



Nurses
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International

Christian Nurse International

Foundational Leaders of NCFI



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Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI)

Making a difference to nurses and nursing around the world

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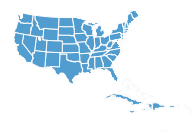
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Contents

The President's letter	02
The President's letter in Spanish	03
A letter from the editor	04
NCFI Presidents, Vice Presidents and General Directors	06
Leading with the heart	07
2020: the year of the nurse and midwife	08
A servant leader of leaders	10
Scottish reflections on pioneer leaders	12
Faithful servant of the Lord in Latin America	14
An early pioneer in the USA	16
'She lived until she died'	18
Reflections on being a leader in NCFI	19
Micah Tswabki leading in Africa	21
Loice Chipere	22
Blanche Lindsay	24
An unexpected journey	27
The leadership of Rev Hyesook Lee and the Korean Nurses Christian Fellowship	29
Pioneers in India: Dora Abraham and Esther Sirra	31
An answer to prayer	32
My journey with NCFI	34
Congress announcement	35
Introducing Susan Elliott our newly appointed Director of IICN	36
The value of our history	37

How can I help NCFI?

We would like to thank everyone who has given so generously to the work of NCFI. Without your gifts we could not continue to do God's amongst nurses and midwives. If you wish to make a donation please contact us or make a donation using Pay Pal by going onto our web site www.ncfi.org. Every donation which NCFI receives is acknowledged. The majority of funds received are used to help others, in line with our strategic plans. **Thank you!**

If you are thinking of updating or making a new Last Will and Testament please remember NCFI! Thank you!

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The President's letter

Remember your leaders

As preparation for this issue of Christian Nurses International, I have been reading again in the book by Pat Ashworth (2012) about the history of NCFI. I have read about our visionary leaders who loved God and nursing, and who had an international perspective from the start.

Bible studies and prayers, reflection on what it means to be a Christian nurse in a foreign setting (or country), building of networks and friendships through conferences and other means of communication have been the core of NCFI work since its beginning in 1958.

As I reflect on the legacy our former leaders have left behind, these verses from Hebrew 13: 7–8 come to mind: *Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever.*



Tove Giske
Vice-President NCFI

So much has happened in nursing and in our societies over the more than 60 years since NCFI was established: Nursing has developed into a profession and is now, more than ever, the key in all kinds of healthcare services in our societies. Despite all the development of knowledge, possible treatments and the advance in technology, it is still true that nurses sometimes cannot cure, we can often relieve but we can always comfort.

World Health Organisation (WHO) had planned 2020 to be The Year of The Nurse. Many events have been planned to honour nurses and midwives around the world, however, they have been cancelled due to the Coronavirus. Instead, the importance of nurses in communities, homecare, nursing homes and hospitals has become evident during this crisis and they are now acknowledged worldwide.

Especially in times like this, nurses and midwives face a lot of stress and need refreshment physically, psychologically and spiritually to stay healthy and to grow. Now as before, Christian nurses are sustained by faith and we find comfort and new strength in our daily lives in God. When we read the different articles of this issue of CNI, let us reflect on how the Christian faith has shaped the lives and work of our leaders in NCFI. How their faith has motivated them to be in the forefront of professional development and making a difference in the local, national and international arena.

Blessings,

Tove Giske
PhD, RN MSN, President of NCFI
Professor and Part Time Director of Research and Development VID
Specialised University, Faculty of Health Studies, Bergen, Norway

Ashworth, P. (2012). *A history of Nurses Christian Fellowship*. Belfast, Blackstaff Press

The President's letter in Spanish

Recuerden a sus líderes

A manera de preparación para la próxima edición de la revista Internacional Enfermeras Cristianas CNI, he estado leyendo una vez más el libro por Pat Ashworth (2012) sobre la historia de CIDEDEC. He leído acerca de nuestros líderes visionarios que amaron a Dios y a la enfermería, y quienes tuvieron una perspectiva internacional desde su comienzo.

El estudio bíblico, la oración, reflexión sobre lo que implica ser una/un enfermera/enfermero en un ambiente o país extraño, el establecimiento de redes y amistades por medio de conferencias, y otros medios de comunicación, han sido el eje de la labor de CIDEDEC desde su comienzo en 1958.

Cuando pienso sobre el legado que nuestros líderes de antes nos han dejado, estos versículos de Hebreos 13: 7-8: vienen a mi mente: *Acuérdense de quienes los han dirigido, y les han anunciado el mensaje de Dios; mediten en cómo han terminado sus vidas, y sigan el ejemplo de su fe. Jesucristo es el mismo ayer, hoy y siempre.*

Tanto ha sucedido en la enfermería y en nuestras sociedades durante más de 60 años desde que CIDEDEC fue establecido: La Enfermería se convirtió en profesión y ahora, más que nunca, es la clave para toda clase de servicios de cuidado de salud en nuestras sociedades. A pesar de todo el desarrollo del conocimiento, tratamientos posibles y el avance de la tecnología, aún es cierto que las enfermeras/os solamente a veces podemos curar, a menudo podemos aliviar, pero siempre podemos ofrecer comodidad.

La OMS había definido el año 2020 como el año de las enfermeras y matronas y programado muchos eventos para honrar a las enfermeras y matronas en todo el mundo, sin embargo, éstos han sido cancelados debido al Coronavirus. En lugar de ellos, la importancia de las/los enfermeras/os en las comunidades, cuidado en casa, hogares para ancianos y hospitales se han hecho conocidos durante esta crisis y ahora reconocidos en todo el mundo.

Y Especialmente en tiempos como los que vivimos, las/los enfermeras/os y matronas afrontan mucho estrés y necesidad de reposo físico, psicológico y espiritual para mantener su salud y para crecer. Ahora, igual que antes, enfermeras/os se sostienen por su fe y encontramos comodidad y renovación de fuerzas diariamente en nuestra vida en Dios. Cuando leamos los artículos en la próxima edición de la revista de CNI, reflexionemos sobre la forma en que la fe cristiana ha moldeado nuestras vidas y el trabajo de nuestros/as líderes en CIDEDEC. Cómo su fe los ha motivado a ubicarse en la vanguardia del desarrollo profesional y así poder producir cambios en el ambiente local, nacional e internacional.

Bendiciones,

Tove Giske

PhD, RN MSN, Presidente CIDEDEC

Professor and Part Time Director of Research and Development VID

Specialised University, Faculty of Health Studies, Bergen, Norway

Ashworth, P. (2012). *A history of Nurses Christian Fellowship*. Belfast, Blackstaff Press

A letter from the editor

A brief history of NCFI

When I look back at the leaders that had the vision, foresight and energy to start the work of NCFI at International and regional levels, I am amazed at the diversity of experience, skills and expertise that God used to bring about this amazing organization. Pat Ashworth's book (2012) recounting the history of Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) highlights the vision and inspirational leadership that these early pioneers showed. Ashworth states categorically that 'NCFI has made a difference to nursing, nurses, and people in contact with them in many countries around the world.' (p. xiii)

She goes on to remind us how nursing has changed not only in technical developments, but the culture of nursing and medicine has impacted on the way nurses live, their relationships with each other, the medical profession and the education they receive. She highlights how Nurse Fellowships thrived when nurses lived in nurses homes, were generally single young women and had limited opportunities to be part of an active church due to their long and unsociable hours of work. The changes in society, including a more secular, multi-cultural and multi faith mix or conversely in some societies an increase in fundamentalism and sectarianism with anti-colonialist nationalist reactions leading to the rejection of the idea of mission and missionaries, has led to a need to refocus and engage in a new way with nurses.



Barbara Parfitt
Editor CNI

In 1946 Johan Allan began to search out countries where there were Nurses Christian Fellowship (NCF) groups. Francis Grimm and Johann Engela from South Africa initiated this work and went on to invite seventy to eighty people from 13 countries to the Keswick Convention in the Lake District to discuss the formation of an International Fellowship for nurses. In 1957 a nurses conference was arranged in Oosterbeek Holland, 140 representatives came from 20 countries. A constitution, basis of faith and name were agreed and Nurses Christian Fellowship International was born.

Miss Allan was asked to become the first President of NCFI and accepted this honour, while Anna-Svea Andersson from Sweden became the much-respected Vice-President, remaining in office until 1967.

Ashworth goes on to say;

'By the end of 1958 NCFI had become, through the leading and providence of God and the vision, faithfulness and efforts of many people of different nations, an established international organisation to support and increase the work of God amongst nurses.' (p7)

The conference held in 1964, in Alpbach Austria was memorable not only because it brought together 300 nurses from 30 countries but also because it became apparent that two distinct views as to how the Fellowship should go forward was evident. Francis Grimm and Johan Engela had travelled extensively and felt the need for widening the fellowship to all health professionals whilst Johan Allan and others like her felt that a specific fellowship for nurses was needed. Over the next three years there was discussion, debate and prayer and in 1967 it was decided to develop two separate organisations, Hospital Christian Fellowship (HCF) and NCFI. Johan Allan continued to play an important role in leading NCFI, tirelessly becoming the first full time General Secretary in 1969.

From these beginnings the fellowship began to grow worldwide. The development of regions with regional conferences, NCFI staff workers were appointed and in 1970 the seventh international Conference was held in St Andrews Scotland UK, preceded by a four day leadership course. In 1975 Ruth Lichtenberger was appointed as the first General Director followed by Harry Loudon.

It is not the purpose of this short account to detail the full history of NCFI. This can be found in Pat Ashworth's book (2012) but we know that the Fellowship continued to flourish through both difficult and easier times. This is because its leaders have remained dedicated to serving, to believing in the overall purpose of the organisation which is to support Christian Nurses to live out their faith in practice sharing the love of Christ with patients and colleagues as He leads.

Some of the distinctive characteristics of the early leaders include; a real sense of calling by God, an understanding of what nurses face in their work and a passion to care and support them whenever possible, self-sacrifice and servant leadership, trust that God will provide both materially and spiritually, strength to make decisions and provide positive support, the ability to delegate and work within a team using everyone's skills and expertise to achieve the common aim and of course a deep personal faith and spirituality that sustains and supports them.

In this edition of CNI we are highlighting some of those leaders. The stories of what brought them to the fellowship, their commitment and involvement over the years and their constancy in facing many challenges. We cannot recount everyone's story but that does not make them any less important. We have listed them below for you to identify and acknowledge and thank God for their unfailing service.

As we look to the future we know that NCFI will change, new leaders will bring a new vision, restoring faded optimism and reinforcing existing strengths. In order to realise the vision for NCFI God is already calling the next generation of leaders. Those whom he wants to carry on the work. A new international board is soon to be appointed and a new President will take her place. A new Director for IICN is in place who will lead NCFI towards an increased level of professionalism and spiritual depth. We thank God for each and every one of them.

Many Blessings to all of you,

Barbara Parfitt
CBE, PhD, DHC, RN, RM, FNP, Editor CNI

Johan Allan our founding President said:

"We are all one in Jesus Christ....nurses, whose lives are spent in the service of mankind and who are seekingmore effective ways of serving. We should be at the heart of our professional organisations ... and show, as St Paul exhorted, 'a more excellent way'... let us accept it as a God given responsibility remembering that in every situation we are ambassadors for Christ."

Johan Allan First President NCFI

Ashworth, P. (2012). A history of Nurses Christian Fellowship. Belfast, Blackstaff Press

NCFI Presidents, Vice Presidents and General Directors

Presidents

Johan Allan (Scotland)	1958–1976
Grace Wallace (USA)	1976–1980
Pat Ashworth (England)	1980–1988
Evangeline Creighton (Scotland)	1988–1992
Pat Ashworth (N. Ireland)	1992–1996
Mary Thompson (USA)	1996–2004
Kamalini Kumar (USA and India)	2004–2008
Barbara White (USA)	2004–2016
Tove Giske (Norway)	2016–2020

Vice-Presidents

Anna Svea Andersson (Sweden)	1958–1967
Blanche Lindsay (Australia)	1967–1980
Grace Wallace (USA)	1980–1984
Evangeline Creighton (Scotland)	1984–1988
Erna Goulding (USA)	1988–1996
Lili Makutu (Fiji)	1996–2004
Sam Mbok (Nigeria)	2004–2008
Tove Giske (Norway)	2008–2016
Anne Biro (Canada/Mongolia)	2016–2020

General Director

Ruth Lichtenberger (USA)	1975–1994
Harry Loudon (Scotland)	1995–2004

Leading with the heart

A commentary by Diane Steigmeir RN CDE CCM

Diane Steigmeir has a master's degree in Christian Leadership from Fuller Seminary. She currently works as a diabetes case manager for Kaiser Permanente in Salem, Oregon. Diane served on staff for eight years with Nurses Christian Fellowship in Northern California.



kings and great men lord it over the people, yet they are called 'friends of the people.' But among you it will be different. Those who are the greatest among you should take the lowest rank, and the leader should be like a servant. Who is more important, the one who sits at the table or the one who serves? The one who sits at the table of course. But not here? For I am among you as one who serves." (Luke 22:24–27*) Jesus led by sharing His vision and he embodied his vision by example as the one who serves others.

What is Christian leadership and how does it differ from secular leadership? Christian leadership is not rooted in worldly notions of success and power. Christian leaders focus on meeting the needs of those they lead to help them reach their full potential and grow in their relationship with God. As leaders, they seek out and discern God's will and move forward into the life and ministry that God has called them to in their work, community and relationships. In the heart of every Christian leader lies the desire to serve those under their care.

The idea of serving employees and considering their needs is rarely considered by secular leaders. Their focus is on making a profit, and society measures leadership on the effectiveness of an individual to perform well in a constantly changing environment. Charisma and authority play an important part of how well employers create a good work environment in which employees feel trusted, valued and fulfilled. In contrast, Christian leadership encourages and functions through community. Members of the community are valued and trusted, and Christian leadership varies from secular leadership as shown in the following passage.

The disciples ask who would be greatest among them? Jesus response was "In this world the

Those gifted with leadership skills develop the qualities of sincerity, commitment, discipline, competence and trustworthiness. They are called to shepherd God's people through a passion for Christ. In 1 Thessalonians 5:11–12, Paul calls them "to encourage each other and build each other up... honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you give you spiritual guidance. Show them great respect and whole hearted love because of their work. And live peacefully with each other." Although Christian leaders serve others, as is shown in this passage, they deserve to be valued for their work. The concept of leadership has progressed from Jesus's form of leadership to that of Paul and other leaders in the church.

As Christian leaders, we accept the opportunities that God puts in our path and trust Him to provide the ability and courage to serve others. We are bridge builders passing on our knowledge, faith and life skills into the lives of others. Our faith and leadership can have an impact on nursing practice as nurses' care for the mind, body and souls of others. Christian leadership not only involves servanthood, but it also embraces being a shepherd, scholar and steward of all of our resources. God blesses us with the special relationships and opportunities to make a difference in other peoples' lives.

* New Living Translation—all scripture references

2020: the year of the nurse and midwife

The COVID-19 pandemic, leadership, and Nurses' Christian Fellowship

Amy Rex Smith, NCF-USA

Amy Rex Smith, PhD, RN is professor and Dean at the School of Nursing at Belhaven University in Jackson, Mississippi. She is a member of NCF-USA and served on the NCFI International Board from 2010 to 2020. She currently serves IICN as the programme coordinator for the Art and Science of Spiritual Care.



The year of the nurse and midwife

This year is the 200th anniversary of the birth of Florence Nightingale. Miss Nightingale single-handedly founded the profession of modern nursing. Her vision for the profession was God-given. We know that she received a direct call from God, and that, despite strong opposition, she stayed true to what she knew God had asked her to do (Rakoczy, 2011). Florence Nightingale's birth year is why the World Health Organisation chose 2020 to celebrate nursing and midwifery. This is the first time in history this has been done.

Nursing had many plans to celebrate the profession this year, whether locally, nationally, or globally. At NCFI, we planned to celebrate at the NCFI Congress this summer. Our best laid plans have been suspended. The pandemic of COVID-19 has emerged. The novel coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 has created havoc in the world's population, a population with no prior immunity. We need to start to think about the year of the nurse in a new way.

A personal story

In December, the founding Dean of our university's School of Nursing retired. I was asked

to assume the Dean position. The retired Dean left a roadmap of month by month activities and I followed it faithfully ...until March. In March, the COVID -19 pandemic hit Mississippi. The university extended spring break by one week and did not re-open. We moved our classes to an online format. One by one, over the course of one week, all of our affiliated hospitals informed us that we could no longer bring our students. In response, we developed on-campus clinical projects, took advantage of free online clinical simulations, and ran our nursing lab like a medical-surgical unit for 2 weeks. These actions, coupled with an application to our state oversight board that was approved, enabled us to finish our spring semester clinical component successfully. We were able to complete the junior year and to graduate our seniors. But it was nothing like the roadmap that had been left for me.

Blizzard, winter or ice age?

As theologian Andy Crouch has stated "we need to treat COVID-19 as an economic and cultural blizzard, winter, and beginning of a "little ice age" — a once-in-a-lifetime change that is likely to affect our lives and organizations for years" (2020). There is no roadmap forward, only uncertainty. Despite the best mathematical models available to us, such as the one located at the University of Washington (<https://covid19.healthdata.org>) we can't predict what will happen or how long this will last. Will it be a blizzard that blows through, a season of winter, or cause a total change, like an ice age? We speculate, we make our plans, but we do not know. The loss of jobs and the effect on the economy is grim. We don't know when a vaccine will be available. We don't know if one of the drugs in ongoing randomized controlled trials will prove to be an effective treatment. It all adds up to uncertainty.

Uncertainty

Uncertainty is not new for nurses. We deal with patients every day who are facing uncertainty in their illnesses. As we sit with them, listen to their hopes and fears, we are stable providers who offer support. Nurses are in different situations depending upon what geographical place they are located. In the U.S., we are confined to our homes, only going out for a daily “health walk” or to get food and medical essentials, wearing our cloth masks. Those of us still working are working from home glued to our computers. In our state, front-line staff nurses have been furloughed – with no elective procedures and people afraid to go to hospital. There is no need for them. The COVID-19 patients are well taken care of with the current acute care and ICU staffs. This is not true in all areas. In many places with larger numbers of infected people, nurses are over-worked and even have been called out of retirement to go back to the bedside. Each of us, as individual nurses, are facing unique challenges.

God is in control

No matter what is happening, to us personally, to the nursing profession, to the health care in our own country and around the world, we know one thing is certain: God is in control. As Stuart Hamblen wrote in the old hymn “Known only to Him”, we may not know what the future holds, but we know who holds the future (1952). As Christians, our rock is Jesus Christ and our faith is secure. This period of uncertainty is when we should take more time to enter even more deeply into our personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We can ask God for strength, for wisdom to make good decisions as nursing leaders, for God to work in our lives and change us into the person He would have us to be. Since there is no roadmap, we take one step at a time, trusting that God is leading us in our journey.

NCFI staying connected virtually

With the recent guidance to stay at home, my days are filled with virtual meetings. But this is

nothing new; over my past 10 years on the NCFI board, I have learned how to be connected to my NCFI nurse colleagues across the globe using virtual meetings. At the NCFI board, in our monthly meetings, we have a devotional and pray as our foundation. This happens first, before we address any of the work. God is first. As we do the work of NCFI together I have learned so many things. Most of it has been from listening to my colleagues and understanding their perspectives, and watching our NCFI leaders. One can take courses on leadership; one can read books and seek to deepen one’s knowledge base. But being able to watch our NCFI leaders in action has been the best learning about leadership for me. I have seen fierce bravery coupled with gentle compassion; a demonstration of Christ-like behaviour in all interactions; a willingness to work and to work hard and long in the ministry; a commitment to the highest quality of nursing science while understanding the challenges that many of our nurses face. The leadership group of NCFI have been valued teachers. I have precious relationships with nurse leaders from all over the world, and am connected by Christian faith and by nursing. I value my NCFI experiences. NCFI is in good hands as we navigate these turbulent times.

Facing uncertainty together

I would encourage you, the Christian nurses of NCFI, to use this COVID-19 pandemic as an opportunity. I would ask you to embrace the experiences it is providing you. We know from scripture “let us also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, 4 and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, 5 and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us. (Romans 5:4–6, NRSV). The eventual outcome of staying with our suffering is hope. As Christians, we offer hope to our lost world. As Christian nurses, in whatever practice situation we are in, we offer others God’s love. Let us strive to stay strong, together, as the Christian nurses of NCFI. May “The year of the nurse” produce much fruit. May we become the profession that our world needs.

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A servant leader of leaders

Johan Allan; Founder of NCFI

Compiled by Pat Ashworth MSc, FRCN

Johan Allan was the leader and founder of NCFI, following on from the initial meetings prompted by Francis Grimm. Ms. Allan established the early structures and organisational values that have carried the organisation forward to its current strong position of today. It was her vision and response to God's calling that enabled her to dedicate her professional life to the service of Christian nurses worldwide. NCFI honours and recognises this amazing contribution to Christian Nurses.

What someone does, how it is done, and the atmosphere they help to create is often a more powerful witness to their character, values and resilience than anything they say. So this is what do I remember of **Johan Allan, the first President** (later General Secretary) of NCFI, a leader of leaders, who chaired the Executive Committee.

The first time I came across this small, active, neat, grey-haired woman was at the Albach NCFI conference held in 1964. She spoke from the platform with authority and humility. She spread a sense of welcome, warmth, peace and order around her as she moved and worked amongst the participants.

There were about 300 participants from 30 countries gathered for this conference. Anyone who has been responsible for organising similar events will recognise some of the challenges faced by Johan and her team. These were even greater because there was no internet or online communication, telephones were often unreliable or unavailable, there were language difficulties, mail often took much longer to arrive, and nurses generally had little money.

The NCFI Executive Committee could rarely all meet in person, and the only paid staff member was the secretary for Scottish NCF, working part-time for NCFI. International nursing conferences were rare. Even with able and willing people **good leadership was required to identify, support and coordinate** those who, with others, could accomplish the work needed.



(Left to right) **back row:** Dr Agathe Burki, Francis Grim, Miss Crouch, **front row:** Betty Kettle, Anna-Svea Anderson, Johan Allan, Margaret Smith

At the Alpbach conference everyone had a badge to indicate their name and country, with attached coloured ribbons to indicate what language(s) they spoke. One language followed by translation was spoken from the platform (always including English at the request of those translating) and during the translation translators into other languages did so for their group. Everyone was asked to sit in language groups to make this easier. (No affordable professional translation or technology then.) Much careful thought, prayer, planning work and coordination had gone into organising the conference, involving many people in different countries and their readiness to deal with any problems that arose. Much effort was made to accommodate differences, to promote Christian fellowship and to develop good relations with others, including local people.

Johan demonstrated the same qualities of hard work, commitment, and good organisational and management skills in more difficult times. By the next conference in 1967 NCFI faced a difficult decision that had to be made as to whether it should change to become an organisation for all health care workers, as promoted by some countries led by Mr. Francis Grim, or remain an organisation primarily

working with nurses. Several years of difficult discussions, consultations and decision-making followed finally by a vote from member countries to continue as an organisation for nurses.

Johan and the executive committee faced considerable challenges during this time and managing the situation with as little bitterness as possible required all her skills and expertise in leadership. **She knew to depend on the Lord to draw on for strength and guidance.** I have no doubt that she depended on our Lord, having learned through previous experiences in her life that **He would never fail her.** One eminent Christian on the council of reference consulted at this time referred to Johan's 'sanctified common-sense'. Following this traumatic period in the life of NCFI, her faithful leadership, work and encouragement were needed in rebuilding the organisation after its separation with the Hospital Christian Fellowship.

A major task set before Johan in the 1950s and onwards was to lead nurses/midwives in many countries with different cultures, education, nursing, economic and other life experiences in building a worldwide Christian community. In 1976, before the election of the next President she listed her view of the required characteristics needed to fulfil the role, unconsciously those were the very attributes she herself had displayed (1).

Called by God, and depending on Him, she had been willing throughout the years to use gifts He had given her. She developed these gifts through life and professional experiences – good and difficult, fitting the description in Proverbs 31:25–27 (with 'responsibilities' replacing household).

As I learned from observation and later from letters and records in the NCFI office, Johan served faithfully doing small things like records

and writing letters to contacts and greater things, giving and doing whatever she had for God's work through NCFI.

But she also encouraged and helped others to do the same. Like any good human leader, Johan recognised personal limitations, and encouraged others to use their gifts. She emphasised that **no human has everything, but everyone has something they can contribute** – but they may need help to recognise and use it. The biblical Christian community-building practices identified by Keller (2) were evident in the building of the nursing/midwifery community of NCFI in these early days. I am sure that **Johan was a good leader of leaders because she kept close to our Lord and followed His leading.**

'At the 1976 General Committee, after a prayer for guidance in choosing the new president Johan made the following comments on the role...' (p. 47) (No men were eligible to apply at that time as there were very few men who were nurses, hence the use of she...')

- A women of God, called to this position
- Have business acumen
- An administrator and organiser
- Thinking that was universal and not insular
- Acceptable to the nursing profession in her own country and internationally
- Understand and appreciate the different cultures/patterns existing amongst NCFs worldwide
- Be readily available for consultation
- Remember that men look on the outward appearance but God looks on the heart.

(Extracted from the general committee minutes 1976, 2–3) (1)

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Scottish reflections on pioneer leaders

Elma Paxton SRN, SCM, MSc, Senior Lecturer in Midwifery (Retired)

As I write we are experiencing a COVID-19 Pandemic. Nurses are at the forefront of care, acting sacrificially in dangerous circumstances. The long hours are not new to Christian nurses of previous generations. It was other similar circumstances that created the need for Nurses Christian Fellowship (NCF) throughout the world. Writing from a Scottish perspective, I think of nurses and midwives who have contributed to the development of Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI). These nurses and midwives provided exemplary leadership at home, supporting nurses at times when they found it difficult to join in church worship. One cannot believe that those caring for these patients, where there is a high mortality rate, will again need the support and leadership of Christian nurses of similar calibre.

I joined NCF Scotland in the late 1960s when sisters, **Miss Cathie and Miss Agnes Thompson** were regional representatives for NCF Scotland. They had been travelling secretaries for NCF and I was fortunate to live in Perth, where they had their home. These gracious ladies had "Open Houses" where students were joined by missionary nurses, or "Scripture Union Members." Through their hospitality, students were nurtured in their faith. In earlier days Miss Agnes Thompson had been a Caretaker Secretary of NCFI in 1957 (Ashworth 2012). As students in the 1960s, we were totally unaware that the ladies who afforded us such warm hospitality had an interest in Christian nurses far beyond their national borders.

Over many years, NCF Scotland held annual conferences at Netherhall Christian centre on the beautiful Ayrshire coast. I can recall the devotional input of **Evangeline Creighton** in those days, as she led our evening reflections



Evangeline Creighton

Nurses are at the forefront of care, acting sacrificially in dangerous circumstances.

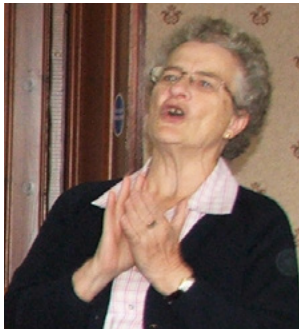
around a large old-fashioned fireplace. The grandiose building had once been the home of Lord Kelvin, the famous scientist. Evangeline was on the Executive Committee of NCFI, and later became the NCFI President. I recall Evangeline being very inspirational at conferences. She held a senior post as a midwifery tutor at the largest maternity hospital in Glasgow. One cannot begin to imagine the numerous high-level committee meetings chaired by Evangeline. She inspired and supported nurses and midwives nationally and internationally. Reflecting on this today, after nearly half a century, I realize **that good leadership, as Evangeline possessed, was primarily relational, with the ability to envision others through enthusiasm, and excellent communication skills.** This was not only through professional skills but by being a servant of Christ, the highest relationship of all. Speaking to Evangeline earlier this year she recalled an informal NCFI meeting on a plane while returning from a European committee meeting in 1976. Many years later this remained of major significance to Evangeline and with hindsight to the European region as a whole. The European regional conference continues to have a strong spiritual and professional input with high academic content where servant leadership is encouraged. Professionalisation of nursing was becoming widely recognized, as more nurses were undertaking university studies.

These nurses and midwives provided exemplary leadership at home, supporting nurses at times when they found it difficult to join in church worship.

A pinnacle of the Scottish experience was the NCFI International Conference of 2000 held at a university campus in Edinburgh. Around forty nations were represented and Evangeline, as President of NCF Scotland, played a leading role in both the planning and the executing of the conference. With representatives of so many nations, Evangeline organized a 'buddy system' to ensure all the delegates were cared for. I recall the enthusiasm of the Fijian delegates at the conference who had responded to Evangeline's announcement of the Scottish conference and her welcome at the NCFI Conference held in Fiji.

After her retirement from NCF committee membership, the NCF Scotland committee turned to Evangeline to act as a member of the Council of Reference, where her wisdom and encouragement was invaluable at a difficult time for NCF Scotland. Perhaps one of the greatest challenges that Evangeline highlighted was the need for Christians to be at the forefront of their profession. She recalled many of previous generations, who were leaders and decision makers who were members of NCF and hence there were Christians in the workplace at the highest level.

This baton of leadership was taken up by **Dr Catherine Robertson**, who, as a nurse educator, introduced mentorship to the Scottish nursing education system and based her doctoral thesis on this subject. Catherine was also a President of NCF Scotland, and chaired NCF Committee



Dr Catherine Robertson

Meetings during the first decade of the millennium. Catherine had also been a member of the NCFI executive committee in the 1990s. Catherine encouraged the Scottish committee to network, and to have a strong voice on ethical issues. She would offer praise or constructively critique NCF responses to government initiatives which would impact on vulnerable people. Catherine articulated high level goals for NCF Scotland believing that there should be a Christian voice at all levels and disciplines within the profession.

Good leadership, as Evangeline possessed, was primarily relational, with the ability to envision others through enthusiasm, and excellent communication skills.

By faith so many of previous generations believed God and acted on that faith as described in Hebrews chapter 11. I recall the prayer warriors of NCF Scotland who upheld NCF in prayer, especially those in Shetland, **Flo Green and Edna Poplar**. They had a missionary vision, and prayed regularly on behalf of NCF, especially those serving overseas. I remember receiving a calendar each year when I worked abroad, which spoke of a practical love. They had the faith to believe that there would continue to be a generation of nurses who would serve the Lord. During this time of crisis in all our regions, I pray that this is the case. We cannot meet at Conference this year because of Coronavirus but let our motto stand, "One in Christ Jesus".

Faithful servant of the Lord in Latin America

Eunice Siccardi

After a long illness, surrounded by her relatives, Eunice left us for the presence of the Lord on April 27, 2020.



Eunice Siccardi was born in an evangelical Christian home where she learned from her father, a pastor, and from her mother who was dedicated to Christian education. She was taught that the best choice she could make in her life was to serve the Lord. With this in mind, she prepared to serve Him in the Bible Institute of the “Brethren” in the province of Cordoba, Argentina.

Meanwhile she dreamt of being a missionary nurse, of going to a distant location where she could show the compassion of Christ through teaching and healing. Eunice continued her education at the British hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

After completing her nursing training, she worked as a helper in churches alongside of her father, until finally the Lord opened the doors so that her dream of traveling to far off regions could be fulfilled. She began by traveling to the north of her country where she worked among the indigenous people in Embarcación (Salta region). There she was able to develop all of her skills as a nurse and missionary in maternal-child care

and in the fight against tuberculosis. These were years of hard work filled with blessings. Her role as “missionary nurse” helped her to understand that her calling was nursing and that God needed her to shine within that profession.

In 1967 she was transferred to Formosa (in Argentina) where she was in charge of a health unit among the indigenous race of her region. After 12 years in this position she was called by the regional government to be in charge of the nursing department of the Central Hospital where she assumed teaching responsibilities for training nursing aides who were needed in that province.

At the same time she was involved in church activities as a deaconess, secretary, and teacher of Christian Education, under the leadership of the Baptist Convention of the country. Simultaneously, she completed her studies to receive a diploma as a Licensed Professional Nurse*.

In 1990 Eunice became the coordinator of the ministry of NCFI in Latin America. The area she worked in for NCFI during all these years was preparing, orienting and accompanying Nursing leaders.

Though the Christian Union of Argentine Nurses (UCEA), has had many ups and downs, Eunice has remained faithful to the Lord’s guidance, holding on to His hand, aware that it was He who had sustained her. She has been and continues to be always grateful for the support offered her by the churches and NCFI.

Despite being due to retire in 2000 she continued her work and service to the Lord guiding the nurses who were to continue the work in Argentina. This work has grown greatly. We thank God for her life and work.

* Registered Nurse status

Testimonio de Eunice Siccardi (Fiel Obrera del Señor en el Campo de la Enfermería Cristiana en Argentina y Latinoamérica)

-Nacida en un hogar evangélico aprendió de su padre pastor y de su madre dedicada a la enseñanza cristiana, que la mejor elección que se podía hacer en la vida era la de servir al Señor. Con esta visión se preparó para servirle en el Instituto Bíblico de la Iglesia de “Los Hermanos” en la provincia de Córdoba en Argentina.

-Su otra vocación era ser una Enfermera misionera, soñando con ir a algún lugar lejano, donde se pudiera aplicar la compasión de Cristo la cual enseñaba, daba de comer y sanaba. Así llegó a prepararse para esto en el Hospital Británico de Buenos Aires.

-Al salir de allí trabajó como obrera en algunas iglesias acompañando a su padre, pero al fin, su sueño de ir a lugares lejanos, se pudo hacer realidad. ¡El Señor abrió las puertas! Comenzó a ir al norte del país a trabajar entre los indígenas en Embarcación (Salta) Allí pudo desarrollar todo su potencial como enfermera y misionera en el área materno infantil y en la lucha antituberculosa. Fueron años de trabajo duro pero llenos de Bendiciones. El ser “Enfermera Misionera” ayudó a que comprendiera que su campo era la enfermería y que Dios la necesitaba brillando dentro de esa Profesión.

-Luego se traslada a Formosa en 1967 y permanece por 12 años a cargo de un puesto sanitario también entre indígenas de la región. Hasta que la llamarían del mismo gobierno provincial para hacerse cargo de la Enfermería del Hospital Central y entonces se involucraría en la labor docente, capacitando a las primeras auxiliares de Enfermería que tuvo esa provincia.

-Continuaba a la par su trabajo en la Iglesia, siendo Diaconisa, secretaria, y maestra en el

“Área de la Educación Cristiana” dependiente de la Convención Bautista del país. Para finales de esa época terminaba sus estudios de Licenciada en Enfermería.

-En 1979 se trasladaría a Buenos Aires convencida de que su ministerio en el norte del país había terminado, para continuar con la visión que siempre tuvo el ministrar a las enfermeras para que sean presencia de Cristo dentro de su profesión. Fue en ese año que es invitada a trabajar en la Comunidad Internacional de Enfermeras Cristianas (NCFI). Le tocó comenzar con un trabajo pionero entre las enfermeras argentinas, debido a que la misionera Fiona Ross quien había llegado al país para este trabajo, partiera a la presencia del Señor muy temprano.

-Desde 1990 coordinó este ministerio del NCFI en América Latina. Las áreas en que más se desempeñó en todos esos años fueron las de formación, orientación y acompañamiento de líderes, en Enfermería.

-Si bien la organización Unión Cristiana de Enfermeras Argentinas (UCEA), ha pasado por muchos altos y bajos, Eunice permaneció fiel al mandato del Señor, tomada siempre de su mano y reconociendo que ÉL la ha sostenido y siempre estuvo agradecida por el apoyo que las iglesias, y el NCFI le brindaron. En el año 2000 en el que se jubilara, continuó igualmente trabajando y sirviendo al Señor guiando a las enfermeras que continuarían con la tarea en Argentina, la que ha avanzado mucho a Dios gracias.

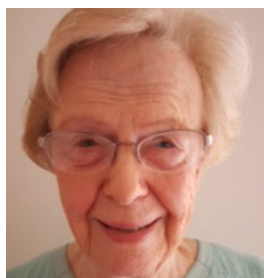
Luego de una larga enfermedad, rodeada de sus familiares, Eunice parte a la presencia del Señor el 27 de abril del año 2020.

An early pioneer in the USA

Mary Thompson RN MSN

Compiled by Dr Kamalini Kumar PhD MSc, Nurse Clinician and Educator

In 1935 three nurses met regularly at the Children's Hospital, Chicago, to pray. In May 1936, the group called themselves Christian Nurses Fellowship (CNF) and their focus was the Word of God, prayer, fellowship and witnessing to their faith. In 1952, CNF was renamed Nurses Christian Fellowship and became part of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. **Tressie Myers** was the first leader of NCF-USA and she brought a strong professional as well as Biblical and missionary influence to the organization. **Grace Wallace** became the national director in 1968 and she moved the organization forward to a new level. A task force was appointed to develop a Christian philosophy of nursing and the first formal research was begun to identify the spiritual needs of patients.



In 1952, CNF was renamed Nurses Christian Fellowship and became part of InterVarsity Christian Fellowship.

Mary Thompson was appointed one of the Area Directors to oversee continuation of this work. Mary and a team of staff and volunteers in west coast/USA developed a series of workshops, accompanied by Bible studies, to prepare nurses and students to follow Jesus Christ in nursing and integrate Christian faith and the nursing profession. Topics included dealing with anxieties in nursing, viewing the nurse as a whole person, spiritual care of patients, ethics, mental health, and being "salt and light" in the profession. This teaching provided vision and resources for local groups of nurses and students to grow as representatives of Jesus Christ in nursing and to reach out to others.

Mary and a team of staff and volunteers in west coast/USA developed a series of workshops, accompanied by Bible studies, to prepare nurses and students to follow Jesus Christ in nursing.

Mary's background:

Mary was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, she was the daughter of a pastor and a nurse. Their examples shaped her life's work. She went to nursing school at the University of Minnesota and was involved in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship as a student, and learned how to study the Bible and view life as a missionary wherever one was. Mary later became a leader in the local Nurses Christian Fellowship ministry while working as a staff nurse at the University of Minnesota hospital and as a school nurse. As Mary sought God's direction for her future, she was encouraged by **Grace Wallace** to consider becoming a staff member of Nurses Christian Fellowship, and this happened in 1968. She served in the west coast and central states, and also completed a masters degree in nursing at California State University, Los Angeles. Her master's thesis focused on developing hope in patients. Mary became national NCF Director of NCF/USA in 1984. She lived in Madison, Wisconsin, the national office of InterVarsity and Nurses Christian Fellowship, and worked with staff and volunteers around the country.

Mary's leadership priorities grew out of basic core values – for herself and how she encouraged others: **Growing in love for God and God's Word; loving people, made in the image of God and having gifts to be developed; living out God's purposes in the world – people coming to know God through Jesus Christ and learning to communicate God's character (compassion, justice, peace, hope...) in relationships, including in nursing practice.**

Avenues for ministry to communicate these values were to encourage others by teaching and mentoring, forming teams of people who work together to implement the values, communicating ongoing vision about the joy of being part of God's work in our world and fostering collaboration of people living out the core values identified above. These values and avenues for ministry are distinctive characteristics of Mary's ministry in the USA, and globally.

Her commitment to NCF and NCFI ministry continues through prayer and financial support, encouragement of leaders, and involvement in the local NCF ministry in Minnesota.

Mary's involvement in NCF International:

Mary became a member of the NCFI Board in 1988 when the NCFI conference was in Philadelphia / USA. Mary states that being part of the NCFI ministry has been a great source of spiritual growth through being mentored by nurses around the world. NCFI conferences and board meetings were a "taste of heaven" as together they learned and worshipped God with sisters and brothers globally. The vision for Christian nursing by nurses in other countries enhanced and reinforced the ministry in the USA. Mary

became president of NCFI in 1996, when the NCFI conference was in Hong Kong and served for two 4-year terms. It was her privilege to be a partner with NCFI leaders in the 6 regions of the world.

Challenges and opportunities during this time included implementing the new NCFI structure of identity and ministry in the 6 regions. In 2004 Mary completed her leadership role in NCFI and passed it on to the new board with Kamalini Kumar as President, thankful for the expertise Kamalini and others brought to the ministry. Mary's NCF director role for NCF- USA was completed in 2007. However, her commitment to NCF and NCFI ministry continues through prayer and financial support, encouragement of leaders, and involvement in the local NCF ministry in Minnesota.

Mary's legacy still continues on in her involvement with the local NCF group and in her connections with NCFI members around the world. Mary brought a high level of financial and administrative management to NCF and NCFI. She was instrumental in connecting nurses to one another both nationally and globally by developing prayer partnerships between the international board members as well as member countries. She worked hard at articulating a global vision for NCFI by seeking to bring a Christian perspective to the knowledge base of nursing, Biblical leadership in nursing and collaboration among the Christian nurses of the world. **Mary's strength was and is her prayer life, willingness to listen to others, and encouragement and mentorship of many new leaders.**

'She lived until she died'

F. Grace Wallace (1918–2005)

Grace Wallace, was the Nurses Christian Fellowship USA Director from 1968 – 1984, She was President of NCFI from 1976–1980. She then became Vice President of NCFI from 1980–1984. Even after



her time as President and Vice President she continued as an executive committee member until 1988. Her 87 years included a heritage of faithfully following Jesus Christ that influenced the lives of nurses around the world.

A nurse who knew Grace through NCF International stated, "*Grace portrayed an excellent model of service, I will always remember her kindness to me in so many ways.*" Certainly, her life is something we can emulate. Grace was known as a mentor, prayer warrior and friend, and is greatly missed.

Grace grew up in California, and graduated from nursing school at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF). A theme in her life was to encourage others in their spiritual growth. Grace helped to start a Christian student group while at UCSF. Following graduation she worked as a nurse and also provided leadership for the Navigator Ministry of Discipleship for service women and nurses in San Francisco.

Later Grace went to Dallas, Texas USA to work with the Red Cross among people affected by the polio epidemic. During this time she met an InterVarsity staff member who shared with Grace about the Nurses Christian Fellowship ministry in

InterVarsity. Leading her to become more involved with NCF USA.

Grace's next place of ministry was New York City. She was awarded her masters degree at Columbia University and taught nursing at Cornell University. She taught a discipleship seminar for business woman as a follow-up course for the Billy Graham Crusade.

Grace later went to the University of Kentucky to teach nursing and develop the paediatric nursing program. Grace's ministry in nursing included participation in the National Advisory Committee of Nurses Christian Fellowship. She was invited to become the associate director of NCF in 1965, and Director in 1968. Following her retirement in 1984 Grace continued to volunteer in ministry among nurses and students in Madison, Wisconsin USA as well as on the East Coast, USA.

Grace moved to Merlin, Oregon in 1991 where she shared a home with her sister. While in Oregon she was involved in ministry with her church, the Child Evangelism Fellowship and the local Hospice. She also continued to communicate with people around the world.

We thank God for Grace and all that she has taught us. Colleagues in NCF and NCFI have stated: '*Grace was able to live until she died*'. Grace's life brought encouragement to others, and was an example for all of us. She deeply cared for people and was a servant leader. Her commitment to the Lord and ministry among nurses and students had a deep and lasting effect on NCF USA and NCF International. She continued to faithfully pray for us, and we are grateful. Her memory will live on in our hearts and lives.

Reflections on being a leader in NCFI

Pat Ashworth, MSc BSc

Nurse midwife, who worked for more than 20 years in clinical nursing including intensive care. After graduating with her MSc at Manchester University she moved into research and teaching. In 1985 she became a senior lecturer at the University of Ulster.

NCFI executive committee member from 1976–1988, President of NCFI from 1992–1996.

Author of 'A History of Nurses Christian Fellowship, The First 50 years'.

I first encountered NCFI when the 1964 Alpbach conference was announced at an NCF regional prayer meeting in Liverpool, and I with a friend, decided to go. It was a good experience and two students from our hospital joined us at the next conference in 1967. Unable to go to the following two conferences, I kept in touch and received the regular NCFI Prayer Letters. In 1976 I went to the Ghana conference as a speaker and one of the UK representatives, and returned as a member of the NCFI executive committee – for the next 12 years and later four more!

So why commit so much time and energy to NCFI, alongside a varied, challenging, interesting, and enjoyable nursing career? I had grown up in a Christian family, not very rich in money but rich in love, in a houseful of books. At home, we were encouraged to learn and to enjoy the blessings of God's beautiful world around us. From home, church and good experiences and even less good ones, (like 14 weeks in hospital aged at age five, and later four years away from home as an evacuee in World War II), I learned some important lessons to take into nursing with me.

For example:

- Good and bad experiences in life happen, often beyond our control. But even when loving humans like parents cannot be with us, God our heavenly Father is with us



- Actions and attitudes have consequences, but God forgives those who do wrong but repent
- Everyone is unique and valuable, but life does not always seem fair, some people seem to bear
- much heavier burdens than others.
- Some people are not easy to love – nor to nurse.

Nursing all kinds of people, often with inadequate resources and difficult conditions, can demand all a good nurse has to offer. Often nurses start a day still burdened by what they believed needed to be done but they were unable to do the day before. Only our Lord's sacrifice and forgiveness can free us to start each day afresh with His help. I always saw NCFI as a way of nurses internationally sharing their blessings, experience and concerns, learning from each other, and helping to build God's kingdom on earth, to the benefit of all.

In some ways, I was a reluctant leader, having resisted for years being pushed into an administrative or teaching post. But I eventually learned that when God put a task before me

I'd better say 'Yes' – though I did add 'if you'll help me'. On reflection many years later some leadership qualities I had or developed later were:-

- **Belief in the work of God** through NCFI and the availability of His power and guidance to enable us to do it
- **Belief in the efficacy of prayer**
- **Appreciation of the gifts**, difficulties and work of co-workers, though I may not always make them aware of my appreciation
- **Recognition of the importance of verbal and nonverbal communication**, potential or actual difficulties, particularly in an international context
- **Experience of managing a busy lifestyle** – for example, papers and reports for discussion are often better received in advance rather than at a meeting after a long tiring journey
- **Consistency and 'unflappability'** – **expect the unexpected**
- **Belief that God knows His plans for us** (Jer. 29:11, NIV) – individually and together. We just have to find His plans and follow them
- **Perseverance and reliance, developing resilience** in our response to the many challenging situations we face and 'sticking with it' are essential qualities for a strong leader.

The future

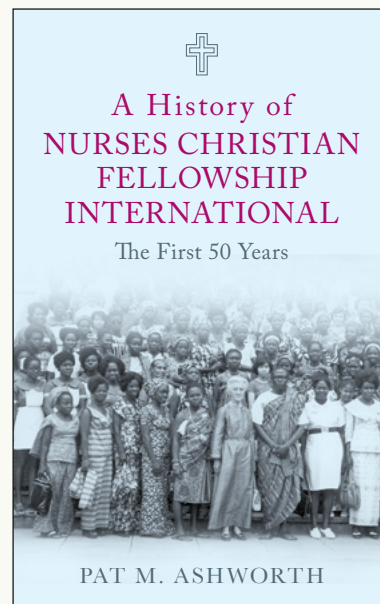
NCFI is now entering a new phase of professionalism with a new board and new leaders. My message to them is that they must not forget what has been learned but build on the work of those who led before us. We have many strong leaders across the world who have stepped out and tirelessly worked for the organisation. Their work has laid the foundations and begun the work of building the walls. Use them as an example, see their leadership qualities and emulate them. Honour their sacrifice and thank God that He has blessed us with their presence.

History of Nurses Christian Fellowship International by Pat Ashworth

This book by Pat Ashworth, a long term member of NCFI at the board and executive levels, describes the first 50 years of the history of the development of Nurses Christian Fellowship. It is a record of faithfulness, commitment, perseverance and resilience in the face of many challenges. It illustrates how men and women of faith can bring about the impossible. In many ways, although a history, it is inspiring in its accounts of faith and fortitude.

NCFI of today is built on this foundation and we should never forget those who have gone before us and established such a strong and remarkable organisation.

Ashworth, P. (2012). A history of Nurses Christian Fellowship. Belfast, Blackstaff Press



Micah Tswabki leading in Africa

Nurse, missionary and pastor

Micah Tswabki joined the Fellowship of Christian Nurses (FCN) Nigeria in 1968 as a student nurse at the Vom Christian Hospital, Nigeria. This was barely eight years after the establishment of FCN



in Nigeria. He became the first indigenous staff member of FCN in 1977. He was appointed as the General Secretary when Grace Stokes, the previous General Secretary was about to return to England. Between 1983 and 1985, Micah gave strong leadership to FCN Nigeria as the National President. This made him the only member of the Fellowship to have served in the capacity of both the General Secretary and the National President.

In his role as General Secretary Micah was an active member of the NCFI Executive and Board member. Later he accepted a staff position as the NCFI African Regional Coordinator, having previously carried out this role on a volunteer basis. In this position he travelled extensively in Africa working with missionary zeal to reach nurses and support Nurses Christian Fellowship groups across the vastness of Africa. Despite the difficulties of travel, he organized numerous visits to several countries taking him to Ghana, Zambia, Kenya, Niger, Uganda and Ethiopia. These visits gave him the opportunity to meet with several NCF groups to encourage them and pray with them. His visits included initial survey work, identification of contact persons, mobilization of groups and awareness creation. In this way he initiated and inaugurated the beginnings of many NCFs.

In addition Micah organized special programs across several African countries as a way of promoting outreach and expansion. These programs usually included seminars and workshops and were channelled to address the needs primarily of nurses but also other health care workers. These initiatives were held not only in member countries but also in non-member countries such as Galmi, and Maradi in the Niger Republic in collaboration with other organisations.

One of the great contributions of Micah to NCFI was **the passion he gave to leadership and capacity development initiatives across the continent**. He organized training programs aimed at empowering emerging and potential leaders through capacity building workshops. He arranged several Africa Regional Conferences in different countries where members from various NCF groups converged to encourage each other and share best practices.

Having Micah as an NCFI staff member working in Africa enabled the NCF groups in the continent to access programs and information about NCFI. Though he worked in a very difficult terrain, in terms of communications, he consistently circulated routine newsletters by email enabling member countries to be well informed of the global ministry. This effective and continuous information dissemination created more awareness and encouraged improved commitment by individual members and NCF groups to the vision and mission of NCFI.

We thank God for his work which laid the foundation for the development of NCF groups and created strong links with NCFI. Encouraging and strengthening nurses throughout both the region and worldwide.

Loice Chipere

An outstanding national leader in Zambia

It all began informally in 1964. The Zambia Nurse's Christian Fellowship (ZNCf). Just a few missionary nurses meeting together in various mission hospitals, praying together and sharing the word of God. They also went around the different hospitals encouraging nurses and praying with them. They travelled not in a ministry vehicle but in buses and local vehicles or used whatever means of transport they could get hold of. They never slept in hotels or lodges but stayed in student hostels wherever they went. Some of the missionaries of note at that time were Jan Engle, Lis Wyatt Chase and Sue Willan.

In 1971 ZNCf was officially registered in Zambia under the local registrar of societies. A great achievement! Elizabeth Halale was the very first Zambian nurse who took over from the missionaries as a staff worker and was followed by our late sister Catherine Namonje and Loice Chipere was the third staff worker.

Loice: an outstanding national leader in Zambia

Loice Chipere served as staff worker/General Secretary from 1995 to September 2016 after having worked for a mission hospital as a registered nurse for four and half years. First of all she attended bible school for two years before taking up full time ministry at ZNCf. Prior to this, she was an active ZNCf member as a young nurse and worked closely with Elizabeth Halale whenever she had an opportunity.

She served on the NCFI board from 2000 to 2008 as well as for the Africa Region under the leadership of Brother Micah Tswabki. Micah Tswabki contributed to sharpening her leadership skills and he made occasional visits to Zambia to strengthen the Fellowship.

In 1971 ZNCf was officially registered in Zambia under the local registrar of societies. A great achievement!



Elizabeth Mulenga (nurse) worked with Loice for a short time as a pastoral nurse/mentor. She was housed at our national referral hospital and nurses were able to access regular counselling services from her.

Loice is a multi- talented nurse; musical artist, good with her hands making many handicraft items. She is an encourager, writer and teacher of the Word.

When things got tough she cried out to the Lord who called her to the work. The desire to see God's promises realised in the ministry kept her hopes alive.

When asked what motivated her to take this path of service in ZNCf she replied:

'The desire to serve the LORD and be at the centre of His will. I answered the call to serve in ZNCf despite the challenges the fellowship was going through at that time. I leaned on the Lord's Promise that he would be there for me and taking care of all my needs.'

Her ministry was not devoid of challenges; there were both valleys and mountains. She knew what needed to be done but had inadequate human

and financial resources. She learnt to hang on and make do with what the Lord provided. Knowing God's timing is the best principle and was a wondrous knowledge that kept her going.

Often she had to work alone without a staff worker or mentor close by whom she could consult or get some coping tips to help with some of the challenges she was going through.

The high expectations from the national committee members amidst limited resource mobilization also added to the pressure.

The death of a number of NCF members, family and friends that had been a great source of support in her work left her at times feeling bereft. But when things got tough she cried out to the Lord who called her to the work. **The desire to see God's promises realised** in the ministry kept her hopes alive. She had the hope that God had better things in store for both her and the fellowship, that He would turn a desert into a fertile field. This hope kept her going during the roughest patches of her ministry.

Loice emphasised that God's sufficiency met all her needs – the Lord provided not just her daily needs but also the needs of the ZNCF ministry.

Her passion to care for caregivers led to a sensitivity to the needs of young nurses that helped her help others overcome the negative comments often made about nurses and nursing by the public. Very few people considered nurses as ordinary people living in a real world with needs like any other person. With this understanding, she wanted to be one of those that would help meet those needs and provide support.

She was spurred on in her work and service by **the opportunities to attend international conferences** and connect with other staff

workers from other countries. A further valuable encouragement was interacting with the young nurses, being a sister, an aunt and a mother to the nurses/student nurses.

In her early ministry days she travelled by public transport with a suitcase in one hand, guitar in the other and books in her back pack. There were times she spent nights in the bush when public truck transport broke down.

Loice was the longest serving staff worker ZNCF has ever had. She ran the race and persevered for the Lord.

Although sharing **The Love of God** remained the major driving force that drove her to serve among the nurses, at times she felt overwhelmed. But God gave her the strength to overcome and she was rewarded with the joys she experienced, seeing lives transformed, hearts healed, relationships mended. She rejoiced **to see students graduate and become role models** in nursing coming into the full realization of their call to care. These were joys that made her feel her service in ZNCF was worthwhile.

Loice was the longest serving staff worker ZNCF has ever had. She ran the race and persevered for the Lord. The national committee did not want to release her but it was the right time as it became very apparent that the ministry was not doing well financially or able to meet her basic needs.

She obtained a full time job at Hope Walks as a programme manager. Hope Walks is an organization that helps to correct club feet in newborn babies. She still serves ZNCF on part time basis when duty calls.

Blanche Lindsay

NCFI pioneer in the Pacific and East Asia

Margaret Hutchison

Australian nurse **Blanche Lindsay** and Scottish nurse **Johan Allan** first met at a conference for Christian nurses held in Denmark in 1961. For Blanche, the conference was a thrilling introduction to a new work God was doing among nurses around the world. For Johan Allen, the first Nurses Christian Fellowship International President it was the ultimate fulfillment of a long-held dream; an organisation that would connect National Nurses Christian Fellowships around the world, to encourage each other and reach out to nurses in countries where no such fellowships yet existed.



meeting as an observer, but before the meetings concluded she was invited to join the executive committee. So began an era for Blanche that eventually led to her pioneering the work of NCFI in the Pacific and South East Asia.

Blanche already had considerable experience in ministry to nurses through her role as a staff worker for the Australian Nurses Christian Movement (ANCM)* which had been established 40 years earlier in Melbourne. The Movement was a pioneer ministry established to meet the spiritual needs of nurses in the days when nurses worked very long hours and lived in nurses' homes, so had limited opportunity to attend Church Services or other Christian activities. The Movement quickly grew to become a national organisation with Branches in every State of Australia. Similar work was beginning in other countries around the world, and by the 1950s there were a considerable number of national groups organised by Christian nurses.



Blanche Lindsey at the PACEA conference 1970

Ambitions and God's call

Blanche had become a Christian during her last year in high school and entered nursing with high ambitions. She hoped eventually to become a Hospital Matron – the peak of the profession in that era. Unexpectedly, soon after completing her nursing training Blanche (known as Bloss to her friends and colleagues) gave up her career ambitions and agreed to join the staff of ANCM in New South Wales (NSW). Johan Allan, first President of NCFI, wrote of her many years later as one who epitomized the Biblical injunction, 'seek first the kingdom of heaven....and all these things will be given to you as well' (Matt 6:33), saying 'Blanche Lindsay as a young newly trained nurse put aside thoughts of becoming a Sister, and following God's call started working with the Australian Nurses Christian Movement in Australia'.

She soon became involved in the various ministries of ANCM which at that time was focused mainly on student nurses and the Bible

Catching the vision

Before that time two significant conferences had taken place. The first was held in Holland in 1957 when NCFI formed its first committee and a trial constitution was drawn up. This was quickly followed in 1958 by the first official conference of NCFI, held in Switzerland. But it was at the 1961 conference in Denmark that a pattern emerged which would operate for the next few decades. It was there that Blanche caught a vision for this worldwide work of which she had been previously unaware. She was invited to attend the executive

study groups held in most hospitals in Sydney as well as many country areas. She was also a part of the team charged with the vital task of following up the many nurses converted during the Billy Graham Crusades in the 50s and 60s, to establish them in their faith, and its application to their nursing experience and practice.

Sharing the vision

Blanche's role in the Federal work of ANCM was an important precursor to the part she would later play in the development of NCFI, especially in the Pacific and East Asia. Her position as Travelling Federal Secretary for ANCM began in 1954 and was aimed to strengthen the ministry of the State Branches. Six weeks of every year was spent in each of the States where ANCM branches had been established. In that role, she trained nurses in outreach and evangelism while giving the NCF staff support and help in their leadership and the problems they faced. She was later appointed to a full-time position as Federal Secretary. It was during this time that the vision for a wider work grew and opportunities came to connect with Christian nurses in nearby countries. Through her links with missionary nurses and NCFs in countries in the Pacific and East Asia, she regularly shared news and prayer needs with those of us working on ANCM staff, and with our members generally. We often spent time praying with her for the emerging NCFs in those countries. In 1961 Australia adopted Papua New Guinea, Malaysia, and Singapore as partner countries in Christian ministry to nurses.

During the conference and Executive meetings in Denmark, Blanche learned of the partnerships that had been formed between countries where a stronger or more established NCF encouraged and supported an emerging one, in some cases helped to establish a new NCF. One example was New Zealand NCF helping to establish an NCF in Fiji. She was challenged that although there were many reports from European countries, there were only two from the Southern Hemisphere, those being Australia and New Zealand. She reported to ANCM that NCFI had received requests for help from individual nurses in India, Japan, Hong Kong, Philippines, and Sarawak.

Travelling for NCFI

During the 1960s Blanche visited several countries in South East Asia, and Papua New

Guinea forming strong relationships with national NCFs, providing leadership training and other help needed to grow and extend their ministries. In 1964 she visited groups in Singapore and Malaysia before attending NCFI Executive meetings in Austria and afterward travelled to Switzerland, England, Hong Kong, and Thailand. In Malaysia, she spoke at the first NCF retreat and advised on the forming of a Constitution for the National NCF.

Her travels for NCFI in 1968 were even more extensive. Following the NCFI Conference and executive meetings in Scotland, there were visits to England, Switzerland, and West Pakistan where she provided leadership training, and on to Malaysia where she found great progress made in the NCF there. Then followed Singapore, Hong Kong and a first visit to the Philippines. It was there she met Naty Lopez an NCF staff worker who would later serve as a PACEA Regional staff worker. The outcome of these visits was the building up of NCFs in the region, and many connections formed that would prove valuable to the establishment of the NCFI Pacific and East Asia (PACEA) Region.

A new strategy for NCFI

At the Executive meetings in Scotland in 1968, Blanche suggested the possibility of developing the work of NCFI regionally. As this idea was explored and prayed over, a strategy began to take shape. One that could

potentially further and deepen NCFI ministry by sharing responsibility and leadership for fulfilling NCFI's aims at a more local level. Blanche was invited to form a pilot region in the Pacific and East Asia so it could be seen if and how this model would work. She took up this challenge with her usual vision and passion. Using the already planned visits to countries in the region, the vision was shared with the national NCFs. This first region would be known as PACEA. and a conference was planned to bring together representatives from as many countries in the region as possible. When she was invited in 1970 to take up the position of Regional Coordinator Blanche was still working for ANCM as Federal



Naty Lopez

Secretary, so it became an extra voluntary role for her. In that same year, Blanche was appointed as Vice President of NCFI.

The PACEA region established

Through the established links in the region, contact was quickly made with as many countries as possible to invite them to send representatives to a conference planned for October 1970. The first PACEA Conference was held in Singapore at Labrador Villa, the nurses' holiday home situated in a lovely area overlooking the sea. Twelve countries in the region were represented – Singapore, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Sabah, Malaysia, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Korea, Vietnam, Australia, New Zealand, and The Philippines. The conference was a great success and plans were made to continue with outreach and development of the region. To do this in the most effective way possible, it was decided by NCFI Executive to appoint a staff worker, Naty Lopez who had been recommended by Blanche. As she supported Naty in this work, strong foundations were laid and the region began to flourish. Naty appointed a small team representing a few different countries to assist her in the work (a forerunner of Regional Committees). New groups formed and established national NCFs were strengthened.

As Blanche continued as regional coordinator a further conference was held in Penang in 1974, beginning a pattern that still exists, with regional conferences and leadership training held in a different country every four years. More

partnerships were formed between countries for mutual support, and the work continued to grow. Even then, there was a strong feeling of connectedness between countries throughout this large region that still exists today. Blanche held NCFI positions of PACEA Regional Coordinator to 1979, and NCFI Vice President until 1980.

Blanche's legacy

Blanche Lindsay's legacy in the Pacific and East Asia is an NCFI Region of 13 member countries (the largest Region of NCFI) with conferences held every four years preceded by leadership training, plus conferences for leaders from time to time. The qualities for which she is remembered by those whom she served as well as those who worked with her were her spiritual insight, vision, passion, dependence on God, and her humility, which among other things was evidenced in her willingness to admit when she might be wrong, and to change her mind when given a good enough reason! She was gifted in organising, teaching, mentoring, and in cross-cultural connections. The experience and skills that were developed during her service to NCFI have been used throughout her life in church ministry, the Australian NCF where she served as NSW President and National President for a time, and in many other areas. Her ambition to become a hospital matron was more than fulfilled when she became the Group Director of Nursing for four Sydney hospitals dedicated to palliative care and rehabilitation. Blanche has now reached her 98th year and shares a home with Adele Sherlock in St Ives, a leafy suburb of Sydney.

* In 1970 the name ANCM was changed to Nurses Christian Fellowship to come into line with National Fellowships of Christian nurses in other parts of the world

An unexpected journey

Margaret Hutchison RN, NCFI Board member, NCFI Communications and Media

My journey in NCFI may never have begun were it not for a thwarted ambition. Throughout my nursing training, I was convinced that I would serve God in India, and that was linked to an ambition to become a doctor.



Encouraged by medical lecturers I secretly dreamed of studying Medicine following my graduation from nursing and midwifery. The last thing I would have embraced at that time was the idea of staying in Australia to work with nurses through the Australian Nurses Christian Movement (ANCM)¹, despite having a deep respect for the organisation and its aims.

Having begun my Christian journey when I was 13 years old, I thought I knew where my life would lead. I wanted only to serve God, but to me, that meant becoming a missionary as our boarding school Matron had been. But as happens so often to followers of Jesus, we eventually realise that our plans are not always his plans. Yet I was to discover that nothing brings more joy than being exactly where he wants us to be and to serve.

The Lord patiently provided experiences and insights that helped me to understand that ANCM was a mission too, and this was where he wanted me to be at that time.

I decided to do a two year full-time Bible college course while considering my next move. As missionaries visited the college to share about their work, I began to feel that I should not delay my departure to India with a lengthy medical course. I reasoned that since I was qualified in general nursing and midwifery, I should set out on my missionary journey as soon as possible. It was while I was preparing by gaining some

further nursing experience, that I was invited to join the New South Wales (NSW) Council of ANCM, and sometime later to consider joining the staff to relieve a staff member taking a 6 month leave. Just a short delay I thought, and some good experience for missionary work. The real shock came six months later when I was invited to pray about joining ANCM staff full time. There were many struggles as I considered this but the Lord patiently provided experiences and insights that helped me to understand that ANCM was a mission too, and this was where he wanted me to be at that time.

Never could I have believed I would still be serving in NCF Australia or NCFI in the year 2020! I eventually served as **Director of NCFA NSW for nearly 40 years**, and later on councils and Board, but I was still working with student nurses when I first became involved in NCFI. It began with a growing interest in what God was doing through NCF in surrounding countries as we heard from Blanche Lindsay the federal secretary of ANCM of her visits to Papua New Guinea (PNG) and some of the countries in South East Asia. After she became an executive member of NCFI we were increasingly challenged by our responsibility to pray and give to that wider work.

Then Blanche Lindsay was invited by NCFI to form an NCFI Region in the Pacific and East Asia as a pilot for a new pattern of NCFI ministry. It was to be known as the PACEA Region and an inaugural conference was planned for October 1970 in Singapore. Our ANCM staff had the privilege of praying with her for this grand vision and for the representatives from neighbouring countries she hoped would attend. I was very excited when Bloss (as she was known by us), suggested I attend the conference and lead some of the Bible studies and a leadership training session. That conference remains the most inspiring and exciting I have ever attended. The fellowship and feeling of oneness and God's presence were typical of the regional conferences that followed, but the conference of 1970 was something extra. As we shared our testimonies there was a sense that God had brought each one of us there for a special purpose.

Naty Lopez who had been a staff worker in the Philippines was one of the attendees. She was later invited to take up the position of Regional Staff Worker and served for several years. She invited a small team of people including me to join her in planning the regional work. It was a prototype of the regional committees we have now become so familiar with.

Never could I have believed I would still be serving in NCF Australia or NCFI in the year 2020!

I was invited to join the NCFI executive committee during the 1970s and served for two four-year terms. In the 1980s, I was elected as PACEA regional coordinator, a role I found challenging and exciting, especially the conference planning and work with the Regional Committee. My experience as the planning team leader and director for the 1990 conference in Hong Kong, was vastly different than for the same task at later conferences. We did not yet have email, and phone calls were very expensive so most of the planning was done through long letters and exchange of meeting minutes, reports and photocopies. This was slow and very time consuming and generated an enormous volume of paper. Barbara Simsen came with me to Hong Kong a week ahead of the conference so we could work on final preparations with the local team and become familiar with the conference venue. It was discovered to be in the middle of major building works, with huge holes around the site that needed to be carefully navigated by participants! Yet it was a fantastic time and had the largest attendance for a PACEA conference to date with over 200 participants. At the regional meetings following the conference, I handed over the coordinator role to **Chan Sum**

Kum from Malaysia who capably led the region in further growth and the 1994 conference in the Genting Highlands of Malaysia.

Over the next couple of decades, I served on regional committees, and attended some NCFI conferences, but had not been closely involved with the region for some years when I attended the PACEA conference in Japan 2010. I had been invited to lead one stream of the main conference topic on Leadership, while Sue Allen from the UK led the other. I greatly enjoyed the experience of being back in harness at an NCFI regional conference. Even so, I expected my service with NCFI was more or less at an end until at the regional committee meeting it was announced that the current Regional Chair would need to step down from her position at that time. I am not sure to this day how it all happened so quickly, but I was nominated, accepted and was elected to the position. And so began the next stage of my journey with NCFI.

As we shared our testimonies there was a sense that God had brought each one of us there for a special purpose.

I joined the International Board in my role as regional chair in 2010 and have enjoyed two and a half terms of service which have involved communications and media work, assisting with administration, and membership of the executive committee. Working with international colleagues and our key leaders has been the most rewarding experience I could have imagined. Best of all, I am never short of a challenge on the journey that God in his wisdom provided for me to serve him and nurses worldwide through NCFI.

The leadership of Rev Hyesook Lee and the Korean Nurses Christian Fellowship

Dr Won Hee Lee PhD, RN

*Won-Hee Lee, former
KNCF president and
NCFI Board member,
Emeritus Professor,
Yonsei University
College of nursing*



*Visiting professor,
Mongolian
National University
Medical Sciences*

Nursing in Korea was established in 1906 by Christian missionaries from U.S.A and Canada and the profession has been greatly influenced by Christian values. In addition to this the role of the KNCF in supporting Christian nurses has been critical for the continued strength and influence of the Christian faith amongst nurses. A keyperson who has sustained this is **Hyesook Lee** who was the General Director of the Korean Nurses Christian Fellowship.



Former presidents of KNCF

The Korean Nurses Christian Fellowship (KNCF) was founded in 1967 and officially became a member of Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) in 1988 through the vision of the first generation of KNCF leaders.

NCFI has had a great impact on Christian nursing development in Korea and consequently on the personal faith of many Christian nurses.

The most motivational factor of the remarkable development of the Fellowship was the appointment of Hyesook Lee as leader and Director of the Fellowship. This appointment followed after much intercessory prayer for KNCF offered by a few committed Christian nurses in PACEA and NCFI. Grace Wallace mentioned that it took ten years to see Hyesook Lee become a member of KNCF staff. This was not done without sacrifice. Hyesook gave up all the benefits she was entitled to receive from the Severance hospital where she had been working for 12.5 years in order to follow Gods calling and lead KNCF.



Hyesook Lee

Hyesook led the Fellowship towards a new and refreshed vision and mission and set new directions for integrating faith and the nursing profession; education, practice and research. Through networking and collaboration between Christian nursing education institutions and hospitals KNCF shared resources and collaborated in education and research into spiritual care. It became a key pioneer in this field of nursing research and education. The book, 'Called to Care' by Judy Shelly and Arlene Miller (2009 2nd Ed) was translated into Korean. Subsequently a spiritual care module for students was developed in the Korean language using this text as a source. This was published with the collaboration of educators and practitioners.

In 2004 more than 350 nurses from 28 nations gathered in Seoul Korea for the NCFI quadrennial conference.

At the opening ceremony the Key Note address was given by **Dr Mo-Im Kim**, a distinguished Korean nurse previously ICN president and

winner of the Christiane Reimann award. She had also been Minister of Health in Korea.

The conference provided a good opportunity for cross cultural fellowship and a sharing of common experiences faced in many parts of the world by Christian nurses. The conference promoted a real interest in NCFI work in the six regions and members of NCFI committed themselves to intercessory prayer for each other.

Hyesook Lee is a role model within KNCF, demonstrating servant leadership and playing multiple roles. She has cared, nurtured and mentored nurses. She meets those in distress with family conflicts, spiritual confusion and spiritual distress and also with new graduates who suffer from culture shock when first entering the clinical setting.

Hyesook has an open home into which she welcomes everyone. She enjoys cooking, first she feeds her visitors with a healthy home cooked meal, then she listens before encouraging the nurses to develop their personal relationship with God through Bible study, quiet times (QT), prayer and through seminars. In this way she helps them build, restore and strengthen their individual faith.

She is also a resource person. She provides the nurses with the references related to Bible reading, QT, and provides a prayer list of the KNCF members with individual health issues upon their request, issues related to Quiet Times, Korean society, church, global issues etc.

As of January 2020, approximately 300 nurses in the regional branches are participating in group Bible readings of four chapters in a day and sharing their thoughts with others by SNS. The small group bible reading is a strategy to identify next generation of leadership development.

The next generation

Despite the rapidly changing society God's words and our prayers are the key to our lives, vision and mission in terms of both individuals and KNCF. Future leadership in Korea is committed to the following principles learned from Hyesook Lee, Mo-Im Kim and others who have played an important role in supporting Christian nurses in Korea.

We will...

- continue to strive to integrate the nursing profession, education, practice and research with Christian values and personal faith
- maintain a strong KNCF with a Christian identity. We will do this through our personal faith and our commitment to the calling of God and the example of those leaders who have gone before us
- maintain a healthy balance between our personal faith and KNCF
- equip ourselves to provide spiritual care as the completion of holistic nursing care
- maintain a KNCF platform to continue and develop our vision and mission in order to glorify God
- build archives to witness and record how God has been working in nursing in Korea from generation to generation.

References

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Pioneers in India: Dora Abraham and Esther Sirra

The Evangelical Nurses Fellowship India (ENFI) was born in the 1950's as a result of the joint work of Christian missionaries and dedicated Indian Christian nurses. It joined NCFI in 1972.

Dora Abraham

was active in the Fellowship from its early days as part of NCFI and joined the NCFI Executive from 1984–1986. She was the President of ENFI and editor of the Nurses Link magazine. A loyal servant who gave so much of herself for the nurses in India. She exemplified servant leadership. Her vision included that of forming the regional group, now known as the South Asian and Middle Eastern Region (SAME). She laid the foundations of ENFI and made a major contribution to the work of NCFI.



She was followed, as ENFI president, by **Esther Sirra**. A nurse who graduated with a diploma in 1965 and who went on to do a BSc, a diploma in nursing education, an MSc/MPhil and finally completed her doctorate in Edinburgh University in 1986, a major achievement at that time.



Esther not only felt called to minister to nurses but also had a burden for the poor and disadvantaged. This led her to start her own nursing institute, as founder and Principal, training rural girls. She had a deep concern for the health of the rural community from which she came and in response to this she established a rural health clinic to help meet their needs. She authored and published books on nursing and was a recipient of many awards both in India and

Internationally. Truly an example of someone who lived out their faith in a practical and caring way.

Esther attended the ENFI conference in Bombay in the year 1989 and Dora Abraham, the then President of ENFI introduced her to the organisation. From that moment she became involved in the ministry of ENFI and started regular Bible studies and prayer for nursing students and staff in the AG Hospital, Calcutta. In 1993 she joined the ENFI Trust.

In 1999 Dora Abraham handed over the responsibility of President of ENFI to Esther, a role that she fulfilled until 2010, when Mabel Kuruvilla was appointed as President.

Esther was a simple, humble, kind and approachable person. She had a sound knowledge of God's Word and was prayerful. Her leadership of ENFI was strong and she led the fellowship to a place of great strength and new vision.

She represented ENFI on the Board of Nurses Christian Fellowship International (NCFI) from 1996 to 2000. She made a significant contribution to the direction and continued growth of NCFI. She was then succeeded by **Chinnamma Mathew** who in turn has been a valued member of the NCFI Board bringing to the Board spirituality and wisdom that has benefited all members.

In June 2017 Esther Sirra went to be with the Lord. We thank God for her service and love for nurses in India and worldwide.

These women demonstrated commitment and perseverance in the face of many challenges. Striving to reach Christian nurses throughout India as well as preaching the Word of God to all nurses. They set an example of fortitude and strength trusting in God day by day to meet their needs.

An answer to prayer

Grete Schärfe RN

As a young nurse I attended a one-year exchange program in New York City from 1969–1970. During that time I became acquainted with NCF-USA. For the first time



I saw how faith and professional nursing went hand in hand. I saw how faith and nursing practice could be part of each other. It totally changed my view of nursing and filled me with a longing to share this with my colleagues in Denmark. During that period I experienced the most meaningful quiet times with God. During one of these mornings, I heard this small, still and clear voice in my inner being,

‘I want you to go back to Denmark and work with something like NCF there’.

My immediate response was a very practical one,

‘You need to give me an address, for I don’t know where to go!’

On my way back to Denmark I stopped in Chicago and met Margie (Margaret Rosti) through a colleague from NCF USA. She asked me,

‘Are you a Danish Christian nurse?’, when I confirmed that I was, she added, ‘then I have an address for you!’

I saw how faith and nursing practice could be part of each other. It totally changed my view of nursing.

I almost fell over in astonishment. Could this be the address that I had asked God for? Margie explained that she had just came back from an NCFI Conference in St. Andrews, Scotland two weeks ago. There she had met a Norwegian nurse called Bodhild Bollerud who was trying to develop a Christian fellowship for nurses in

Denmark. Bodhild had asked participants to pray for a staff worker. Afterwards, Margie had asked her if there was anything she could do to help.

‘Yes, if you meet a Danish Christian nurse then send her back to me!’ Bodhild replied, handing Margie her address.

When I met with Bodhild, I discovered that a Danish Christian fellowship of nurses existed, but they needed a staff worker. The National Committee of the Danish fellowship had been very specific in their prayers. The person should be Danish, a Registered nurse, young, have a Lutheran background, interdenominational openness and have experienced NCF in another country! I matched the description to the letter.

During the following 25 years as a staff worker in Denmark, I have often faced difficulties, but I never doubted that I was where God wanted me because of His clear calling.

Before I started as a staff worker I had the privilege to follow the work of NCF-England for three months and attend the NCFI conference in Switzerland 1972.

I joined the Executive Committee of NCFI in 1975 working with wise and experienced women like **Betty Kettle and Pat Ashworth** until 1984. During October–November 1981, I travelled on behalf of NCFI, mainly in Germany. I published a small European newsletter, ‘Euronews’ which was distributed 2–4 times a year in order to increase the communication between the European countries. I worked at the NCFI office in London prior to the international conference in India 1984, and in Fiji in 1992. I was responsible for the coordination of seminars. My most important contribution was helping to form a European Region within NCFI.

Forming a European regional group

In the early 1970’s, PACEA (Pacific and East Asia) had formed a region within NCFI. The NCFI conference in Ghana 1976 encouraged delegates from the African countries to form

an African region, and European delegates also desired to form a European Region.(1). On the plane returning from the Executive Committee meeting in Ghana, six nurses from England, Scotland, Switzerland and Denmark decided to meet again the following year. We would invite representatives from the missing European fellowships with the purpose of forming a European regional group (1).

During the coming years key leaders of European national fellowships met two to three days once or twice a year for personal encouragement, support and prayer for our fellowships. We attended each other's national conferences or met at the NCFI headquarters in London (2). I remember it as a time of tremendous solidarity and enthusiasm. In forming a European Region we wanted to strengthen the existing fellowships and reach out to nurses in European countries with no fellowships.

From my experiences I can see that young leaders from other countries can learn and discover new ideas, as I did.

After much prayer, guidelines for forming a region were sent to the European NCFI member countries for discussion with an invitation to send delegates to meet in Switzerland in 1981. Eleven European delegates came and decided to form a Caretaker Committee to prepare the first official

European conference in Switzerland until an election could take place the following year (2).

NCFI has given me valuable relationships around the globe. After I resigned as a staff worker in 1998, I worked as a hospice nurse. Through my contacts with NCFI, I taught spiritual and palliative care in Moldova and Ukraine.

From my experiences I can see that young leaders from other countries can learn and discover new ideas, as I did, from visiting fellowships and meeting other Christian nurses at national conferences. What NCF-USA and NCF-England did for me had life changing consequences not only for myself but also for NCF-Denmark.

We benefit from exchanging teachers, for example one of our members taught spiritual care at a conference in Spain last year, and this year Pippa Peppiatt, Head of Nursing from Christian Medical Fellowship, England spoke at our National Conference on how to recruit young nurses into the fellowship.

National committee members can also benefit from visiting committee members in other countries. After the regional leadership conference in England October 2019, committee members of some of the Scandinavian fellowships have met online to exchange ideas and encourage each other. God can show us what our specific role as Christian nurses is in a changing world to the benefit and blessing of our colleagues, and eventually to our patients and our fellow human beings.

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My journey with NCFI

Chan Kum Sum BSc SRN SCM MTD (UK)

My association with NCFI began in the 1960s when Miss Johan Allan, the General Secretary, invited me to the NCFI conference in Austria. At that time, I had just completed my nursing and midwifery training in England. The conference was the starting point in helping me to connect my faith to nursing.



On my return to Malaysia, I joined NCF as a member. I was elected president of the Malaysian NCF in 1971 and held that position for many years. During my term, the Lord gave me many opportunities to serve Him through different channels. With the help of staff workers our membership increased. NCF groups held meetings in different parts of the country and annual conferences were organised. A magazine, news and prayer letters were published regularly.

Over the years, I have given many talks and written articles that address issues in nursing from a Christian perspective. It has always been my desire to compile these material into a book. By God's grace, this became a reality in 1994 when my book, "The Christian in Nursing" was published and launched at the 7th. PACEA regional conference held in Malaysia. The book was well received by nurses in the PACEA region.

My involvement with NCFI member countries in the PACEA region has been an inspiring and meaningful experience. Our common purpose in caring, sharing and supporting Christian nurses has brought us together to organise the bi-yearly regional conferences. I had the privilege of attending most of these conferences and participated as an organising committee member,

speaker, workshop facilitator and small group leader. I also had the responsibility of being the regional chairperson in 1994.

Visiting and working with national NCFs in the region has been of mutual blessing. It was an honour for me to be invited as the main speaker at the Papua New Guinea NCF national conference in 1997. It was attended by 400 nurses and PNG NCF was the fastest growing fellowship at that time. I also had the privilege of attending the first national conference of the Indonesian NCF in 2009 and joined a team from the PACEA region for a mission trip to Kalimantan, Indonesia, teaching primary health care to rural folks (NCFI News Letter June 2020 www.ncfi.org).

As a member of the NCFI executive committee from 1980–1988, I was given the opportunity to develop a global view of NCF and share in decision-making. It was a great honour to be invited as a plenary speaker at the 1988 NCFI conference in Philadelphia, U.S.A. In 1999, the NCFI Board and PACEA Leaders' meetings were held in Kuala Lumpur and I had the privilege of facilitating those events.

Looking back, I can see that my nursing career was intertwined with NCF. My journey as a Christian nurse has been shaped and enriched by my involvement with NCF. It gave me the opportunity to develop and use the gifts and abilities that God has graciously given me. At the same time, I have been greatly blessed by others in the NCF family. Thanks be to God. To Him be the glory!

Chan Kum Sum worked as a staff nurse for 10 years and then as a Nurse Educator for 26 years at the Advanced Nursing Education Programme, University of Malaya.

Congress announcement

Due to the corona pandemic, we have postponed the NCFI World Congress from July 2020 until July 2021.

Welcome to the NCFI world Congress, July 2021

- The same title: OPPORTUNITIES & CHALLENGES IN NURSING TODAY: A Christ-Centered Response
- The same place: Colorado Christian University (CCU), Denver, Colorado, USA

We are grateful that Dr. Kamalini Kumar has agreed to continue as the Congress Director and that Dr. Barbara White as agreed to continue as the Congress Convener. The CCU has kindly decided to keep the same conditions in 2021 as agreed upon in 2020. We thank God for this and pray that people who invested in visas and flights will be able to take these forward into 2021.

The dates for the 2021 Congress

The **Pre-congress courses** start with an opening ceremony Friday July 9th in the evening. Courses will run Saturday morning July 10th – Monday July 12th. Please keep yourself informed about the time, content, when to book and other information regarding the Congress at the NCFI website www.ncfi.org

The **main Congress** runs from Monday July 12th with the opening ceremony in the evening until Friday evening July 16th.

Some comments regarding the main Congress

- We aim at having the same program as we have planned for in 2020.
- **Sponsorship** – we have had a process for the 2020 Congress. Those who are awarded sponsorship for the 2020 Congress will keep the sponsorship for 2021 Congress.
- **Abstracts for the concurrent sessions** – we have had a process for evaluating and accepting abstracts for papers and posters for the 2020 Congress. Those who have their abstracts accepted for the 2020 Congress will be welcome to present at the 2021 world Congress. There will be invitation to send in more abstracts, please stay informed by our website www.ncfi.org
- **International Forum** – The NCFI business meeting will be carried out during the World Congress in 2021. Time and plans for the meeting will be communicated to the National NCFs is due time for the Congress.
- **Regional Forums** – The six NCFI Regions will run their regional forums during the 2021 Congress. The regional chairs will communicate to their regions time and plans for these forums.



Denver is in the heart of the beautiful Rocky Mountains of Colorado

Introducing Susan Elliott our newly appointed Director of International Institute of Christian Nursing (IICN)

IICN is the professional division of NCFI and is charged with the promotion of a Christian worldview in nursing practice, education, leadership, and research/evidence-based projects. We are delighted to welcome

and introduce Dr Susan Elliott as our new Director. Dr. Elliott joined the NCFI volunteer ministry team as director of IICN in February 2020.



Dr. Elliott was raised in a Christian home in Southern California, USA and she gives personal testimony that Jesus Christ is her Lord and Saviour. Her parents guided her into involvement with church music and missions programs and many a furloughing missionary stayed in their home. Dr. Elliott earned her BSN degree at a Christian University and soon served through the Church of the Nazarene as a volunteer missionary nurse in Swaziland (now Eswatini). There, she was trained as a midwife. Dr. Elliott became a women's health Nurse Practitioner and later, when earning her MSN degree, became a family nurse practitioner also. These degrees better prepared her to meet God's purpose for her nursing career. In time, Dr. Elliott responded to God's leading and in 2000 she completed her PhD in nursing. She utilized historical methodology while conducting her doctoral research in Swaziland, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and in multiple USA states. Her dissertation is entitled *Missionary Nurses Dorothy Davis Cook, 1940–1972: "Mother of Swazi Nurses"*.

Through the Church of the Nazarene, Living Room International, and the Saddleback Church PEACE Plan, Dr. Elliott has now served and presented on six continents. She co-created and was director of the first international health family nurse practitioner program in the United States. She has held various academic leadership roles at Christian and secular Universities which include six years as director of the nursing program at Biola University. Courses taught by her include research, cultural care, nursing ethics, nursing leadership, community-based healthcare, advanced health systems, and women's health. She has mentored nurses earning advanced degrees and in clinical settings through the processes of nursing research and evidence-based projects. Countries where Dr. Elliott has served in disaster relief, nursing education and research, and in advanced practice direct patient care include Swaziland, Rwanda, Zambia, Kenya, Russia, Australia, India, Venezuela, Panama, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Guatemala.

After leading the nursing research and evidence-based practice programmes at a large children's hospital, Dr. Elliott's focus of time and practice for the last 4 plus years has been in the care of her elderly parents. She expresses her joy and praise to God for opening the door for her to serve Him and Christian nurses across the globe through NCFI/IICN. Her topics of particular interest are application of a theological model of the professional nursing-Christian worldview partnership, nursing and spiritual care, Biblical gender equality, and mobilization of the clinical church. In all, one of her favourite songs is "To God be the Glory"!

The value of our history

**Dr. Susan Elliott, PhD, RNC, APRN-BC, PHN, Professor,
Director, International Institute of Christian Nursing**

In this edition of *Christian Nursing International*, you have had the joy of reading the lived-experience stories of Nurses Christian Fellowship International leaders. You have been given historical insight into how God used each of these nurse leaders for His purpose. Nursing history such as this gives the next generation of Christian nurses a spiritual and professional identity and heritage. In your academic nursing education, you learned of historical facts and were shown a perspective on how modern nursing came into existence, how nursing roles and today's nursing practice were developed and discovered who were the historical leaders who led the way. Each Christian nurse also has their heritage and a story of how things came to pass that they can value and pass on.

History provides us with two critical events which merged to be the foundation of who we are as Christian nurses today. The first is Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Saviour. Were it not for His documented story of coming to live as a man, dying for our sins to live again and leaving us with the Holy Spirit in anticipation of His return and eternity with Him, we would not be Christian. If Florence Nightingale had not established nursing with standards for learning, growing, becoming, and serving, we would not be professional Nurses. Our blessing is that these events merged one day in 1837 when Florence Nightingale stated that "God spoke

to me and called me to His service" (Florence Nightingale Museum, 1996).

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic discussed in the article by Dr. Amy Rex Smith, history is being made. For years to come, these weeks and months will be discussed in nursing, medical, science, engineering, political science, public health, economics, social justice, business, social work, philosophy, psychology, and theological classrooms. The global lived experience stories of caring for others while afraid for self and family will be remembered. They will be valued in conversation, books, movies, motivational presentations, and faith testimonies for decades to come. What must be asked, is how will Christian nurses be remembered? None of us is qualified to care for any patient at any time without a solid foundational and ongoing evidence-based knowledge, critical thinking, clinical reasoning, and a strong professional skill set. Christianity alone does not qualify us to care for patients. At the same time, we should never leave our Christian faith at home. Each of us has the responsibility to intentionally learn and grow spiritually and professionally with intentional merging of Christianity and Nursing in dynamic ways.

May God bless you richly as you meet His purpose for you in service as a Christian professional nurse. Leave a history which glorifies God.

About NCFI

Doctrinal basis

The following are the basic beliefs which NCFI members hold and which encompass the basic beliefs of the Christian Faith:

- the unity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the Godhead
- the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ as very God, of one substance with the Father, and very Man, born of the Virgin Mary
- the Divine Inspiration and supreme authority of the Holy Scriptures in all matters of faith and conduct
- the guilt and depravity of human nature in consequence of the Fall
- the substitutionary Death of our Lord Jesus Christ and His Resurrection, as the only way of salvation from sin through repentance and faith
- the necessity for the New Birth by the Holy Spirit and his indwelling in the believer

Aims

- encourage Christian nurses and nursing students to live out their faith in compassionate professional practice
- deepen the spiritual life and cultural awareness of Christian nurses and nursing students around the world
- promote friendship, communication, connection and collaboration among Christian nurses worldwide
- support Regional NCFI Councils (Committees) and National NCFI organisations in their ministry with nurses
- empower Christian nurses to examine and apply scripture as it relates to professional practice
- equip and support the development of Christian nurse leaders around the world
- represent Christian nursing in the global nursing and healthcare arena

Culture

- faith and prayer
- *this is the lifestyle by which we will be known*
- integrate Biblical principles into our professional nursing practice
- *this is the how we live out our calling*
- participate in healthcare to demonstrate Jesus' love through equipping, encouraging and empowering nurses to provide competent and compassionate care
- *this is our life of nursing as ministry*
- seek to respect and understand cultures, languages, local customs, and healthcare practices as we serve
- *this is our commitment to incarnation*
- work with, learn from and encourage those who share the same purpose
- *this is our commitment to local communities of believers and the global Body of Jesus Christ*

Strategic goals 2013–2021

1. establish a sustainable financial and administrative infrastructure to achieve the aims of the organisation
2. establish an effective worldwide communication and collaboration network
3. develop an International Institute of Christian Nursing to equip nurses in professional practice, education and collaborative research
4. expand a network of prayer and praise across the organisation
5. initiate and develop key partnerships across like-minded organisations and institutions
6. organise international conferences normally every 4 years
7. expand the organisation through increased membership including students, active practitioners and retired members

Writing for CNI: author guidelines

CNI accepts a wide range of submissions including

- letters to the editor
- research manuscripts and literature reviews
- opinion pieces
- reports and book reviews
- educational articles
- spiritual teaching
- experience manuscripts

All submissions should be forwarded to the editor for consideration (babsparfitt@hotmail.co.uk). The editorial committee will review submissions to ensure that they adhere to the aims and scope of CNI.

Research papers should follow the accepted format of reporting including an abstract, introduction, design, method, results or conclusions and discussion. They **should not be more than 2000 words in length** and must indicate the ethical approval process has been undertaken.

Manuscripts addressing topics of interest, educational approaches and spiritual teaching should **normally be no more than 1500 words** or less. Letters, reports and opinion statements should normally be **500 words** or less. If you are uncertain regarding the length or type of your submission please contact the editor.

All manuscripts should be word processed using Microsoft Word, Times Roman, spacing normally 1.15. Grammar and English should be checked as far as possible before submission. Avoid complex formatting, as this is sometimes difficult to transfer into the main document. British English spelling is preferred and should comply with the Concise Oxford Dictionary.

Articles written in Spanish or French will be considered.

References should be presented normally using the Harvard style, author names followed by year of publication. e.g. (Jones 2015). When a web page is cited the date when it was accessed should be noted. DOI's should be included when possible for Internet accessed publications.

Photographs and tables etc. should be submitted of the highest possible quality to allow for printing and titles should always be given. No pictures or tables should be submitted without permission from the copyright holder.

For further details please check our website: www.ncfi.org

CNI 13 will focus on your stories and experiences of working during this COVID-19 epidemic. We want to share how you have been challenged, supported and served as Christian nurses and how God has been with you in this time. Please send your written accounts to susan.ludwick@newberry.edu

Nurses Christian Fellowship International is registered as a Nonprofit Corporation with the Office of the Secretary of State of the State of Colorado, USA, against entity ID No. 20131016427, 03/13/2013. NCFI is also registered with the United States Department of the Treasury, Internal Revenue Service (IRS). The organisation is governed by an International Board consisting of three representatives from each of the six NCFI worldwide regions including the regional chair.



Nurses
Christian Fellowship
International

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