

autumn 2016

for today's Christian nurses  
& midwives

# spotlight



- ten top tips for surviving nursing school
- nursing as a Christian ministry
- they used to throw us to the lion

# spotlight

is the nurses' & midwives' journal of the Christian Medical Fellowship

A company limited by guarantee  
Registered in England no. 6949436  
Registered Charity no. 1131658  
**Registered office:**  
6 Marshalsea Road, London SE11HL  
**Tel** 020 7234 9660  
**Email** admin@cmf.org.uk  
**Web** www.cmf.org.uk

## President

John Wyatt MD FRSPCH

## Chairman

Ken Toop MB MRCOG

## Immediate-Past Chairman

Peter Phillips MB FRCP

## Treasurer

Philip Taylor MA (Oxon)

## Chief Executive

Peter Saunders MB FRACS

## Subscriptions

Spotlight is sent to all nurse members of CMF as part of the benefits of membership.

## Contributions

The editor welcomes original contributions, which have both Christian and nursing or midwifery content. Advice for preparation is available on request.

Authors have reasonable freedom of expression of opinion in so far as their material is consonant with the Christian faith as recorded in the Bible. Views expressed are not necessarily those of the publishers.

## Editors

Steve Fouch (CMF Head of Nursing)  
Pippa Peppiatt (Nurses Student Staff Worker)

## Design

S2 Design & Advertising Ltd  
020 8677 2788

## Print

Solopress

## Copyright

Christian Medical Fellowship, London. All rights reserved. Except for a few copies for private study, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior permission of the Christian Medical Fellowship.

Unless otherwise stated, Scripture quotations taken from The Holy Bible, New International Version Anglicised Copyright © 1979, 1984, 2011 Biblica. Used by permission of Hodder & Stoughton Publishers, an Hachette UK company.

All rights reserved. 'NIV' is a registered trademark of Biblica.

UK trademark number 1448790.

# inside

4 ten top tips for surviving nursing school

6 devotional

8 nurses on the frontline

10 nursing as a Christian ministry

14 they used to throw us to the lion

# editorial

**W**elcome to the first edition of *Spotlight*, the new CMF publication for Christian nurses and midwives!

We're really excited to launch our own publication that focuses on experiences and perspectives which are specific to nurses and midwives.

*Spotlight* aims to bring together personal, professional and biblical perspectives to strengthen, inform and inspire one another as we seek to combine our faith and our professions in the workplace. We also want to encourage nursing and midwifery students and those newly qualified as they begin their careers.

This first edition is timed for the start of the new academic year, when hundreds of Christians start their first steps in their nursing or midwifery course or in their first professional job. With that in mind, we've included an article about nursing as a

Christian ministry, an interview with a newly qualified nurse on how she kept going as a Christian during her studies and our ten top tips for nursing students.

Going forward, we want to see *Spotlight* grow and cover professional, spiritual and ethical issues and challenges from a Christian nursing and midwifery angle. To do that we need YOU! Your ideas, articles, letters, questions and suggestions are all needed and greatly appreciated. Write to us, email us ([steve@cmf.org.uk](mailto:steve@cmf.org.uk)), send us a Facebook message – however you communicate, send it to us! We want this to be for you and by you.

On behalf of the CMF Nurses Team

Steve & Pippa

## **Steve Fouch, CMF Head of Nursing**

Steve worked in community nursing in South London, before working for several years with a Christian HIV and AIDS home care team in the city.

## **Pippa Peppiatt, CMF Nurses Student Staff Worker**

Pippa trained as a nurse and has worked in a variety of settings. She has also planted a church for students with her husband, set up a charity for street kids in Uganda, and has been a Friends International Student Worker.

## ten top tips for surviving nursing school

### 1 look after yourself wholistically

You'll be taught to do this for patients. Take the same advice. Care for yourself physically, mentally and spiritually. Nursing school is a marathon, not a sprint. You can probably endure a short period of exhaustion, caffeine and on-the-hoof meals, but your performance will plummet if you neglect yourself long-term. Eat well, take care of yourself, and sleep as much as you can!

### 2 get stuck into a church

You won't make every meeting, but try to commit to one local church. Build up relationships with a few people. Having a church family nearby will help you settle into university life and be a vital part of your support network.

### 5 ask questions

The only wrong question is the one not asked. Don't be afraid to grow your inquisitiveness; ask not only the 'what' and the 'how' but the 'why' questions too.

### 3 put God first

Daily devotions are important. Read the Bible daily. Safeguard your intimacy with Jesus. Perhaps get a daily devotional book and find a time to read it each day at a time that works for you.

### 4 use the support at your nursing school

Keep in touch with your personal tutor, even when things are going well. Then you have a relationship to be able to approach him or her whenever you might be struggling.

7

## learn time management

This is one of the most important skills to develop. Learn to plan and prioritise, not just 'going with the flow'. These skills will save you from many bad days, both as a student nurse and later.

6

## make use of every opportunity

You'll meet many different and interesting people during the course of your studies. Enjoy them, especially the ones who are different from you! You never know what the Lord might bring from these relationships. Make the most of the clubs and other unique opportunities you have as a student (you'll miss the discounts after you graduate!).

8

## exercise regularly

Studying as a nurse or midwife can be quite a responsibility, causing some stress and anxiety. As well as keeping us in shape, exercise has been proven to help relieve stress and anxiety. It also boosts your ability to retain information.

9

## journal before bed


If you catch yourself lying awake at night, frantically reviewing everything you have to do the next day, give journaling a try. Take just a few minutes before bed to jot down your thoughts, experiences or concerns. This will decrease feelings of stress and anxiety. Pray through these things.

and finally...

10

## connect with other Christian student nurses and midwives through CMF

It is so helpful and encouraging for Christian nurses and midwives to connect and prayerfully support one another. It's great to unite publicly to promote Christian values in nursing, and to collectively look at ethical issues from a biblical perspective. Make use of available online and written resources. Be encouraged to be the best Christian nurse or midwife you can be!



The Lord sustains  
them on their sick-bed  
and restores them  
from their bed  
of illness.

Psalm 41:3

It is often said that nurses make the worst patients. My family can testify to this. I hardly ever get ill (not even 'man flu'), so when I do come down with something I stubbornly refuse to accept that I am ill, until someone either makes me stop and lie down or I collapse! Then I want to tell everyone what to do and insist on doing things for myself that really I cannot at that moment... I fear that when I am ill I am trying to teach my family about grace and patience, when perhaps I need to be doing the learning!

Being a carer can often make it very difficult to be the one receiving the care – we are not used to the idea of being dependent on others. It is a lesson in humility (and love) that I suspect not just I, but many of us in the caring professions, need to learn.

Yet Psalm 41 says something that should make us sit up take notice. Verse 3 can be translated: '...all his bed You [O Lord] will turn, change, and transform'.<sup>1</sup> In other words, this passage is actually saying that God will make up and turn your sick bed. Like a parent caring for a sick child, or like a nurse with their patient, God

cares for you, tends to you in your sickness and in your health; he transforms your circumstances, if you would but let him.

We might find it hard to accept care from our colleagues and families, but we also need to let down our defences and let God tend to us. Is your heart broken? Are you over-burdened, stressed and weary? Are you caught up in uncertainty and feeling directionless and lost? God is there to transform your situation, to tend to you and sustain you through your circumstances. Turn to him. Admit your need, and receive his grace and love.

Steve Fouch

This piece was originally published in the new CMF book for nurses and midwives *Lighting the Way devotionals*

1. Amplified Bible, Classic Edition

# nurses on the frontline

Rosie is a newly qualified nurse working in London. She kindly hosts our London nurses' group.

What area of nursing or midwifery are in?

I am an adult nurse on a rotation for a year, working six months in liver intensive care and then cardiac recovery.

Why did you choose this speciality?

I wanted to work somewhere challenging, and a rotation was a good opportunity to explore a variety of areas.

What motivates you in your job?

Although job satisfaction and 'loving my job' have motivated me at times, it only takes a really tough week at work or a difficult situation to unsteady that attitude. However, throughout both studying and working as a nurse, God's presence has been continually apparent, which gives me the drive and motivation that I'm not just doing a good job for my patients and colleagues, but that I want to please my Father.



## What does a typical day look like for you?

I've never been a morning person, but before each shift I always spend ten minutes over breakfast reading a bit of the Bible and praying. I love this time as it puts the day in perspective – that Jesus is in control and is with me throughout a long shift. Then it's off to work, seeing who I'll be spending the day with, taking handover, getting to know patients, assessing, making sure all medications are done, planning for the day, monitoring and continually reassessing. Some nurses are not good at taking their breaks, but it's so important (physically and mentally) to make sure you have them! No two days are ever the same, but inevitably you get home knowing you've spent your day doing something really worthwhile.

## What are the particular blessings/challenges of your job?

Nursing varies so much day-to-day that the challenges and blessings of the jobs are often the same thing on different days! On one shift your colleagues may be a joy to work with and the next everyone may be a bit tired and fed up. The same goes for patients, one day you may discharge someone you never thought would get home, but the next a patient deteriorates and it can be hard when faced with such differing situations.

## How did you find the transition from student to qualified nurse?

I remember feeling very ready to qualify, but also overwhelmed at the prospect of so much responsibility. It was a big transition. After the initial excitement of the first few weeks, settling into a routine and having some really good days, I remember that there were some days when I felt I knew nothing – but that is so normal, and within a few months you really get a confidence in yourself and in the knowledge and skills you have.

## Any advice for student nurses and midwives reading this?

I would really encourage that 6am Bible reading slot before shift! Also, remind yourself during your day at work that Jesus is your rock and refuge – you can totally rely on him, and when a shift may seem busy and stressful it's in him you will find peace.

## What things can we be praying for you?

To keep trusting in God's sovereignty at work and home.



feature

## nursing as a Christian ministry

'The uniqueness of Christ-inspired nursing lies in its emphasis on caring for the whole person as embodied, respecting each person as created in the image of God. It is both a science and an art, but primarily it is a response to God's grace and a reflection of his character.'

Shelley and Miller <sup>1</sup>

**O**f all the professions, nursing has one of the strongest claims to being rooted almost uniquely in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Yet, modern nursing today is very much distanced in its language, theory and philosophy from Christianity. Likewise, most churches do not seem to have space for nursing as a ministry or as an expression of the mission of the church to proclaim the Good News to the whole of creation (Mark 16:15). This was not always the case. But how can nursing, as a profession, be a ministry of the church? And how can we carry out Christian ministry in our hospital, clinic or community practice?

Jesus made it clear that to be his disciples we need to be engaged with the pain and suffering of a fallen, sinful creation. It is not enough to sit back and watch, we are called to get involved, to get our hands dirty helping the suffering and the lost. In Matthew 25:31-46, Jesus judges those who call on his name based on the care they show to people in need – the poor, the stranger, the sick and the imprisoned. More than that, to care for people in need was

to care for Jesus himself – it was an act of Christian worship (see also Galatians 6:10). We are all made in the image of God (Genesis 1:27). Therefore – regardless of any other factors, such as age, race, gender, sexuality or social class – we are all worthy of the same respect and care. God has given us all value and dignity, but we are also all sinners in need of God’s grace and forgiveness. No one is ultimately any better or worse than any other. So then, we are also called not to judge others, but to first recognise our own sinfulness and need of forgiveness (Luke 6:37).

Each person we encounter has been made for a relationship with God – a relationship that has been broken by human sin, but that can be made right and reconciled through Jesus’ death on the cross. In other words, despite the fallen nature and sin of our patients and colleagues (and our own), each one of us has a longing for God (because that is what we were designed for), but which we can’t satisfy apart from Jesus. So part of our role is to present Christ to others, in action and words. We care not just for our patients’ bodies (although this isn’t unimportant,

1. Shelley JA, Miller AB. *Called to Care: A Christian Worldview for Nursing*, 2nd ed. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2006

1 Corinthians 15); not for just their minds or social situations (though both are of great importance as well); but we also care about their spiritual needs, their need for meaning and significance, purpose, reconciliation and forgiveness – which is found only in Jesus Christ.

Care and compassion is a direct outworking of God's character. This was lived out by Jesus. Through sending Jesus, God himself became human. He experienced the same things we do – Jesus wept, experienced thirst, hunger, tiredness and can sympathise with our weakness. Ultimately he became a servant, taking the punishment we deserve through his death on the cross (Philippians 2:5-11). When confronted with people in need (spiritual or physical), Jesus was moved to compassion (Mark 8:1-8; Luke 7:11-15). In each case his compassion led to action that transformed the situation. On the cross, Jesus showed compassion in its most selfless form: he chose to lay down his life for our salvation.

Furthermore, we need to remember that God made us and has given us everything we have. Therefore, all aspects of our lives, including our gifts, skills and work belong to him. So whether we work for a church or a secular employer, Paul reminds us that 'whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working

for the Lord, not for human masters' (Colossians 3:23). We should be seeking to serve God by working to the best of our ability in whatever we're doing.

In living out the Good News of Jesus in our work, it is not just what we do and how we do it that matters. It also the sort of person that we are as a result of our relationship with Jesus. It is about our character, which as Christians should be one marked by the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22).

## care and compassion is a direct outworking of God's character

Finally, we work not in isolation, but as part of a body (1 Corinthians 12:27). Jesus does not just save us as individuals, but the Father has adopted us into his family (Romans 8:14-17). We are there to encourage one another, equip one another, point one another to Jesus in our lives, correct one another, and together reflect Jesus to the whole world (John 13:35; 1 Thessalonians 5:11).

# how does this work out in practice?

- 1. Caring as worship** – caring for our patients as if physically caring for Jesus himself. Our nursing practice grows out of, and in direct response to, our relationship with God. Keeping our spiritual lives healthy is a vital part of our nursing practise.
- 2. Caring as service** – laying down power and privilege to serve sinful humanity as Jesus did (Philippians 2:5-11). We seek to serve others, out of the same sense of service-as-worship, going beyond the basic requirements of our job description and professional codes to give Christ-like service to those in our care.
- 3. Unconditional, patient-centred care** – because as Christians we believe that every human being is made in the image of God, we can know that each individual has value and dignity. This applies to how we relate to and work with our colleagues as well as how we care for our patients and their families.
- 4. Caring for the whole person** – caring for bodily, psychosocial and spiritual needs of each patient as needed, in recognition that Christ values our physical, mental and spiritual wellbeing.
- 5. Caring in community** (or for one another) – both the relationships with our secular colleagues and with fellow Christians. With our non-Christian colleagues we need to show care, support and professional accountability of highest order. So that we are ‘doing what is right in the eyes of everyone. If is possible, as far as it depends on you, live and peace with everyone’ (Romas 23-17-18). With our Christian colleagues, we need to recognise our dependence on God in prayer, reading Scripture and reflecting on God’s Word with others. We need a godly community around us to help us live out our faith in the workplace every day, whatever that community might look like.

Steve Fouch

This article originally appears as a chapter in the new CMF book, *Lighting the Way: a handbook for Christian nurses & midwives*

## they used to throw us to the lion

**T**here was nothing the ancient Roman rabble liked more than a day at the circus. And though today most are squeamish about wild animals trained for human entertainment, organisers of Roman circuses had no such scruples. Wild circus lions were kept hungry to ensure a truly bloody spectacle as they tore unfortunates to pieces. And many of these unfortunates were Christians.

The Roman powers-that-be often didn't need

much pretext for making Christians scapegoats. Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (AD 155–240) – Tertullian for short – was a prolific early Christian author. In a famous passage he lamented how Christians were always deemed to be in the wrong. With his tongue firmly planted in his cheek he wrote: 'If the Tiber rises too high for the walls, or the Nile too low for the fields, if the heavens do not open, or the earth does, if there is famine, if there is plague, instantly the howl is, "The Christians to the lion!"' What, all of them, to a single lion?'

There's debate about just how widespread persecution of Christians was in the early centuries AD. It was patchy; local outbreaks of hostility rather than widespread violence. But it could be vicious. The story of the martyrdom of Perpetua and Felicity (killed in AD 203) is a famous example. Perpetua was a married noble woman, 22 years old and a nursing mother. Felicity, a slave imprisoned with her, was pregnant. They were put to death during games celebrating the birthday of the Emperor Septimus Severus.

What softened the hearts of the Roman world, and led to a genuine conversion of people in the Roman Empire, was not intellectual arguments but practical caring. Widows in the ancient world often faced a life of miserable penury. Supporting them was one of the earliest forms of Christian social service. When a devastating plague hit, pagan households would throw infected people into the streets. Christians, by contrast, were seen caring for them and taking them into their homes. When the Emperor Julian (born AD 332) gave up Christianity and tried to re-institute paganism, he admitted this enterprise would only work if pagans were seen to care more than Christians did. His campaign failed.

Through the centuries, Christians took a lead in offering medical care. Some of Britain's most famous hospitals (Barts, St Mary's,

St Thomas' – to name just three) began as Christian foundations.

These are hard times for Christians in Britain. We hear reports of Christians banned from wearing crosses, or finding themselves on the wrong side of NHS officialdom for sharing their faith with patients or colleagues. Yes, there's more hostility towards the Christian faith in this country today than there used to be but we need to see this in perspective. The Open Doors 'World Watch' list makes sober reading. It lists 50 countries where Christians face daily persecution. Open Doors say there are nine countries where there is 'extreme persecution'. Top of the list is North Korea, followed by Iraq, Eritrea, Afghanistan, Syria, Pakistan, Sudan and Iran. In a further 17 countries the persecution level is rated 'severe'. There is 'moderate' persecution in 14 countries while there is 'sparse' persecution in another ten. See the full list: [bit.ly/1zWfwMb](http://bit.ly/1zWfwMb)

There are two lessons here. First, persecution is a normal experience for most Christians. In the UK we get off light. Secondly, what softens hearts is not arguments but genuine care and compassion. As Desmond Tutu has said, 'God's dream is that you and I and all of us will realise that we are family, that we are made for togetherness, for goodness and for compassion'.

John Martin is CMF Head of Communications

# upcoming events 2016

## Saline Solution

– training in being an effective witness for Jesus in your workplace

24 September  
St Mark's Church, Battersea  
Rise, London SW11

15 October  
Bottesford Baptist Church,  
Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire

## London Nurses' Refreshment Dinner

– a chance to meet other Christians in nursing and midwifery (student and qualified) over an evening meal, with time for prayer

19 October 18:30  
6 Marshalsea Road,  
London SE1 1HL  
– all are welcome!

## CMF Regional Conferences

– for all the fellowship, a chance to meet with Christians in nursing, medicine, midwifery, and the allied health professions for fellowship, encouragement, teaching and prayer

7-9 October  
Northern Conference,  
Ilkley, West Yorkshire

5 November  
London & Southeast Day  
Conference  
London

11-13 November  
Scotland Conference  
Dundee

to book, go to: [cmf.org.uk/nurses/events](http://cmf.org.uk/nurses/events)

