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Nurses Christian Fellowship International European Region Newsletter January 2011

## Editorial

It often seems that one of the greatest encouragements of being a Christian is seeing our God at work, answering prayers, opening doorways, reconciling groups and people who have broken relationships, bringing life and hope to situations of despair and death.

One example of that has been the growth of nursing fellowships in Eastern Europe over the last few years. It was so encouraging to meet nurses from Armenia, Albania, Moldova and Romania at the NCFI Europe conference in May-June this year.

Even more encouraging is to hear the news from the Armenians of their developing ministry, reaching out to patients and colleagues as the Christian Nursing Department of the Armenian Christian Medical Association.

And after many years of prayer and labour, to see the Romanian Christian Nurses Association finally officially set up and meeting in at least two centres, with a possible seven groups in all getting ready to meet regularly across the country.

Our God is a God of answered prayers. He is also a God who asks no less of us – that we should work hard in his service to see his kingdom come.

The new Migrant Nurses Project has come out of the hard labour and prayers of the Spanish Christian Nurses Association, and the hard work of Rosa Lopez and Fatima (amongst others), and the prayers of many, both in Spain and further afield. It is a practical response to the call in scripture to care for the foreigner who lives amongst us, and we hope that the lessons learnt are ones that other Christian nursing fellowships around the region can put into practice to show practical Christian love and care to the many migrant nurses across the region.

And we have seen God answer prayers as some of our members struggle with organisational and financial problems. It is not always easy to keep going as many nurses do not see the need to be involved with a Christian nursing fellowship, or struggle to find the time to contribute to its work and vision. It can be a real

labour of love, and I meet many who have been worn out in this work.

I am therefore encouraged by the words of Paul - a man who knew a lot about hard work, prayer, opposition and persevering through discouragement.

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may **strengthen** you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that **Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith.** And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to **grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ,** and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that **you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.***

Ephesians 3:16-19

So, as we start this new year I pray that you may know strength from the Holy Spirit, that he may fill you with God's love, presence, peace and strength in your service of him, in your work and in your national fellowship.

*The European Committee  
of NCFI*

## Armenian Nurses



ACMA team in one of the villages

Post operative nurse



*“Almost all patients hear the word of God and the Saviour’s message.”*

ACMA – Armenian surgical ministries. Christian Medical During operating days at Association was born in the hospital, the nurses 2006. It was officially are divided into two registered as an NGO in groups: the first group of 2007 in the RoA nurses stays in the (Republic of Armenia). operating theatre. This The Christian Nurses group of nurses keeps Department (CND) was on praying for patients officially announced and and the surgical team, took its recent shape in just before surgery and 2009, under the post-operatively trying to supervision of the support these patients ACMA's executive with spiritual counselling director Dr Kristina if needed. In addition Alikhanyan and as its they prepare patients for representatives both of surgery, and care for Miss Gayane Movsisyan them postoperatively in and her assistant Miss the recovery room. Marine Abgaryan (both of Patients are able to talk to the nurses and be European Conference in prayed with and Armenia in May 2010). comforted at the Since then, this recovery-pre-theatre department has grown room. and continues to grow in many different ways and styles.

For the last ten years, Dr. Jany Haddad, MD, FRCS, the founder and president of ACMA-NGO has come to Armenia twice yearly and does tens and hundreds of operations for free. Since 2009 our nurses started to be actively involved in this medical

and surgical ministry. On each visit, more than 75 patients are operated upon during 6-7 days, and more than 700 patients are seen in different out-patient clinics. ACMA nurses (ACMA-CND) are actively involved in both ACMA's medical and

care and service, they keep on saying that they have never before experienced this kind of care, both free medical treatment and gifts from ACMA staff. So, all their friends and relatives receive the good news - verbally and in print - as books and booklets. It is so blessing and encouraging. Almost all patients hear the word of God and the Saviour’s message, and many patients receive the Lord as their Saviour. Patients are cared by our nurse till their discharge.

Beside these two groups of nurses who are involved during the surgical period, we also have a third group of nurses. This group couldn't come to Gyumri – to the Austrian Pediatric Hospital, where operations were performed – because of their employment or for other reasons, but were praying for the doctors and nurses who are in Gyumri and lifting them up in prayers as a group.

ACMA has vision not only to spread Gospel among patients but also to talk about Jesus to healthcare workers, as well as increase the level of Professional skills. In this connection, we

Also ACMA nurses give all patients small bags with gifts in them (some spiritual books and individual goods for their hygiene, etc.). Patients are usually very glad and surprised at the same time for such special

invite nurse-students (from different nursing schools, different marzes (provinces) - Armavir and Shirak from Gyumri) who are both trained and witnessed to. All these nurses - students and ACMA nurses - are accommodated at the ACMA Centre, with some time for fun and talks where we share of His love.

Regularly and before Dr. Jany's visit, ACMA's-team (doctors and nurses) go to different regions to see many different patients with different problems and at the same time register patients who need surgical treatment and prepare them for his bi-annual visits. All ACMA doctors and nurses do this ministry as volunteers. Some of our nurses took their annual leave in order to spend two weeks with Dr. Jany in looking after patients in hospitals and even after the operations.

Postoperative care of patients is done by local ACMA-marz (provincial) team, mainly nurses. Wound dressing is done in different places: churches, hospitals, at homes. We have a great team of nurses who are doing a marvelous job in their patients' postoperative period. We do praise

the Lord for such a wonderful team. In case some of these patients might have any questions or need for advice from our nurses, they can approach them directly and talk to our Dr. Armen Minasyan who is surgeon or by email can contact to Dr. Jany Haddad.

Since 2009, when the ACMA nursing department started to work actively, the number of nurses has increased from a few counted on the fingers of one hand to about fifty plus. Not only Christian nurses joined us, but also some nurses became Christians through ACMA. For example, there is a nurse-student who wanted to be involved with ACMA, and for that reason she decided to study at one of the nursing schools in Armenia and to be an official nurse serving through ACMA. During this time, and through her testimony, her teacher heard about ACMA through this

student and is now one of our active ACMA members. And there are also many other testimonies which show God's hand in ACMA and His blessings through all the other departments as well.



Dr Janay Seeing a patient at a mobile clinic

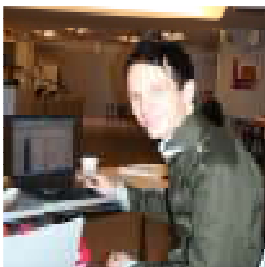
## The meaning of a photograph in exploring spiritual health. – Crossing the boundaries?



Healthcare touches a human being at all the levels of his existence. The idea of separating physical and mental is based on a western philosophy (Plato and Aristotle). Yet in the life of a human being these facets of physical and mental intertwine. Especially in times of illness the facets of physical, mental, social and spiritual come together in a strong way.

Questions about the origin of ailments, or their meaning, or the future after the diagnosis, are often asked for the first time by a healthcare professional. Often in these situations it is not possible to consult a specialist e.g. in spiritual matters. So, the central question will be: as healthcare professionals do we have enough training to meet these kinds of challenging care-settings/relationships?

In his recent research Ikali Karvinen explored spiritual and mental health in a Kenyan



*Ikali Karvinen*

hospital by the methods of ethnographic research and photography.

Using visual methods in research is not new, but recently it has got new traits. Also in medical sociology researchers have been rediscovering this method.

Ikali Karvinen is challenging healthcare workers to try to use photographs in their everyday work. For instance, talking about the photo may help the patient to describe his/hers physical, emotional, social or spiritual needs better also verbally – the photo/picture may help the patient sort of make (create) his/hers reality visible for others.

*Ikali Karvinen, RN, Dr of public health*

For more information on the use of photography in spiritual care email:

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*translated by Paula Laamanen Helsinki*

## A MINISTRY OF PRAYING FOR THE WORKPLACE

### The beginning – the Calling

In 2004 we started prayer meetings in a group at Haukeland University Hospital in Bergen, Norway. In my heart there had for a long time been a prayer and a calling to take responsibility to pray for my place of work, for my colleagues and for patients. After having attended a Bible seminar in Bergen, God guided me to meet a physiotherapist working in the same clinic as I. We shared the same calling and need. In 2004 we began our meetings every Tuesday at 15.30 in a room for services, a “silent room”, at the hospital. We were consecrated to service. The same took place for our chaplains working in the hospital. Little by little more colleagues with the same vocation joined us - especially from a medical ward. We made an overview over Christian colleagues we knew about and invited to a prayer communion. The chaplains gave us access to the room for services and to announce the meetings - by a poster and, for a short period, by intranet.

For us who have participated from the beginning we experienced a clear vocation

especially based on the Jesus’ missionary command - when Jesus commands us to walk out, but to start in Jerusalem – near the place we are. Other verses in the Bible have also been inspiring and functioned as guides – from the Psalms, Nahum, Moses (who prayed for the people), Isaiah, Jeremiah and from Romans. We have also experienced prophetic pictures and words which have given us courage and strength to persisting prayer. Six years have passed and we are still praying every Tuesday. The group faithfully participating consists of five to ten persons. On account of different working times some are absent. The need to pray for others makes people participate in their leisure time as well. On several occasions we have had communion in the group.

### Praying while walking

The group has been on “Ulriken” – a mountain near the hospital – where we have prayed for the area and blessed it. We have also practiced ‘prayer walking’ outside different wards and clinics at the hospital.

Outside the

Psychiatric Clinic we were praying while walking on seven days. The seventh day we walked seven times around the building. The background for this was a clear picture of Joshua and the Israelites walking outside Jericho, with the fall of the walls as a consequence.

The intention of these walks has not been to demonstrate, but a silent walking with prayer, praising and blessing. Once, after prayer walking around the Psychiatric Clinic we heard of how God had been present and helped in a difficult treatment situation on just the same day as we had been walking around this institution. In the Bible God instructed the Israelites to bless and to anoint their doorposts. The group has practiced that in the ‘Central block’ at the hospital.

### Historical aspects related to the hospital

God gave me an obvious sudden thought to study the history connected with the area of the hospital. Through this research three topics for our praying emerged. The hospital was established on a big farm called “Haukeland Gaard” - a part of a farm belonging to the king (“Alrekstad Kongsgaard”).



### A Ministry of Praying for the Workplace continued



We then brought the aspect of “king” into our prayers and placed Jesus as King of the kings on the throne of the hospital. In addition to this we found through the research that there earlier had been a thing or a courthouse under the main building. As a consequence of this we prayed the laws of God into treatment, care and research at the hospital, especially the issue of the Norwegian law of provoked abortion. “Haukeland Gaard” had also been an old marketplace. So we brought the economic blessings back to the hospital and blessed the finances and management through our prayers. Later on the Haukeland University Hospital was the first Norwegian hospital which achieved financial balance.

#### Connections at the hospital

Already from the starting point there has been contact with the hospital’s chaplains and we have - according to words given us from God - informed the chief executive and other persons in leading positions about our praying group and that we are interested in receiving topics for praying.

#### Focus in our prayer

- The patients – as a group and as individual persons
- Next of kin

- Children as in-patients
- Colleagues
- Managers
- The chief executive and the administrative management
- The chaplains at the hospital
- Treatment and care
- Mental Health
- Research
- Workplace environment
- Protection from treatment errors, accidents and mishaps
- Hospital finances
- The hospital’s engagement and involvement in Asia and in Africa.

#### Have we seen any results from our prayers?

Yes! Above all we have experienced that God has touched our hearts, which are praying and that in a new way he has given us love and care for our colleagues and patients. In the group we have developed a unique communion across the divisions between churches and congregations.

Through this fellowship we are bound together in love. From persons in the hospital we have also received strong testimonies about interventions from God leading to recovery, restoration, salvation, restored relationships

and positive changes to patients’ circumstances. We have prayed with and anointed patients who have come to the praying room when we are gathered and we are praying for each other.

God has given us many words and pictures on the way, like a cross above the area, melting ice, sprouting flowers. Some years ago a serious accident in a housing development took place in Bergen. The night before this happened, one of the members in the group was lead by God to pray without knowing why. When she listened to the news in the following morning, she understood why God had woken her up.

Some years ago I visited a bible school called “Veien Bibelskole” to talk about how to be a Christian in the workplace. Then I got a prophetic word where our praying work at Haukeland University Hospital was placed in a national and international context. This prophecy is now about to be completed – a network in Norway concerning praying for the workplace is being started up by the “silent room” movement. We want to be a part of this. Earlier this year I was in Romania and attended the European Conference (NCFI) and participated in a

### A Vocation for Praying for the Workplace continued

workshop on this issue.  
**Why prayer in the workplace?**

My prayer, and the prayer of all of us in the group, is to be salt and light in the workplace and to pass Jesus on through our lives. This has become our service in our workdays. We believe that prayer makes a

difference and along the way we have seen many specific prayer results.

We must believe that God can achieve great results – believing that prayer is of use.

We want to inspire other to start praying groups on every workplace.

*Torbjörg Søyland Hopen*

*Professional responsible anaesthetist nurse – neurosurgery KSK Head – Throat Section Haukeland University Hospital Bergen – Norway*

## Migrant Nurses Pilot Project - Spain

**Greetings in the precious Name of Jesus.**

We have just started the Migrant Nurses Project and held the first meeting in Madrid on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> of October 15 nurses arrived from Madrid, Castilla la Mancha and Valencia. The main theme was the presentation of the Migrant Nurses Project.

The programme was arranged to include the participation of Spanish and migrant nurses. A Spanish nurse, Esperanza, welcomed everyone, and we all introduced ourselves. She then, opened in prayer and handed over to Sylvia, from Ecuador, who gave a very relevant devotional on the life of Abraham as a migrant. He had to leave his own country and settle in a land, unknown to him. As a migrant nurse herself Sylvia explained that the migrant, who trusts in the Lord in migration as in the other experiences of life,

finds their security in God. As sons of God we have the certainty that our present and future is full of hope because He wants the best for us. Jeremiah 29:11-13 **"For I know the thoughts that I think towards you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you an expected end.....You shall call on me .... and I will answer you. ....And you shall seek me and find me.... and pray and I will hear you"** encourages us and gives us steadfast security.

Our next speaker was Pilar Paciencia, a Spanish midwifery educator who presented the history of nursing, with particular emphasis on midwifery care from earliest times until the present day in Spain. This was the introduction to the Spanish health service.

The migrant nurses then gave their experiences in nursing training in their countries and their adaptation to

Spain. Sylvia shared of her rural experience as part of the nursing training course in Ecuador. Gerty from Peru amazed us with her report on being a newly qualified nurse in a mission station in Peru, among the Indians, It was an inspiring story of working, in conditions very different to anything we could imagine in Europe, being dropped off in the jungle among Indian tribes, setting up health clinics and teaching health care to illiterate people, even giving blood transfusions from her own blood (O) to the needy Indians and of how she was blessed in this work.

Teresa and Brenda from Bolivia, shared about their training and working conditions, working double shifts to be able to live, being on call 24 hours a day, day after day. One was only impressed by the

**Migrant Nurses Project Continued...**

dedication of these nurses following day. The who came to Spain to get anaesthetists remarked more training. that patients that Carmen

Rosa presented the visited were calmer and Migrant nurses project and needed less anaesthetic gave us the steps to follow. than others. Carmen

After lunch Marion didn't talk about the Lord explained the vision of she just reassured them NCFI, to bring the and prayed for them. presence of Jesus into the (International Saline profession and workplace. style).

and challenged the nurses Gracia, a Spanish to see nursing as a nurse shared her ministry not just a job. experience in Romania Carmen, a Spanish nurse with photos.

shared of how in her We closed by hospital the theatre nurses praying for each other visit the patients on the and thanking the Lord for operating list for the a wonderful time of

fellowship.

*Rosa sent this update a few weeks later:*

"On the 20th of November we had a meeting in Valencia .The were a total of 8 nurses from Ecuador, Nicaragua, Bolivia, Colombia and Spain. Not all those invited came. Rosa presented the Migrant Nurses Project and how to apply it locally. We finished with a time of prayer for nurses that they would be salt and light in nursing"

**News & Updates from National Nursing Fellowships****NCF Scotland****Change**

In order that a Fellowship can grow and bear new fruit, from time to time change is sometimes necessary; this is not always easy but a vital part of the growing process. Recently, the executive committee members met together for an 'away day' to review, reconsider and pray about the aims and objectives of the Fellowship. Following this, a decision was made to contact every member asking for permission to share their contact details with other members/those interested in the Fellowship. The main

aim of this was to strengthen and maintain links already there, make new links and endeavour to re-establish prayer groups. The role of Prayer Secretary was filled recently and June has been in touch with the membership asking for prayer requests and to know what is going on in their area.

Following the annual residential conference in April a decision was taken that, for the time being, no more residential conferences will be held, instead it is planned to hold study days in different parts of the country. Yes, this is a change but more and more often working

nurses are unable to give time for a whole weekend away. It is hoped that by this change more active working nurses will be free to attend, and join with those who over many years have prayed and supported the Fellowship.

The issue of our quarterly magazine was addressed and as from March 2011 a newsletter will be published bi-monthly. It is hoped that by using this format and frequency, the articles will be more up to date, current and fresh, and reflect the immediacy of the changing nature of healthcare in the current climate.

The Fellowship

### News & Updates from National Fellowships continued...

continues to have links with other Christian organisations, and to exhibit at Christian conferences throughout Scotland.

Recently, in the Scottish Parliament, a bill seeking to introduce assisted suicide was defeated and we give thanks to all who contributed in any way to this debate and we thank God for the result.

We have enthusiasm for the work ahead of us and look forward to the challenges facing us in the coming year.

#### **DKS - Denmark**

##### **Crisis in Denmark -**

**September 2<sup>nd</sup> 2010:** NCF-members receive an emergency letter from the National Committee. There is only sufficient finance for three months of salary for our staff worker, Annette Langdahl, provided that our securities are sold. The Committee Members are seriously considering closing down the fellowship. The National Conference planned for October 9<sup>th</sup> can only be carried through if we have at least 20 participants as there is no finance to cover a deficit. Members are encouraged to pray, think, give and distribute conference invitations.

Prayer request is sent to NCFI friends.

**October 1<sup>st</sup>:** Final date for conference booking. Not enough participants. Considering canceling.

We receive encouraging greetings from NCFI friends and own members.

**October 9<sup>th</sup>:** Just enough bookings for the conference to be held. All costs are covered, and with donations we even have a surplus! At the General Assembly following the conference it is decided to give the fellowship a chance for one more year.

Annette's working hours will be reduced from 15 hours per week to 7 hours. We will suspend the production of our magazine for the time being, concentrating on email correspondence, the NCF home page and a coming home page on spiritual care. Furthermore we will aim to distribute our message through newspapers and professional magazines.

**Future:** We are having "dialogue meetings" at different places in the country, listening to what needs nurses (members and nonmembers) may have regarding living as Christians in nursing. Next meeting will be January 13<sup>th</sup>. Spring 2011 we are planning a seminar on how to use the press for our

message most effectively.

Our finances are still fragile. Our future still seems uncertain. We still need prayer and God's guidance. But we are grateful we are still here! And we are grateful for having NCFI friends in Europe and the rest of the world. Friends who understand. Friends who encourage. Friends who pray. Thank you!

*Grete Schärfe  
NCF Committee Member,  
Denmark*

#### **KFSS – Norway**

After a year of uncertainty and prayer for God's guidance, we have much to give thanks for.

Praise the Lord for a new nurse on the national board and for two new nurses and a student at the editorial board of our journal

Praise the Lord for a newly established prayer network amongst our retired members

Pray for 2011 for KFSS, for the planning of our national conference, and for the election of a new board and leader

*Tove Giske  
Bergen, Norway*

### Updates from National Nursing Fellowships Continued...

#### AAMCR - Romania

I am writing to you, to let you know our good news about Christian nurses in Romania. As you know, we started our NCF as AAMCR - 'Asociatia Asistentilor Medicali Crestini Din Romania' (Christian Nurses Association of Romania). We had few meetings with Christian nurses in Cluj and nurses from Zalau have started meeting too. There are five other groups in different parts of the country who hope to start meeting soon.

In every meeting (the last Thursday of the month), 10 or more nurses had different subjects to talk about (e.g. the fruit of the spirit from Galat.5:22) we prayed, and share some problems that we have in our job.

We have a *Statute* (official papers that we needed to be registered), and are working with European Committee in setting up a constitution and guidelines for others wanting to set up local groups in Romania. Please continue to pray for us.

*Dana Chantree – Cluj,  
Romania*

#### CHP - Germany

The group continues to meet regularly, although numbers remain small. Andrea is okay. Johanna was not with us because of recent health problems. Julia, our student nurse is okay: she told us yesterday, of another student nurse with whom she is in contact and for whom she had prayed. Although she did not want to know anything about being a real Christian at first, she is now interested to hear about Christian beliefs. We will pray that Julia may be a blessing for her.

Please continue to pray, as everyone in the group is under much pressure at the moment with work, family or health needs.

*Uta Bornschein –  
Ostfelden, Germany*

#### CNM England & Wales

The main news has been the appointment (in partnership with Christian Medical Fellowship) of Annie Leggett who is working with student nurses. We have long recognised that we need a strong work amongst student

nurses, helping them to think about nursing in terms of their Christian faith, helping them grow in witness to colleagues and patients, and encouraging them to develop their nursing skills with a strong Christian heart.

Annie has been busy since October building relationships with other student ministries in London (especially at the bigger churches), and building relationships with student nurses.

We have also been strengthening link with the Parish Nursing Ministries network in the UK – Steve (our Secretary) was one of the key note speakers at their annual symposium in September, and their coordinator, Helen Wordsworth has written an article for our magazine, spoke at the NCFI Conference in Romania and hopes to speak at future CNM conferences. We are organising with them a retreat for nurses and midwives in the autumn, and plan to do other work with them getting churches and Christian GPs to recognise the role

### Updates from National Nursing Fellowships Continued...

and need for nurses to be involved in health ministry from the local church.

We continue to build a relationship with the Royal College of Nursing, our main professional body in the UK, and have been encouraging members to join RCN working groups on spirituality and ethics in particular.

We have a conference in London in March and a major weekend conference for March in 2012 in the English midlands.

Please pray for new leaders on the Council.

*Steve Fouch –  
London, England*

#### SSKS - Finland

We had our annual general meeting in November, and a new board was elected. President (chair) is Anneli Huttunen, Paula Laamanen (vice chair), others: Ulla Arvola, Irma Kirla, Helena Koskinen, Riitta Nikkilä, Leena Salmijärvi, Satu Tuominen & Raija Wallius-Smulowitz.

Financially the Lord has been good and can look to the next year without immediate financial problems. Next year we want to reach out

for student nurses especially.

At the turn of next year we open our new website: [www.sksry.fi](http://www.sksry.fi) and have modernized our logo a little bit.

The we held a successful seminar "Does the Culture of Caring Survive" in October. People enjoyed it and asked for more. Our subsections met for planning of their future activities at the same time.

Our Healthcare Sundays in different parts of the country were also well- received. One couple came to one of the organisers to say that how surprised and taken he was to learn that

healthcare professionals pray for their patients.

Next year we are again having a stand in the biggest nursing training days in March *Sairaanhoitajapäivät* and have also been asked to arrange a morning prayer time there on March 18.

Our summer seminar is to be held in Iisalmi from 13-14 August.

*Paula Laamanen,  
Helsinki, Finland*

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## Upcoming Events

### 5th International Student Conference on Spiritual Care

3-4 November 2011

Amsterdam, Netherlands

Watch [www.ncfieurope.org](http://www.ncfieurope.org)  
for news and updates