position in a field of nursing that I would enjoy and be passionate about because I still had not found a field that I considered to be my niche. Though I was nervous about the transition from being a student to a working nurse, I was full of anticipation for what was to come.

Things, however, did not go at all according to my hopes and plans.

One of my greatest disappointments was failing the CRNE. To make matters worse, I received this news on the same day I started orientation in a new graduate position which meant I had to leave. I was utterly devastated by these two blows on the same day and was filled with shame and embarrassment; I felt crushed in my spirit.

I thank God so much that He did not allow things to go my way...

In the midst of what seemed like a major failure and setback to my hopes and plans, I believe God was working and had a plan in store for me. In the face of my CRNE failure and the loss of my first

RN job, I reached out to God more and more. I grew deeper in intimacy with God in prayer and through reading His word. I had a newfound and deep joy in my relationship with God and experienced His love in a fresh and very personal way. I felt as though I were literally falling "head over heels" in love with God.

I also had the privilege of getting more involved with the ministry of Nurses Christian Fellowship Canada. I attended the Health Care Prayer Summit where health care practitioners from different fields gathered to pray about the various issues facing health care in Canada. This was an eye-opening experience. As I listened to the heartfelt intercessory prayers of those around me, I felt that I was learning more about prayer myself.

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Life Unexpected: Gaining Strength in Brokenness (Part 1)

As told by Jessica Gies to Julie Desjardins

Life has a way of getting your attention. Like when the road rises up to meet you, not because you're running so well but because you've fallen so hard. The impact is unexpected and it leaves you breathless. Especially when things were going so well and you felt in control. That's how it was for Jessica Gies. In early December of 2009 she enjoyed working as a registered nurse on the neurosciences floor in Kingston, Ontario. She was happily married to her husband who is a nurse practitioner and they had just bought and moved into the exact home they had always hoped for. The very next day, following the move, Jessica's world spiraled out of control. She

had just stepped onto the floor to begin her shift when she had a seizure and was told she could no longer practice hands on nursing!

In 1995 Jessica had graduated from high school. A committed Christian she felt God calling her to go into nursing. In 1999 she graduated from Nursing at a time when there were few jobs for new grads in Canada but was blessed to be awarded a position on neurosciences, a job she loved. Sometime between then and that fateful day, between shift work and the politics of nursing, Jessica had

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Moment from an NCFC Director

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May the grace of our Lord Jesus fill us with mercy and grace as we grant hospitality to those fleeing violence, as we offer kindness to the marginalized and vulnerable. May we be moved by His wisdom as servant leaders who have captured a vision of God's world where justice and righteousness are restored for all.

Shalom.



Hope is a recently retired faculty member of St. Francis Xavier University (St. FXU) School of Nursing. She is eagerly participating as coordinator to

prepare senior nursing students at St. FXU for a four-week consolidation practicum in Kenya in February 2016.

A Special Day Together: Growing in Discipleship

by Betty Hitchcock

"But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect..."

(1 Peter 3:15)

Each autumn, a group of graduate nurses gather for an annual retreat in Saint John, New Brunswick. The focus of this year's retreat was discipleship. In the morning we were privileged to have Anne, a Canadian nurse, share with us about the Saline process.

Anne has been volunteering internationally since 2004, working with Christian nurses in the areas of discipleship and leadership. In 2014, Anne became a member of the Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) executive committee and was also appointed as the international coordinator for Saline. Saline is a practical course that helps to encourage and equip health care workers to be salt and light in their workplaces. The guiding principle behind Saline is the understanding that evangelism is an often lengthy process guided by the Holy Spirit whereby a multitude of mini-decisions result in the unbeliever placing his/her faith in Christ. Saline provides

practical tools that enable trainees to personalize an approach to sharing the love of Jesus according to each patient's needs.

Health care today is an environment that can often be hostile to the gospel of Jesus Christ, therefore Christian nurses need to know how to be active and appropriate witnesses for Jesus. God calls us to be salt, light (Matthew: 5:13-16) and witnesses (Acts 1: 8) and this is a command that we carry into every aspect of our lives; it is not something we leave outside the door of the hospital, care home or clinic. During our morning together we explored why faith is important to health and in health care. We examined research and best practice as well as the clinical relevance of the patient's beliefs. Despite the evidence for faith in health care, Christian nurses often face barriers to delivering spiritual care, so we also looked at barriers in ourselves and in our patients. We pray God uses us to open doors for faith to be proclaimed (Colossians 4: 2-6) and that barriers to faith be removed; that we would increase in spiritual vitality and influence, and provide a safe faith environment for our patients. In all this, we also remember that we too are growing in our faith.

Indeed, in order for us to spiritually influence our patients and one another we need to continue to grow in Christ-like character (Galatians 5: 22-23), professional competence (2 Timothy 3:17), compassion (2Corinthians 1: 3-4), wise communication (1Peter 3: 15), and courage (Joshua 1: 9). Creating a safe environment for patients to explore and express their faith is important and we can do that by using words people understand and providing opportunities for questions and discussion. Just as we use nursing tools (instruments, care plans, interdisciplinary care teams) for the physical care of our patients, we can also use faith tools to help us care for our patient's spiritual needs: prayer, questions, spiritual healing, faith flags, faith stories, truth prescriptions, gospel presentations, and spiritual referral teams.

It was an excellent morning of learning and growing together. May God help us all to be salt, not only in our workplace, but also in our families, our relationships and in all that we do.

For more information about Saline, visit IHS Global at www.ihsglobal.org

Betty Hitchcock is a retired nurse living in Saint John, NB and has been involved in Nurses Christian Fellowship Canada since her student days.

Life Unexpected: Gaining Strength in Brokenness (Part 1)

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lost track of God. The seizures themselves weren't new; Jessica had been diagnosed with epilepsy at the young age of 13 but with medication they had been under control. Then in 2009 the seizures started coming back; this time medication was not controlling them and the seizures had become a monthly occurrence. Now, having to go on disability, her once bright

future was suddenly uncertain. Why was God letting this happen, she thought, when things seemed to be going so well? It is often in a season of brokenness where we are invited to begin again to hope in God, to trust Him again with our very lives. We can blame God for our circumstances or we can allow Him to shape us through

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Life Unexpected: Gaining Strength in Brokenness (Part 1)

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them. Jessica and her husband decided on the latter. When a couple invited them to the Meeting House in Kingston they began attending a small group there. Reconnecting with the Lord, her growing faith and the amazing support from her father, family and community of believers gave Jessica the strength to persevere through this dark season. As one year turned into two and then three, Jessica did not know if she would ever be able to work as a nurse again. What was God doing? What happened to that call she had felt as a young woman eager to serve the Lord? Were all these years just wasted?

After several different medication and lifestyle changes, Jessica was still experiencing a few seizures a month. When her epileptologist asked if she

would consider surgery Jessica's initial reaction was: "No way! Can't we try another medication, maybe something brand new that has come out?" After years of taking care of patients who had brain surgery, with their hair shaved off and staples in their head, Jessica understandably did not want to go through that. There were also very sad cases where some of her patients who had brain surgery were better for a while but then the tumor was malignant and came back. Moreover, at that time Jessica had never seen anyone who had had surgery for epilepsy. She did not feel ready to trust God with brain surgery so she tried another medication but that failed too. Jessica knew that God didn't want to be her back up plan; He wanted to be her everything. So in 2011, Jessica was ready. Still the surgery did not happen right away. Jessica was referred to Toronto Western Hospital and had to undergo extensive neurological and neuropsychological testing to determine if she was even a candidate. The testing took almost a full year to complete. One of

the tests, the Wada test, would determine if the other parts of her brain would be able to compensate for the part that would be removed. She also had to stay in hospital for a week, with her scalp hooked up to electrodes, to have an EEG to determine where in her brain the seizures were coming from. Ultimately Jessica was told that she was a good candidate for surgery. While preparing for surgery Jessica did her own research. She knew the risks: memory loss, speech impairment, vision problems, stroke and even the chance of increased seizures! However there was also a chance for life without seizures. And it was a chance for Jessica to live out her faith, trusting that God knows the end



from the beginning and that He works in all things for our good. (Romans 8:28)

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in the next edition
of **NCFC Pulse**

God's Faithfulness in Detours and Setbacks

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Bit by bit, it did not matter as much to me that I was jobless because I was too busy basking in God's great love and presence. I gained a growing confidence and faith that God would provide the right job in His perfect timing. His way would be the best and perfect way.

Thanks be to God, through the prayers and support of many family and friends, I restudied, rewrote the CRNE and passed! In addition to this, after several months of job searching, God provided two quite unexpected but stretching opportunities that enabled me to develop my confidence in caring for patients as a novice nurse. Last spring, God opened doors for yet another opportunity and I am currently working full-time as a Registered Nurse on a medicine unit in

Hamilton. In this position I am continuing to be stretched and I am learning so much. I am experiencing God's faithfulness to sustain and strengthen me moment by moment as I depend on Him.

I desire to give thanks and glory to God for His great love and mercy. I thank God so much that He did not allow things to go my way because through the detours I experienced, I received a better and more precious gift: growing deeper in my faith and love of God. He is the source of my confidence and hope and He strengthens me to be the best nurse I can be every day.

"Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever."

(Ephesians 3:20)



Jenny graduated in 2013 from the McMaster School of Nursing Accelerated program and currently works in General Medicine at Hamilton General Hospital. She also has a twin sister

who is a nurse. Jenny loves connecting with novice and experienced nurses alike to mutually encourage one another through shared experiences and prayer.

Contact Us

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

Visit Us

www.ncfcanada.ca

Editor:
Julie A Desjardins
Layout & Design:
Dora Yiu

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