



Greetings from Grace

Engaging students and nurses with the Good News of Jesus Christ to bring God's love and healing to nursing and healthcare.

March 2011

Health and the Gospel

Healthcare is more than just a way to reach out to the poor and suffering. It is an integral part of the gospel message.

When it comes to prayer requests, health concerns often top the list. We all know friends and family members who are suffering from ill health. Cancer, surgery, infections are all agents of suffering and bring us to our knees. If our own health is not what it should be, it becomes the priority for us as well. We seem to take good health for granted; but when we become ill or injured, we recognize the blessing of good health. We petition God for restoration and we thank him for our health.

Awareness that health plays such an important part in our lives has led to a whole industry that according to 2010 statistics consumes 17.3% of the United States gross domestic product.

Healthcare is big business in the United States. People are seeking healthy lives and want to eliminate all suffering and disease. This has great implications for Christians.

First, we need Christians in the healthcare professions. Advisors tell young people who are looking for job security to enter healthcare. "You'll always have a job because there will always be sick people." Nursing is the largest healthcare profession and the recent recession has led many to consider nursing as a second career as well as a first career choice. But if the motivation is just a stable source of income, then I'm concerned for the nursing profession and the other healthcare professions.

Caring for others who are suffering ill health requires more than advanced knowledge and technical skill. Compassion for others and trust between the caregiver and care recipient are aspects of healthcare that affect health outcomes but are difficult to measure. Currently the buzz word is "evidenced based practice" – healthcare that is scientifically researched, measured and established. While science and research are essential to good healthcare, I think that there are some intangibles that may get overlooked. It's not just how to insert an IV or administer a treatment; it's the care and concern for the individual who is undergoing that therapy that is also important.

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Spring Schedule

- April 16, 2011 NCF information event for Western Michigan
Brookside CRC, Grand Rapids, MI
- April 19-21, 2011 Global Missions Health Conference Executive Committee meeting
Southeast Christian Church, Louisville, KY
- May 3-5, 2011 Health workshop and Chapel talk for InterVarsity Staff
InterVarsity National Service Center, Madison, WI
- June 1-4, 2011 Christian Community Health Fellowship Board meeting and conference
Belmont University, Nashville, TN
- August 18-20, 2011 Center for the Study of Health in Missions Board meeting
West Coast Healthcare Missions and Ministry Conference
Fuller Seminary, Pasadena, CA



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As Christian nurses we look to Jesus as our example. Jesus understood our suffering. When He died for us, it wasn't only the physical pain of the crucifixion that he suffered; he also suffered the emotional pain of being denied by his friends, the social pain of being mocked and ridiculed, and the spiritual pain of rejection by God, the Father. When Jesus cared for people he not only cared for the physical well-being of those whom he healed; he also addressed their social, emotional and spiritual concerns. He touched the outcast leper for whom touch had been prohibited (Matthew 8:3), he restored the demoniac to his right mind (Luke 8:35), he forgave the paralytic (Matthew 9:2). Nurses Christian Fellowship equips nurses to care for others holistically — caring not only for their physical bodies, emotions and social concerns; but also for their spiritual lives.

The second implication of health care relates to missions. God has given us incredible ability to treat and cure many illness and disease through science. We are able to treat illnesses that only a few years ago would have been a death sentence. For people in other countries where healthcare is not as advanced, the healthcare available in the United States is miraculous. For many years, missionaries have used the advances in healthcare to reach out to the poor and suffering around the world. Medicine and clinics have

been tools to bring the message of the Good News of Jesus. However, healthcare is more than just a way to reach out to the poor and suffering. It is an integral part of the gospel message. If we care for the body and don't care for the soul, we have not addressed the whole health problem presented to us. On the other hand, if we are just concerned about a person's relationship with God and not addressed the suffering of injury and disease, we failed to bring the entirety of the gospel message. God cares for our whole being.

Integrating health and the gospel message seems to be the focus that God has given me for this year. In May, I will do an in-service education program at the National Service Center (NSC) for InterVarsity on the topic of health and speak at the NSC chapel service. In August, I've been asked to give a plenary address at the West Coast Healthcare Missions and Ministry Conference at Fuller Seminary. It will also be a topic at the Global Missions Health Conference at Southeast Christian Church in Louisville, KY in November. The ongoing work of the Center for the Study of Health in Mission includes this focus as well.

Thank you for partnering with me to bring God's love and healing to nursing and healthcare.



Praise and Prayer

Praise — Thank God for:

- An excellent National Staff Conference for all InterVarsity Staff in St. Louis in January. The focus was on the campus renewal portion of IVCF's vision statement.
- Acceptance of an article, "Challenges and Trends in Healthcare Missions" in the June-August *Journal of Christian Nursing*.
- Volunteer Clair DeHaan who is working with nursing students in Western Michigan.
- Connie Jarlsberg who continues to serve as missions specialist for NCF and will be surveying the Christian colleges and universities about their interest in overseas service learning programs for nursing students.
- The increased number of nurses becoming aware of NCF through our Facebook page and social media networking.

Prayer — Ask God to:

- Provide the necessary financial and human resources for NCF to expand our student ministry and continue to educate and minister to nurses in practice.
- Raise up the next generation of NCF leaders to bring a Christian worldview to nursing in the future. There are many new challenges in today's healthcare milieu and we need Christian nurses and healthcare professionals who can address the ethical choices presented, provide moral leadership to navigate in these waters, and be committed to bringing the Good News of Jesus to a suffering world.
- Speak through me when I am asked to give presentations. I want to hear from God and share the message He has given me.

Gifts for the ministry of Grace Tazelaar can be sent to Nurses Christian Fellowship P.O. Box 7895, Madison, WI 53707-7895