



PRESCRIPTION

A Singapore Nurses' Christian Fellowship Newsletter

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Restoration of the Wall of Nursing

Scripture Reading: Nehemiah 1:5 -11

History

Nehemiah was the **governor** and **cupbearer** to King Artaxerxes 1 of Persia (now Iran), today a predominantly Muslim country. When Nehemiah heard that Nebuchadnezzar destroyed Jerusalem in **586BC**, he was grieved in his spirit. As he began to intercede for his people, he felt led to lead his exiled kinsmen (who were already in the land of Babylon) to return to their homeland to rebuild the ruins and destruction caused by the Babylonians. Jerusalem was regarded as the spiritual and political centre of Judah.

Nehemiah **obtained the King's permission, provision and protection** for the massive project of rebuilding the walls. As he had **found favour with the King**, the King was gracious to his request and backed him even with people, money and protection.

Definitions

The Hebrew meaning of Nehemiah is "**Comfort of Jehovah**". The **Cupbearer** is a position of great honour and responsibility. Nehemiah's role of tasting the king's wine before the king consumed it (to save the king from being poisoned) placed him in a position of great trust as one of the king's worthy advisors.

Walls are solid structures that define a physical or geographical boundary. They offer protection to "what is within". In short, walls legitimize the rightful boundary that no person is allowed to cross over or intervene without an authorized entry.

Symbolic Significance

In the passage of scripture, "restoring the wall" suggests both a **Physical Restoration** and a **Spiritual**

Restoration. Chapters 1 to 7 concentrated on the physical rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls while Chapters 8 to 13 talked about the **Restoration of the People.**

Restoring the wall was symbolically significant as it reinforced Judah's political and geographical restoration and presence. There is no other way, **without walls, Jerusalem cannot be considered as a city** at all.

There is a strong analogy between Nehemiah and Nurses. Nurses are special people, called by God for a special ministry that is, to bring physical and spiritual restoration to the profession of nursing as well as to those whom we serve. In this context, I would like to structure my sharing into 3 broad parts:-

- a. *Reclaim the Call*
- b. *Recalibrate the Course*
- c. *Renew our Commitment*

1. Reclaim the Call

Nehemiah portrayed Christ by demonstrating a deep love for his people. Similarly, nurses have chosen to join the noble profession because they want to care for the weak and vulnerable. Each one of us here is therefore a "Nehemiah" ordained by God for the workplace. The wall of nursing has suffered onslaughts of devastation from all sides throughout the years for as long as we can remember. Nurses are bruised. Some are disillusioned and many have left the cause for which they have been first called to do.

There is a pervasive spirit of despondency and helplessness. Just as Nehemiah **challenged his kinsmen to rise up to rebuild** the shattered walls

SNCF
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One In Christ

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MISSION
STATEMENT

SNCF seeks to bring Jesus Christ to nurses, equipping and helping them find meaning and purpose in their work.

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of Jerusalem, let us too rise up to rebuild the wall of Nursing. Nehemiah cannot do the job alone, he needed likeminded people. Likewise, we are one in Him and ordained by Him for that same purpose. (Eccl 4:12 – “Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not easily broken”).

Therefore, in whatever capacity or role you play, whether a bedside nurse, educator or administrator, you are the “Nehemiah” whom God has appointed. Rise up and take the leadership role. Do not allow the wall of Nursing to degenerate any further.

The Lord is blessing nursing. Look at the turn of events in the last 5 years that our political and secular leaders have blessed our profession – more headcounts, more scholarships, improved salary, more opportunities for career progression and the list goes on. However, from a spiritual as well as a professional transformation, there is much work to be done. We cannot accomplish much if we are not together with one heart and mind committed to the higher mission. Some questions worth reflecting are:-

- a. How many of us earnestly pray for our profession?
- b. If we see a policy, a particular practice or a new initiative not moving in the right direction, do we have the boldness to raise this to the higher authority and make a stand for what is dear to our people, no matter how formidable the authority can be?
- c. Do we find opportunities to intervene on behalf of the profession, colleagues or even the patients when the situation calls for it?

2. Recalibrate the Course

Nursing is not an easy job. The work can be rough and unkind. Nehemiah faced the same problems too. He had to confront mounting opposition from within and without. Internally, wealthy Jews abused and oppressed their own kind, forcing them to mortgage their property and sell their children to slavery. Externally, he faced mockery, conspiracy. Isn't this happening in Nursing?

Nehemiah's response is one that we can all learn from. Nehemiah set the example. He sacrificed his governor's salary to help the poor and in the rebuilding effort.

Friends, the call to excellence will require something from us. We cannot give to God anything that costs us

nothing. Nehemiah overcame external threats through wisdom from the Lord, by setting half of the people on military watch and half on construction. In spite of deceit, slander and treachery, Nehemiah continued to trust God and to **press on with singleness of mind until the work was completed.**

Lesson for Nursing

How do we calibrate our course? Let us optimise the use of our limited resources. We only have 7 hours to make the difference. Tackle negativity with **prayer and action.** (Faith without works is dead James 2:26). We must also be mindful of the “**Rhetoric vs Reality**” conflict. Always speak the language of love. Inject positivity into a foul-mouthed, negative and perverse workplace. Bless those who curse us. And press on with singleness of mind until the work that we do for the Lord is completed. (Phil 1: 27, 28 “Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. I know that you stand firm in one spirit. Contending as one man for the faith of the gospel without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you”

3. Renew our Commitment

- a. Restoration of the People (Chap 8 – 13): The construction of the walls was followed by the consecration and blessing of the people. When all is done, Ezra the priest stood on a special wooden podium and gave the people a marathon reading of the Law. All who were there responded with weeping, confession, obedience and finally rejoicing. The Levites and priests then led the Israelites into a great prayer of thanksgiving to God for His work of deliverance and loyalty on behalf of His people. The covenant is then renewed as the people of God committed themselves afresh to Him again.
- b. The task of revival and reformation within the rebuilt walls **demanded years of Nehemiah's godly life and leadership.** As governor of Jerusalem, Nehemiah demonstrated courage, compassion and love for his kind. He was a great man of integrity, godliness and selflessness and willing to give up the luxury and easy life of the palace to help his people. He was a dedicated man of God who had the right priorities. With those values, he unreservedly encouraged and rebuked when the situation called for it, was strong in prayer and never forget to give all glory to God.

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The powerful result was that the wall **was finished in 52 days**. Even more amazing was that **all the nations became afraid of the Israelites (Neh 6:15-16)**. This is the power of God for us. Let us be a Nehemiah, a "Comfort of Jehovah" at our workplace. Let us put every effort to restore the wall of nursing and by so doing, define and protect the very profession what we

dearly love. Let us show God in our lives so that those around us will tremble in the presence of a Holy God. Let us renew our commitment to Him.

*Ms Pauline Tan
Chief Nursing Officer, Ministry of Health*

Singapore Nurses' Christian Fellowship - Nurses' Day Celebration 2009

SNCF Nurses' Day Celebration was held on 1 August 2009, Saturday from 1600 to 1830 hours at the Auditorium of The Salvation Army, Bishan. It was another year of great jubilation and a very successful event well co-ordinated by Ms Ng Kim Choo, Ms Kua Young Ghee and Ms Chia Mui Sim. A total of 255 people attended, comprising 112 nursing students, 40 SNCF members, 103 Mentors and friends.

The main speaker was Ms Pauline Tan, Singapore's Chief Nursing Officer at the Ministry of Health. She encouraged the nurses to build the "Nehemiah's Wall" in Nursing – in times like these. Her message is summarised in this newsletter "**Restoration of the Wall of Nursing**" for your reading and meditation.

There was enthusiastic participation by various groups such as the line dance from Hakka Methodist Church; live music presented by a Band led by Johnny's son and friend. The Peacehaven nurses sang beautifully and Mr Johnny Tan, Ms Kelsey Tay and Grace Vision Praise Team led the worship.

The event closed with the traditional candle lighting to signify nurses being the channel to pass on to others of what is good and positive. Ms Pauline Tan led the

nurses to rededicate their calling to nursing by reciting the Florence Nightingale's Pledge. Pastor Yip Khoon Mei concluded the special day with blessings for the nurses.

We thanked and praised God for His provision and generous contribution in cash, food, gifts, time and effort from many members and friends who gave willingly and sincerely toward the events to celebrate Nurses' Day.

As the year comes to a close for 2009, may God's calling of those who serve as nurses be blessed with our Father's love, His Son's grace and the Holy Spirit's anointing to perform their roles and responsibilities to glorify God and bring Honour to His Name.

We would like to thank all who contributed to the success of the event and a job well done. Till we meet again next year.



Photographs of SNCF Nurses' Day August 2009

MENTORING OF NURSING STUDENTS

Singapore Nurses Christian Fellowship invites you to prayerfully consider being involved in Mentoring of Nursing Students from China and Myanmar.

Since 1993, SNCF has been involved with mentoring of nursing students from China. A new batch of nursing students will arrive in December 2009. Their average age 20 years and they will spend about 9½ years in Singapore. They will undergo English language training followed by 3 years of nursing training in School of Health Sciences Polytechnics. A Welcome Party will be held for mentors to meet the students on 29 December 2009, Tuesday.

Please see below for detail in regard to Briefing Meeting for Mentors and Welcome Party. We look forward to your partnership in this work initiated by the Lord.

For more information to contact Kim Choo at 97379041, email :kimchoo.ng@ncf.org.sg

SNCF CALENDER OF EVENTS

(All events are held at The Salvation Army Territorial Headquarters, 20 Bishan Street 22)

❖ Briefing Meeting for Mentors

Date : 23 November 2009 Monday
Time : 7.30 pm
Venue : Social Hall (Level 1)

❖ Welcome Party for Nursing Students

From China and Myanmar
Date : 29 December 2009, Tuesday
Time : 6.00 pm
Venue : Auditorium (Level 1)

❖ SNCF Annual Thanksgiving Service

Date : 12 December 2009, Saturday
Time : 3.30 pm -Refreshment
4.00 pm – Programme Starts
Venue : Chapel, Bishan Chinese Corps (Level 2)

❖ SNCF Annual General Meeting 2010

Date : 9 January 2010, Saturday
Time : 3.30 pm -Refreshment 4.00 pm – AGM
Venue : Chapel, Bishan Chinese Corps (Level 2)

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