

## **To Engage, Equip and Empower Nurses in Christ**

### **a Message from the National Chair**

Greetings in the name of Jesus!

I praise and thank our God and Father in Heaven for His continued grace and favour towards nurses and Nurses Christian Fellowship over the years.

Becoming an independent charity has been a long time desire for NCF. We have operated under the umbrella of IVCF for many years and received much needed support and development. Over the last few years, we have been working towards achieving a recognized status for NCF that takes into consideration our vision, mission and the people we serve. I am very happy to share with you that we have been approved as a non-profit charitable organization as of July, 2012. We could not have reached this goal without the prayers, encouragement and financial support from all of you, so this victory is also yours to celebrate!

NCF Canada works to empower nurses to use the teachings and principles of the Christian faith and the Bible to guide their practice and thought processes. The Holy Spirit can help us to be sensitive to subtle needs that are often overlooked in patient care. Stirring up this force within us every day can teach us to be stewards of God within our profession.

Nursing is evolving so rapidly today that it is sometimes hard to keep up. Advances in knowledge, practice and technology

have enhanced the way we provide care to patients and significantly improved the outcomes for many. Having said that, we need to stop and ask ourselves: what is the role of Christian nurses amidst the burgeoning profession today? How can Christian nurses integrate faith into practice and advocate for the spiritual needs of our patients/clients?

I've listed a few verses from the Bible that will hopefully help you think about your role as a Christian nurse and nursing leader. The greatest challenge for all of us who are called and positioned as stewards is not what we know and preach,

but how we enact our roles and influence outcomes. For some of us this reflection may be a renewal of mind, body and soul; for others it may be enlightenment. Are you ready for the challenge?

Reflection: Acts 1; 1 John 3:16-18; John 16:13-15; 1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Romans 12:4-8; 1 Peter 4:10-11.



Steward of  
Christ Jesus,

Judith Fanaken  
NCF Canada  
National Chair

## **Integrating Faith with Nursing Practice**

by Elsie Millerd

What does it mean to be a Christian nurse? How does one live with integrity as a nurse and a Christian? These are the questions that have shaped my nursing career.

NCF has played a huge role in my journey. From my first week in nursing school I found guidance and support from Bible studies, fellowship with other nurses and ongoing mentoring. The NCF motto, "To know Christ and to make Christ known," became my guiding principle.

To know Christ is to know God as Love. To be involved in this Love is to be obedient to God and the teachings of Christ. I find this obedience develops with the daily practice of prayerful meditation on the

Word of God. The love of God found in the Word convicts me of my own unloveliness that I want to repent and be transformed. As one grows to love more, one wants to be more obedient to God, the source of Love.

How do we make this Love known to the world, especially to nurses who practice in a secular environment? Showing love for our own neighbours can help develop a culture of love and caring in the workplace. When working in environments where success is measured by physical and mental activity rather than spiritual gifts such as love, our

...continued on page 3

**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 Difference of Jesus in the Life of a Patient

by Amelia Salisbury

Working in a paediatric oncology ward has its ups and downs. People often question why I chose this area of nursing, and many times I don't have an answer. I don't know why God has called me here, but I know He has. Some days are good; night-time dance parties while the chemo bag is hanging, or celebrating a final chemotherapy treatment with a surprise cake and card. Some days are bad; seeing a patient rushed in with yet another admission of fever and neutropenia, or caring for a child's deteriorated body following several months of aggressive yet futile cancer treatment.

In my daily work on the floor I am often blown away to see how God orchestrates situations with patients and families to teach me more about His love and grace. As a nurse and a Christian I acknowledge my calling to minister to others and be a reflection of Christ to them. However, it is in the moments when I take the spotlight away from my own actions and focus on others that God's lessons really shine through.

It is five o'clock in the morning and I sneak into a patient's room to draw the daily blood work from her central line. Her mother is already awake and reading to her from the Bible. I think about Proverbs 3:5, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding". We don't understand why this beautiful child was recently diagnosed with leukemia but we know we can trust the Lord through it.

I am sitting in a mandatory training session learning about a new and highly intensive protocol for treating neuroblastoma. My mind wanders to the mother who will bring her toddler in, yet again, for another series of aggressive cancer treatment. I am reminded of Romans 5:3, "...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope". What a testament of perseverance, character and hope this little girl and her family are to me!

I attend the hospital room "nail salon" of one of our long-time patients on the floor. As I spend time with her, laughing while we joke back and forth, James 1:2 pops into my head, "Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds". I am humbled by this girl's expression of true joy amidst the hardships in her life.

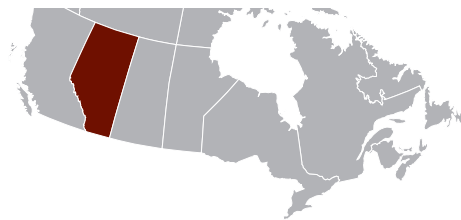
God is at work all around, no matter where we work or what our roles are. What is He trying to say to you today?



*Amelia is a recent nursing graduate from the University of Western Ontario. She has worked on inpatient paediatrics at London Health Sciences Centre and Paediatrics/Special Care Nursery at Bluewater Health. Amelia is passionate about global missions and has participated on several nursing mission trips. She plans to attend the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine this spring to obtain a diploma in tropical nursing and is excited to see where God will lead her in the future.*

## Taking Small, Careful Steps in Alberta

by Patricia Mitchell



Greetings and salutations nursing colleagues!

Though our monthly meetings are still in their infancy, we are starting to grow spiritually as a group and as individuals. Our focus is on understanding who

we are, what is important to us, what our relationship is with God and what He is asking of us. We cannot gain the confidence we need to go forward until we are comfortable with ourselves, with each other and building trust in God. If we want to grow in the knowledge and wisdom of God's plans for us, we must be willing to become intimate with Christ first. Achieving this will allow us to witness to others.

In Matthew 28:18-20, Jesus gives us a great command. If we had to fulfill this

as individuals we might as well give up without trying – it would be impossible. Our group is learning that God calls us as members of His body. Some of us can do one task while others can do another. Together we can obey God more fully than any of us could alone. Together we can work to express the fullness of God.

So, how exactly did our group evolve in Alberta? In the fall of 2010, two nursing colleagues and I began talking about

...continued on page 3

## Taking Small Steps in Alberta

...continued from page 2

our love for the Lord Jesus Christ during coffee breaks at work. In early 2011, we broadened that by meeting for supper every so often and discussing our Christian walks. Soon after, another three nurses asked to join us. In the summer of 2011, we decided to create a monthly Bible study and even gave our little group a name: The Spiritual Sisters. To this writing, we continue to meet monthly for Bible studies and two more nurses have joined us. We are in prayer for two more nurses who have expressed an interest and will hopefully meet with us this month. God is great! Thanks be to the Lord Jesus Christ, through whom all things are possible!

So, what are we studying? Our monthly Bible studies are based on learning about those strong, enigmatic, and challenging women of the Bible. Their stories put a personal face on God's teachings. As we unravel the intricacies of a woman's life in early times, we discuss how this applies to us today. We are sometimes lead down paths that bring loud cheers or sad tears, but the Lord is teaching and leading us through it all.

Sharon, one of our Spiritual Sisters, writes; "...it is important for us as Christians to come together to study the Bible. There is nothing like Christian fellowship to help us grow. One cannot continue to grow in one's Christian life alone and new Christians especially need the

connection. We need the warmth of Christian fellowship to keep each other on track; as we read the Bible, learn to pray and share our experiences in our spiritual lives. We need to let go of the old and bring in the new when we follow God. We need to share the good news of Jesus with others. God commands that of us".

...continued on page 4

## Integrating Faith with Nursing Practice

...continued from page 1

endeavours can feel rather hopeless at times. It would be good to recognize God's love at work in our nursing environments!

An amazing breakthrough for me was a call to parish nursing. In this role I have been given a natural opening to talk with others about spiritual matters. As a parish nurse I suddenly gained respect from other nurses after years of feeling sidelined as a Christian nurse. My practice allows me to gain expertise in giving spiritual care which I can then share with other nurses. My increasing desire to know how to articulate and advocate for spiritual care led me to further my studies. I learned how to conduct qualitative research on the relationship of spirituality and health. This has opened the door for delivering formal presentations to nurses on the need for spiritual awareness in giving wholistic care. One highlight was my presentation at the International Nursing Conference in Jerusalem this June.

It is a joy to experience this integration

of my faith and practice. Within the secular healthcare environment it is very tempting to separate our identity as a Christian and a nurse. It sometimes even feels like the wise thing to do. Only through the persistent grace of God and a willingness to be obedient to his nudging have I been able to find the integration that allows me to live fruitfully as a Christian nurse. It is my prayer that all nurses find an integration of their faith and nursing practice, and witness God working through them.

This is an added dimension to our work. Remember Jesus' compassion in healing the sick and His words, "As you have done it unto the least of these, you have done it unto me".



*Elsie currently practices parish nursing at the Church of St. John the Evangelist (Anglican) in Kitchener, Ontario. For 14 years Elsie was Chair of the Ontario NCF Committee. Her other nursing experience*

*includes medical nursing, administration, education and community nursing.*

## Thanksgiving in Scripture

Be cheerful no matter what; pray all the time; thank God no matter what happens. This is the way God wants you who belong to Christ Jesus to live.

*1 Thessalonians 5:18  
(The Message)*

My counsel for you is simple and straightforward: Just go ahead with what you've been given. You received Christ Jesus, the Master; now live him. You're deeply rooted in him. You're well constructed upon him. You know your way around the faith. Now do what you've been taught. School's out; quit studying the subject and start living it! And let your living spill over into thanksgiving.

*Colossians 6:2-7 (The Message)*

Thank you! Everything in me says "Thank you!"

Angels listen as I sing my thanks. I kneel in worship facing your holy temple and say it again: "Thank you!"

Thank you for your love, thank you for your faithfulness;

Most holy is your name, most holy is your Word.

The moment I called out, you stepped in; you made my life large with strength.

*Psalms 138:1-3 (The Message)*

# Calling Christian Nurses to Action!

by Doreen Westera

*"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 (NIV)

As I reflect on the words of Peter I can't help but be challenged. This verse can challenge us all as Christian nurses to advocate for spiritual care within nursing practice, administration, research and education. Each of us has been called by God to whatever context we find ourselves in the nursing world. As such, Jesus is Lord in our professional as well as our personal lives. We have a hope within us that can be influential in ensuring that the spiritual dimension is not forgotten.

## Taking Small, Careful Steps in Alberta

...continued from page 3

In Acts 1:8 we read, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost comes upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth".

Our group of 10 Spiritual Sisters in Alberta are getting ready to proclaim the Good News from the heights of the Rocky Mountains to the hospitals and care facilities throughout Alberta. We ask for your prayers at this time, as our fledgling group begins to evangelize for Christ in Alberta's Nursing Community.



May God keep you always safe in His abiding love. Amen.

Patricia currently serves as Chair of NCF Canada's Alberta Chapter.

We also have an acute sense of our own spirituality as followers of Jesus – ample evidence in nursing literature suggests that nurses with a strong sense of their own spirituality are better able to recognize and attend to clients' spiritual needs. As Christian nurses, we also have an arsenal of writings on the topic of spirituality. Many of us have experienced first-hand, or witnessed the positive impact that faith in God can have in dealing with health crises or other significant life events. Christian nurses **can** and **should** be advocates for spirituality in nursing. I believe that our colleagues and the nursing profession in general will listen to us **if** we 'have an answer' that is rational and reflective in terms of incorporating spirituality into nursing. They will listen **if** we provide this rationale with gentleness and respect.

1. There is ample discourse on the topic in nursing literature. A recent search of mine yielded over 1000 articles written on some aspect of spirituality in nursing and over 200 additional articles on nursing education alone. Many of the practice articles focus on spirituality in specific client contexts;
2. The Codes of Ethics in nursing assume knowledge of the client's spirituality;
3. Nursing claims to be holistic in focus, implying the spiritual dimension is a part of nursing;
4. Spiritual care is consistent with culturally-sensitive care;
5. Research shows a high level of spiritual well-being leads to positive health outcomes;
6. Governing bodies in health care endorse attending to spiritual needs (e.g. WHO, ICN, CAN);

7. Spiritual distress is a well-known nursing diagnosis.

There are many more reasons for including spirituality in nursing. The point is that there **is** ample rationale for the inclusion of spirituality in nursing!

How can we as Christian nurses advocate for spirituality in nursing? We can join with other like-minded colleagues for dialogue and prayer, discussing the topic and related challenges and issues; we can read widely on the topic, increasing our own knowledge and critical reflection skills; we can partner with nursing programs to advocate for research in the area; we can write short articles on the topic for our local nursing association newsletter; and we can advocate for policies on spiritual care within our institutions.

I hope that this article has stimulated you to think about your part in advocating for spirituality in nursing. Pray that God will direct you to whatever role He would have you play in this responsibility!



Doreen completed her undergraduate in nursing education at Memorial University and graduate work at the University of Toronto and Memorial University.

She has been teaching nursing since 1983 and currently teaches community health nursing, counselling and a course on the spiritual dimensions of nursing practice.

### Contact Us

Judith Fanaken  
visit [ncfcanada.ca](http://ncfcanada.ca), and click on  
[nationalchair@ncfcanada.ca](mailto:nationalchair@ncfcanada.ca)

### Visit Us

[www.ncfcanada.ca](http://www.ncfcanada.ca)

Chief Editor:  
Fronica Yiu

Designer:  
Dora Yiu

copyright © 2012 NCF