**NCF in British Columbia**

Please pray for God’s leading and guidance for the future of NCF in B.C. With many of our members retired, or nearing retirement, we have a strong need for younger nurses to join NCF and continue the ministry here. Events past year have been difficult to accomplish because of low attendance. We have been praying for a new chairperson to take over and we strongly believe it is time for fresh initiatives in the leadership.

Elizabeth Obiri-Darko
British Columbia NCF Chairperson

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**Monday Night E-Mail Prayer Ministry**

By Celia Wong, RN

In the spring of 2006, Anne Hawes, the NCF National Director at the time, was preparing for her retirement. Anne had been responsible for sending out an e-mail prayer bulletin every Monday night to nurses across Canada asking them to pray for specific concerns as expressed by nurses. In arranging her transition, she announced the need for a volunteer to take over this ministry. When I read that request, I thought to myself that whoever decided to do this would need a large heart and the ability to communicate with this large audience. Several weeks later, I ran into Elise Millerd, the former chair of the Ontario NCF committee. Elise privately asked me if I would consider taking up this exact task.

I was hoping that no one would ask me, because I knew the great responsibility this commitment would entail. In view of the fact that I have been associated with NCF for over 15 years and I was not working at that time, I could think of a reason to decline. So, there I was, trying to do what I knew was right and said “yes”.

Monday night prayer e-mails have been a means by which NCF prayer partners and friends encourage one another through sharing the word of God and can feel supported by the prayers of the NCF community. Nothing is more comforting and assuring than knowing that our prayers and praises have been uplifted to our Heavenly Father.

From time to time we are encouraged by answered prayers and inspirational stories of personal journeys with God. Monday night prayer emails have also enabled members to share their news and updates with one another.

Occasionally, I am asked, “What if I cannot pray exactly on Monday evenings?” My answer is this: God invites us to try our best. As long as we have a desire to pray, God will honour our desire and our prayers even though we may not think that they are timely. He will minister His grace to us in His own perfect timing. There have been occasions when I could not send out prayer emails before certain events for which prayer had been requested. In those cases, I can only trust that God heard our prayers in advance. I hope and pray that NCF prayer partners will continue to find encouragement, prayer support, and companionship as we strive together to serve God and to share His grace in our nursing roles.

Paul says to the Philippians, “If you have any encouragement from being united in Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the body and mind through prayers. We are requesting prayers that more young nurses become involved and that someone will answer the call to be the chairperson for Quebec NCF.

Pauline Martin
Quebec NCF Chairperson

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**NCF in Ontario**

This has been a busy year for Ontario NCF. Christian nurses in our province are coming together and learning how to integrate their profession and faith. Our small groups in Ottawa, York Region/Torohill, Scarborough, Toronto Public Health, Hamilton, St. Catharines, Port Colborne, Guelph, Kitchener/Waterloo, Halton, and London, have been meeting regularly for Bible studies and prayer. Several small group leaders are also reaching out to student nurses and providing mentorship.

We have had a lot of success reaching out to Christian and non-Christian nurses alike through job fairs – making NCF known to different local communities. RNAO exhibitions, breakfast gatherings, and annual seminars are examples of some other events we have been involved in annually.

The use of new forums such as Facebook and the NCF website have been successfully connecting younger nurses who share similar views on healthcare. NCF has been and continues to be a place where nurses can gain and regain the spiritual strength and knowledge needed to perform in the nursing profession.

Please keep in your prayers our need for more local groups and for more opportunities to reach out to younger nurses in Ontario.

Jackie Schmidt
Ontario NCF Chairperson

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**NCF in Québec**

Québec NCF is composed of a community of nurses who dedicate their time to serve the Lord by praying for and supporting other nurses. We meet frequently for Bible studies and prayer meetings. Though some of the nurses are bilingual, our meetings and activities are offered in English only. We are affiliated with another group of nurses who are predominantly French-speaking, and these nurses participate in some of our special activities. We organize and offer one-day conferences which address needs and topics of interest to the nursing work place. Topics include spirituality, understanding mental illness, and healing the body and mind through prayers. We are requesting prayers that more young nurses become involved and that someone will answer the call to be the chairperson for Quebec NCF.

Marg Winchester
Atlantic NCF Chairperson

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**NCF in Atlantic Canada**

This year we have continued holding regular NCF gatherings in Fredericton, St. John, and Moncton. Our newsletter, The Link, has been successful in reaching out to and connecting nurses in Atlantic Canada. We have also been distributing Ambassador Kits (packages containing information about NCF) to nurses who are interested in learning more about our ministries. For the first time, in 2008, we participated at the job fair in Fredericton.

NCF in Fredericton met bi-weekly this year on the UNB campus, in the Faculty of Nursing building. In March they decided to shift their focus and meet at the hospital chapel instead of the University. Though their numbers are small, the times of fellowship and focused prayers for the local hospital and government are encouraging.

Our main emphasis is prayer for God’s leading/direction to enable us to be a visible presence on and off campus, for leadership, focus and direction, as well as renewed interest and fellowship in the fall. Karen Chase, our current leader will be getting married and moving to Halifax in June, so please pray for her as she takes these new steps. We are also seeking nurses willing to commit to serving on the committee and for NCF representation in P.E.I. and Nova Scotia.

Pauline Martin
Quebec NCF Chairperson

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**NCF in Saskatchewan**

NCF in Saskatchewan continues to be used by nurses to care for nurses. Three community groups in Yorkton, Estevan and Regina meet at various intervals throughout the year to attend group discussions on health care issues, listen to relevant and timely speakers, study and apply scripture, and pray. Christian nurses in our province have been engaged in mentoring new graduates as well as international nurses who have come to Canada to serve in our provincial health region.

Responses to personal invitations to attend retreats, brunch/dinner meetings, and workshops have been very positive. In March, Regina NCF hosted a ‘Getting Your House in Order’ brunch with Bonnie Raebel as our speaker. Our monthly ‘Prayer & Share Coffee’ also continues to lift up nurses and the health care system in prayer. This fall will be our 4th annual nurses’ retreat. It has been planned for October 16–18, 2009 at Dallas Valley Ranch Camp near Regina. NCF is definitely meeting the needs for education, care, and fellowship among nurses as they serve God and the people of Saskatchewan in their chosen profession.

Doreen Pretzlaff, RN
Former Saskatchewan NCF Chairperson

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**NCF Across Canada**

Across Canada, nurses are affiliated with another group of nurses who are working to support the nurses in their respective communities. RNAO exhibitions, breakfast gatherings, and annual seminars are examples of some other events we have been involved in annually.

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Ontario NCF Chairperson

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Pauline Martin
Quebec NCF Chairperson

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Doreen Pretzlaff, RN
Former Saskatchewan NCF Chairperson

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Spiritual Caregiving in Plural Contexts...continued

I feel I have a spiritual bond with many of the Sikh and Punjabi patients—they are so devout. When I come to a woman’s house and I know that she has had a prayer shawl over her head and then she comes and becons me. I feel like I’m almost walking on ground. And feel I an immediate bond. So I don’t think, ‘Oh, you’re from a different religion.’ I admire her devotion and so on for me. It’s not such a barrier.’’ (Sheryl-Reimer-Kirkham et al., 2004, p. 158).

The point then becomes how religion and spirituality—even when rep- resenting different beliefs—can be an avenue for connection between nurse and patient. Mary O’Brien (2007) has written several books on spirituality and nursing also draws on the Old Testament narrative of Mo- ses and the burning bush when she says that a nurse’s spiritual posture is one standing on holy ground, one that requires us to “take off our shoes” as it were. She writes:

“God frequently speaks to us from a ‘burning bush’, in the fretful whimper of a feverish child, in the anxious questions of a surgical patient, our daily bread. In Christian traditions, this may be the “praying nurse’s” sentence. When Caroline Petrie was substituted after she offered to pray with a patient (Nursing Times, 2009). At the same time, the media in Brit- ish Columbia featured the story of a nurse who cut the beard of a de- ad elderly Sikh, clearly violating religious proscriptions in his case (Wintonyk, 2008). The nurse did not know that the cutting of hair was prohibited for a Sikh; her intention had been to provide for his personal hygiene. These two incidents drew attention to the religious, spiritual, and cultural pluralities faced by nurses, as well as the political nature of religion and spirituality today. Global patterns of migration are creating unprecedented diversity in our so- cieties, leading to questions about how today’s predominantly secu- lar health settings accommo- date religious, spiritual, and cultural pluralities. While spiritual caregiving is now given increased attention in nursing education and research, how it is integrated into health care settings varies con- siderably (Cavan et al., 2007; Pest et al., 2008).

Petrie has since been reinstat- ed but her situation has sparked a healthcare and religion debate in the United Kingdom about bound- aries for what nurses do with their own values and beliefs. While the consequences of either scenario is raised when a nurse of- fers therapeutic touch, crystals, or other spiritual interventions also raise similar questions. How does one initiate a conversation about matters pertaining to reli- gion and spirituality? Is it wise to share one’s own beliefs, or does someone else have? How does one encourage each other? God can encourage each other.

Have I Got a Job For You!
By Clara Martin, RN

“What is a newly-retired public health nurse doing under- hind a booth at a job fair?”

In a way, both are true. The real “job” is to represent the Lord. What I discovered a few years ago is a unique lit- tle opportunity to share my faith with others—rep- resenting NCF at Health Care Job Fairs. More volunteers are needed across Canada and the commit- ment of time is lessened the more people help.

Think about it! People in need of a job or information about jobs come to these events looking for guidance. They are often at a crossroad in their lives. They need help. Our booth at the NCF booth with me. I enjoyed it from the outset, talking with nurs- ies, student nurses, and anyone else who passed by. It is a wonder- ful opportunity to meet nurses and other health care providers. Many nurses are not aware of NCF and delighted it to exist that supports nurses in their workplaces. Some leave their names and e-mail ad- dresses to talk with nurses about the NCF card and to check for the website for information.

Job fairs provide us with op- portunities to speak with people from various health care sectors and are a great way to get nurses involved. Besides NCF materi- als including the Ontario NCF and Canadian NCF newsletters, I have available other resources such as the popular, Our Daily Bread, a small booklet entitled Daily Strength which contains verses for each day of the month, Gos- pels of John, and New Testaments. Nurses often tell me they will carry these small booklets in their bags for quick reading, a spiritual snack to so speak. More recently, I have also brought with me copies of the DVD Jesus DVD & Magdalena (Broadcast Communica- tions Inc.: 1-800-463-4885, or 519) 886-2410). New Testaments and Gos- pels of John – Canadian Bible Society

Stickers for young children who may be accompanying their parent(s)

It was unfair to assist him in find- ing a job, I was able to give him the NCF website information and he was eager to receive them. An- other time it was a person who was from Bangladesh, as the DVD could not be shown about proselytization. I would like to encourage you as nurses to take the challenge to represent NCF at Job Fairs in your city. If you can, find a partner with whom you can volunteer alongside, so you can encourage each other. In particular, philosophically and theologically always honours His word; you nev- er know whom you may be able to encourage.

If you would like to learn more about how you can get involved with job fairs, feel free to con- tact Fronica Yu at nationalchair@ ncfcanada.ca or your local NCF group leader.

A few of the many resources available:

- Daily Strength – Scripture Gift Mission: 1 (705) 325-1002
- Jesus DVD & Magdalena (Broadcast Communica- tions Inc.: 1-800-463-4885, or 519) 886-2410)
- New Testaments and Gos- pels of John – Canadian Bible Society

Nurses Christian Fellowship Canada

NEWSLETTER 2009

Spiritual Caregiving in Plural Contexts

By Sheryl Reimer-Kirkham

To recent stories that caught media attention highlight some of the com- plexities of spiritual caregiving in plural healthcare settings typical of Canada and many other nations. The second scenario arises. Our cur- rent nursing education emphasis- es, or more accurately, privileges a generic spirituality over religion and can leave nurses ill-prepared for practice. Nurses are uncertain about how to distinguish between religious, and spiritual boundaries, and how to care in culturally and religiously appropri- ate ways for their patients. A group of nurses researchers at Trinity Western University, Langley, B.C. are studying how nurses, oth- er healthcare professionals, and spiritual care providers (chaplains) are approaching spiritual care- giving in plural settings. We are continuing a project within the Home Health Care setting and have received funding (from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada) for a second project in home health settings. We are pur- suing questions such as:

- Given the plurality of soci- ety—covering the gamut from atheism to personalized New Age beliefs (Christians) to other spiritualities, how do their boundaries differ from those of religious, spiritual and cultural pluralities?
- What are the roles of health care professionals in relation to other religious and spiritualities? Where are the professional boundaries?

In our research, we heard sto- ries from nurses, views of others—Christians, who reflect uncer- tainty and moral dilemmas about what to do with their own values and beliefs with concerns. How does one initiate a conversation about matters pertaining to reli- gion and spirituality? Is it wise to share one’s own beliefs, or is it more important that patients be able to say their prayers and follow dietary rules and other guidelines (such as the five Ks of the Sikh religion)?

Our research has shown many effective and profound ways in which healthcare providers can connect with patients across differing values and beliefs. One nurse, a Christian, explained that spiritu- ality could become a bond with patients, even when they had very different beliefs. She gave this ex- ample of visiting a Sikh woman in her home:

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