TORONTO CONFERENCE '82
(Hotel-Triumph Sheraton)
This was a conference with a difference. It had a special quality about it that overcame any secular concern with mere numbers. There was a great moving of the spirit and the Lord brought those people who needed to be there. On Friday evening (Sept. 17) the conference opened with songs of praise led by John and Deirdre New. After prayer by Rev. Bill Ferguson, the session was turned over to Dr. Rod Davison who introduced the keynote speaker, Dr. William Reed. Early in his talk on LPS Medicine (Logo-Psychosomatic) Dr. Reed quoted Alexander Solzhenitsyn (noted Russian author) as saying that there is a "despiritualization of society" which is at the root of the West's weakness. This spiritual weakness is affecting medicine and nursing and is even creeping into the Church. Although great importance is attached to more and more education we are not being saved by it. As Dr. Reed humorously pointed out, we are "dying by degrees"! We need to re-discover traditional medicine with its concern for human beings. It is time to look at the patient with the eyes of Jesus. Dr. Reed went on to say, 'it is time to make our medicine spiritual'. John 6:63 says, "It is the Spirit that gives life".

SATURDAY MORNING MEDITATION: Rev. Al Hughes led us in a song of praise and then talked about effectual prayer. He said that when we come to God we should ask for his forgiveness before asking for anything. But then, as Rev. Hughes pointed out in his excellent homily, Jesus wants us to be an asking people. When we pray, He wants us to know that we can receive whatever we ask. John 14:14 "If you ask anything in my name, I will do it".

THE WHOLE FAMILY IN A BROKEN WORLD: This was a provocative talk by Kay Reed. Some of the statistics she quoted were devastating and underlined the need for new spiritual absolutes. According to the Tampa Tribune (Feb. 1982) there were 73,580 legal abortions in Florida in 1980. The total for the whole country that year was 1.55 million. This means that 25 percent of all pregnancies were terminated. There are such great inroads today into our society (by pornography, violence, divorce, immorality, etc.) that Kay literally pleaded 'Mother (and Dad too) you need tremendous strength at gut level or your family will fall apart'. Proverbs 24:3-4 "Through wisdom a house is built; and by understanding it is established: And by knowledge shall the chambers be filled with all precious and pleasant riches."

THE CHRISTIAN HEALTH CARE TEAM
A CHAPLAIN'S VIEWPOINT: According to Rev. Dick Wukasch, the concept of a Health Care Team is a fairly recent one. By definition, it is a multi-disciplinary group of people working together in a particular health care setting towards the wholeness of the people under their care. In a truly Christian health care team the Holy Spirit will be dwelling in each member. Sometimes at Riverdale Hospital, people ask him how he can sleep nights with the burden of problems he must take home with him. He has learned to bring the cares and concerns of his patients and place them before Jesus saying: "You who never slumber nor sleep are down there at Riverdale through the night. Without you, we can do nothing, but with you all things are possible."

A NURSE'S VIEWPOINT: Elizabeth McCready took a penetrating look at the history of Nursing and told how Deaconesses in the early Church looked after the sick and the dying. It was from these early Christian roots that modern nursing was born. She stressed the fact that the nursing role is a caring role and that a Christian nurse has a mandate to provide spiritual care that can promote and contribute to the well being of the whole person (body, mind and spirit). Effective spiritual care calls for the assessment of the spiritual needs of the patient. Elizabeth then discussed these needs under three headings: (1) The Need for Meaning and Purpose (2) The Need for Love and Relatedness (3) The Need for Forgiveness. Once the needs have been established nursing intervention can then take place using-self, prayer, scripture and clergy.
This brief outline does not begin to do justice to Elizabeth's well documented presentation. In the time available to her she did a masterful job of outlining the role of the Christian nurse.

A PATIENT'S VIEWPOINT: Honey Botnick gave a moving testimony which was doubly meaningful because she was born into the Jewish faith and after experiencing mental illness is now a psychiatric social worker. About 12 years ago, a brain tumor operation was the start of an illness finally diagnosed as agoraphobia. She experience so much anxiety, fear and depression that she gave up her four children and began her long search for meaning and purpose in her life. After several discouraging sessions in the psychiatric wing of a general hospital in Toronto, she was sent to Homewood Sanitarium in Guelph. This is where she met Jesus and got well. Partly through the love and care of a Christian staff and the ministry of a Dutch Christian couple from Guelph, Honey gave her heart to Jesus. She was discharged in the Spring of 1979 totally healed. God spoke to Honey and encouraged her to attend Seneca College for a two year program in social work. In January of this year he brought her to Queen Street Mental Health Centre as a psychiatric social worker. Here with love and compassion she ministers to her patients. They know she has something very special to offer...the Jesus factor!

A DOCTOR'S VIEWPOINT: Dr. Don Denmark shared with us the story of how his unique Christian family practice evolved in his home at Petrolia. In his role as "facilitator" (of God's working) to Christian and non-Christian patients, he discovered that a Christian patient is not incapacitated by his illness. He comes to the office knowing that God is in control. A non-Christian patient is often bitter and resentful of the fact that his illness is inconvenient to his lifestyle. There is anger towards God and a feeling that God is punishing him, but God is trying to get his attention and maybe allowing Dr. Denmark to let Christ's love to flow through him and touch the patient. And so, Dr. Denmark set up his office to reflect God's love. Daily he prays for his patients and the nurses working in his office. Daily he prays for wisdom and judgment in dealing with his patients. He commits everything each day to the Lord and asks the Lord to use him in some way to touch these people.

PANEL DISCUSSION

When Dr. Denmark finished his viewpoint, John New had the audience form three groups for discussion (Doctors, Nurses, and Pastoral Care). These groups were well attended and produced excellent comments on Health Care. Finally our guest speakers formed a panel and responded to questions brought back by the groups as well as answering questions directly from the floor.

The Saturday Evening Banquet was a memorable affair. After dinner, John, Deirdre and Robert Hamilton taught us beautiful songs of praise that brought us all together as members of Christ's Body. Dr. Reed talked about "The missing Dimension in Medicine and Nursing" and then called on Eva Orr our "resident layreader and poet" to encourage us with verses of scripture which she knows by heart. There was a moving response to the Ministry of Healing that touched all hearts. Truly one could say that the Lord was in this place.

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