

Pilgrimage to a Land Called 'Holy'

By Elsie Millerd



What did I expect on my pilgrimage to the Holy Land this spring? I was told that I would never be the same but I was not sure that I wanted to change. God was inviting me to find out about this place called 'Holy' and I knew that I needed to see what He had to show me. What an amazing and complex experience He had in store for me.

Travelling with colleagues and friends from Waterloo Lutheran Seminary, I had the privilege of seeing many aspects of the Holy Land. It was amazing to look out over the land and gain an understanding of the context of the various stories in our scriptures. I had not realized how geographically close the locations for the stories are, or for example, that the Temple of the New Testament was located in the same place as where it is believed Abraham brought Isaac to be sacrificed. A new dimension has been added to my scripture reading, as I can picture the context of the content—the people listening to Jesus' teachings on the teaching steps of the Temple or beside the Sea of Galilee.



Above: The Town of Bethlehem

Staying in both Israel and Palestine, we were introduced to the socio-political situation of the region. We got to know people on both sides of the conflict and hear their concerns and yearnings. Our hosts in Bethlehem were Palestinian Lutherans who are trying to bring Christ's love and reconciliation into the situation. We visited Christian schools where children of all faiths are being educated together in the hope that they will learn to love and respect one another. When we visited the Deheisha refugee camp (a home to Palestinian refugees for over 60 years), we heard the Palestinians' frustrated recounts of being prevented entrance into Jerusalem. As we listened to their stories about the check points at the "security" or "dividing" wall, and witnessed firsthand the Israeli settlements and separate roads for the two groups in Palestine, I found myself becoming enraged by the apartheid surrounding this place. In the midst of all this, we could see God working within groups such as the Parents Circle - Bereaved Families for Reconciliation (www.the-

parentsircle.com). We met Rami and Omar, a Jew and a Palestinian who came together as brothers through the shared grief of losing their family members. They now work side by side demonstrating their hope for transformation by dedicating their time to giving seminars on reconciliation.

My life has been transformed by my experiences in the Holy Land. The reading of scripture has become richer and my understanding of the need for Christ's death to break down "the dividing wall, that is the hostility between us" (Ephesians 2:14), has deepened. My prayer joins that of the Palestinian Christian quoted by Pneuman (2009), "Pray not for Arab or Jew, for Palestinian or Israeli. Pray rather for ourselves, that we might not divide them in our prayers, but keep them together in our hearts."

Reference:

Pneuman, M. (2009). A view from Ahli Arab Hospital on the front lines in Gaza. *Episcopal Voice* Vol. 20 (2), p. V1. Retrieved July 6, 2009 from <http://www.ecww.org/files/6/Feb2009.pdf>.



Above: Overlooking the city of Jerusalem from the East

AFRICA MISSION 2010

ZAMBIA AND KENYA

July 15 - July 31 and July 22 - August 9



Needed:

Children's Workers, Women to do Workshops in Women's Ministry, Trainers in Discipleship, Medical Personnel: Doctors, Nurses, Pharmacist, Dentist
Applications must be in 4 months in advance.

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Mission for Advancing Theological Education/ Friends Committed to Caring (MATE/FCC) (A Christian, non-denominational organization) P.O. Box 20060 Scarborough ON M1W 3Y9

For further information phone Marilyn Daniels, Coordinator of Short-term Missions 905-479-6185 - Office (9:30-4:00) Email: matefcc@bellnet.ca Website: www.matefcc.org

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO SHARE THIS INFORMATION WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

"Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these.....you have done it unto Me"

GUYANA MISSION 2010

March 18 - April 4



Needed:

Health Educators, Pharmacists, Doctors, Nurses, Physiotherapists, Dentists, and Support Personnel

Deadline for Applications is September 30, 2009

For further information phone Marilyn Daniels, Coordinator of Short-term Missions 905-479-6185 - Office (9:30-4:00) Email: matefcc@bellnet.ca Website: www.matefcc.org

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GUYANA 2009

This past spring an enthusiastic team of 10 doctors and nurses joined forces to provide holistic care in the rural communities of Guyana, a small country of 200,000 people scattered throughout a vast expanse of rainforest and Savannah at the top of South America.



(Known as "the land of many waters, subsistent farming is made easier by plenty of water. Rivers contribute to a good diet of fish, become a playground for youngsters and provide a river road as people paddle from place to place. In these rivers women wash clothes and dishes, bathe babies and teach their children how to swim. However, clean drinking water is still a problem, so

the population is encouraged to boil all drinking water.)

Working under the auspices of The Mission for Advancing Theological Education and Friends Committed to Caring (MATE/FCC), a 25 year old Christian mission, the team provided health education and medical care for over 2,000 patients in clinics, churches and schools. The gratitude shown by the patients was very touching; even a small tablet of Tylenol was received as though it were gold. Local health care professionals welcomed our assistance and CME training with deep appreciation. Serious attempts were made to deworm whole villages through the schools with the hope that accompanying information on hygiene would make a lasting impression.

In our clinics we carried out triage, identified emergencies, provided early treatment interventions and prescribed basic medication. We placed nurses in the pharmacy with assorted support staff packaging 1-2 weeks supply of medication. MATE/FCC has a policy requesting that we bring along our own provision of medication and supplies so we do not exhaust the limited resources in developing countries.

The Amerindians of Guyana are very teachable, gentle, undemanding people with a life expectancy of about 62 years. The risk of maternal and infant mortality is 20-fold. Many of the patients we saw in rural areas have never seen a doctor. They accept death as a very real part of life, often preferring to stay home to die rather than seeking help in a hospital. Isolation and lack of general knowledge creates fear of the unknown, therefore it is imperative

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Guyana...Continued from page 3

to bridge the gap between major health care centres and the general population. Travel to medical centres is often daunting as evidenced by one mother who, after 48 hours of labour, paddled for 2 hours, travelled for another hour by car to get a speed boat across the 22-mile mouth of a river, then journeyed one more hour by car to arrive at a hospital. She eventually delivered a hydrocephalic baby by c-section.

Glucometers are easy to procure but donations of test strips are harder to find. Toothbrushes are a real necessity among a people group who suffer from a lack of serious dental care. It has been very rewarding over the past 14 years to see our efforts begin to make a difference in staffing as well as in the physical improvements of rural health centres. The MOH is now working to provide mosquito nets to prevent malaria (the #1 killer in many tropical countries) reducing the incidence in one village by 80%.

Deep spiritual convictions grace the Am-

erindian communities with high moral standards. However in urban areas, alcoholism, and subsequent abuse are serious problems. There are no social structures working to encourage women to seek help in these difficult situations.

We know that Jesus is the answer for the world today! There is freedom to talk about our faith openly—we see this as a precious opportunity for evangelism as we share the gospel at the beginning of each clinic. It is a thrill to see lives changed as people turn to Jesus Christ! Working with local church leaders we encourage discipleship as follow-up.

We thank God there is a great support system at home. Although this part of the team doesn't join us overseas, they are vital to the ministry we see God doing in the field.

As long as God leads we will continue to work in Guyana (March 18 - April 4, 2010) and Zambia (July 15 - August 9, 2010) For further enquiries about joining us please feel free to call Marilyn Daniels, Coordinator of Medial Missions (905-479-6185).

nancies so I spend a lot of time listening to them and hearing about the choices they have made to get to this point in their lives. Again, I need to ask Jesus to help me be salt and light without condemning the women I interact with. My relationship with Jesus is key in all I do and without a living daily walk with Christ I would not be of any use to Him. He is the One who works in and through me as I make myself available for what He has planned.

How do I share the gospel? I always ask the women I see what they believe. Depending on the answer I receive, I proceed from there. I also ask all my clients if they would like me to pray for them in Jesus' name. If the answer is 'yes' I pray for them then and there. If the answer is 'no' I leave it and pray for the client quietly by myself. Prayer is the key to ploughing up a person's spiritual ground.

The daily challenge I face is seeing Christians making choices that bring them harm and destruction as they face unwanted pregnancies. The majority of the women using our services are from Christian backgrounds. The question I ask myself is how can I live life as Jesus has instructed me to do without being sucked into the pressures of society to conform. It is being able to convey this to the clients I see without being condemning or judgmental because the Truth of Christ always sets us free. It never harms us. I believe the key is my relationship with Jesus and the prayer life I have as I seek the Lord at the start and end of each day.

For those of you who work in places where

Nurses Christian Fellowship Weblinks

www.ncfcanada.ca - NCF Canada's official website

www.ncf-jcn.org - website for NCF USA and Journal of Christian Nursing

www.ncfi.org - website of NCF International

www.urbana09.org - intervarsity's 22nd student missions conference

www.facebook.com - National Nurses Christian Fellowship of Canada - a great way to connect with other Christian nurses and nursing students

<http://www.rnao.org/> - Registered Nurses of Ontario

<http://www.rpnao.org> - Registered Practical Nurses on Ontario

<http://www.capnm.ca/index.htm> - Canadian Association for Parish Nursing Ministry

<http://www.biblesociety.ca> - Sowing God's Word - that heart's and lives may be changed

<http://www.pitt.edu/~super1/lecture/lec34601/index.htm> - a good website to keep up to date on topics such as the H1N1 virus

SALT AND LIGHT IN THE WORKPLACE

By Hannah Anderson

I have worked as a nurse and midwife for more than 25 years. In all my working years I have worked in a non-christian environment and have counted it a privilege to be salt and light in my workplace. Jesus was in the world and not of it. I want to be the same as Jesus with the work that He has given me to do.

How do I do this in a society where it is not politically correct to speak the Truth? Each day before going to work I ask the Lord to use me either with my words or with my actions. As I place myself into Jesus and all that He has for me, I see how He opens doors and uses me as His tool.

I work with women facing unexpected preg-

you cannot talk to your clients openly about Jesus and the Truth, you can always pray quietly. You can ask the Lord to speak through your actions—in how you relate to your client and the attitude you take on since this can and does speak volumes to those who are spiritually seeking. If at all possible, ask the Lord where other christian workers are in your workplace and get together with them as often as you can to pray together. This will have a tremendous impact on you and your work. May the Lord encourage you and give you His creativity as you spend time with Him each day and minister to the clients entrusted to your care.



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The Newsletter of the Ontario Nurses Christian Fellowship

Welcome The STRANGER

"I was a stranger and you invited me in...Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Jesus (Mt. 25:35, 45)



Muriel Wilson is the Treasurer of Ontario NCF Committee.

In our multicultural nation, we have increasingly diverse clients in our care. We read regularly of

the struggles many experience here in a new culture with barriers such as language, credentialing, etc. There is one group of newcomers, known as "refugee claimants," whose situation merits special attention.

Under its commitment to the 1951 Geneva Refugee Convention, Canada has a process to assist refugees (i.e. people in need of protection because of a well-founded fear of persecution in their home country). Each year the government, private individuals and groups sponsor about 9,000 persons to come to Canada. Although some bear the scars of torture or simply living for many years in refugee camps, their legal status in Canada as "persons in need of protection" is already determined.

Other people who are labelled "refugee claim-

ants" arrive on their own accord and make a claim for "protection" from within Canada, principally at the airports and land borders. In 2008, over 35,000 people entered Canada under such a claim. Each one surrendered their passport and joined a complex and lengthy process to establish whether they will be legally considered a "person in need of protection". About half of the claimants eventually receive a positive response. Unfortunately this process can emphasize keeping the "wrong" people out rather than helping those in need.

Such persons are basically stateless until their status here is established in a hearing before a Member of the Refugee Review Board. When that system works well, newcomers have a fair hearing within a reasonable time. But for various complex reasons, the system currently has long "wait times" of 16-20 months or more.

We can be glad that refugee claimants receive special Federal Medical coverage, can apply for a work permit, may receive Social Assistance, and may qualify for legal aid for their hearing. Think of the contrast between that and the camps that refugees experience in other countries. However, their lives are basically "on hold" until the determination is made.

As you provide care for such a person, put yourself in their shoes. You are afraid to return back to your home country; you may have experi-

Designed by Wendy Voss
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Editor: Dora Yiu

Please Pray For...

...the new graduates of the RN, RPN, and PSW courses; for guidance as they start their new careers.

...the nurses in the military - for nurses stationed in Canada and around the world; that they may feel God's love and safety no matter where they are.

...missionary nurses both short term and long term; for safety as they venture into unknown territory.

...nurses who are working and feeling the pressure of these uncertain economic times; that their families may experience God's blessings

enced terrifying violence (many of the women have been raped); you have entered a completely unfamiliar country, you may not understand the language, the weather is so different (especially the cold), you may be separated from close family members and you do not know whether your story will be accepted in this new place—you know it will be challenged. All these factors affect one's physical, mental and spiritual health.

Refugee claimants are people whose health difficulties call for an extra measure of understanding, compassion and kindness. As health practitioners, we do not judge the rightness of a case but we can welcome, listen and try to understand. Those who are Christians (and many are, especially from Africa) will respond well if the nurse mentions the Lord's care and power and encourages prayer.

May we be nurses who welcome the stranger who is a refugee claimant.

I have been privileged to hear many stories in my volunteer work with Matthew House (Fort Erie), a house of refuge and a place of ongoing support for claimants who have come from the US over the Peace Bridge. With recent changes in government regulations, fewer people will be coming into Canada via the land borders. If you want more information, www.ccrweb.ca is a good place to start.