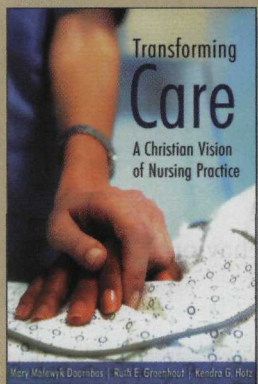


# BOOK Reviews



## Transforming Care: A Christian Vision of Nursing Practice

Mary Molewyk Doornbos, Ruth E. Groenhout, and Kendra G. Hotz

Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, MI, 2005, 213 pp., \$10 (paperback)

Although *Transforming Care: A Christian Vision of Nursing Practice* is limited in scope, it offers nurses a faith-based perspective for practice. The authors begin by describing an ordinary nurse-client interaction and quickly move to an exploration of the way that faith impacts nursing practice. This “double consciousness” prompts the nurse to recognize God’s presence in patients and colleagues and, as a result, to practice his or her profession with a sense of gratitude. The authors then discuss nursing in terms of the traditional concepts of “person,” “nurse,” “environment,” and “health.” They describe how Christian faith and nursing practice help shape nurses’ character, thereby making nursing a “moral” practice. They consider the concept of health holistically, and analyze the nursing environment, which they see “as part of God’s creation,” noting that its social, ecological, national, and cultural aspects change over time.

The authors discuss the values of “care” and “justice” in light of their Christian roots. Although the authors use the noun *care*, they tend to turn it into a verb, defining it as attitudes and actions that:

- Respond to a need
- Are accompanied by concern and appropriate action
- Elicit a response

They consider “justice,” which they describe as a matter of equity, at personal, institutional, and social levels.

The book is organized in two parts: “Christian Faith” and “Nursing Practice.” The authors use nursing theory to provide a foundation for theological concepts. They have geared the book toward nurses who come from a Christian tradition and want a resource for holistic practice. The chapters in “Nursing Practice” are helpful but rather superficial. On the other hand, the book does offer a number of stories from practicing nurses. These stories are insightful, offering the nurse who reads them an approach for

evaluating his or her own practice. Most such readers will find the book inspiring. Faculty in a nursing school could use the stories as case studies in student seminars.

The book’s last section deals with the specific aspects of nursing practice in which faith and nursing intersect. The authors explain, for example, how nurses are affected by—but can respond to—the challenges that patients face, such as stigma, nonadherence to medical regimens, and lack of insurance coverage. The authors note that, in the general community, nurses are themselves faced with cultural differences, funding issues, and nonadherence, all of which challenge them to function with humility and a sense of servanthood. In the highly technological world of acute care, where organizational and interpersonal relationships are especially trying, nurses need not only special expertise but also a sense of wonder at the greatness of God, the authors say. This sense of wonder allows nurses to fully share in their patients’ many joys and sorrows and to remain strong during troubling times.

Scattered through the book are quotations from authorities in nursing theory and theology that encourage further thought.

*Transforming Care: A Christian Vision of Nursing Practice* has some limitations. For example, a section dealing with the value of care is weak on exploring the human-to-human relationship so necessary to high-quality health care. The practical examples at the end of the book are skimpy as well. On the other hand, nurses who read this book will gain insights into the everyday connection between faith and nursing practice, and these insights can help them respond to their patients’ unique needs.

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