

BOOK REVIEW

Christian Ethics and Nursing Practice

Steele, B. R. and Monroe, A. H. (2020). *Christian ethics and nursing practice*. Cascade Books. 214 pages.

The book *Christian Ethics and Nursing Practice* (2020) aims to compare Scripture with *the Code of Ethics for Nurses* (The ANA Code). The ANA Code is a secular document consisting of nine provisions that outline the ethical obligations of the nursing profession. The authors summarize "strands" or types of moral discourse from the Scripture — Law, holiness, wisdom, and prophecy — and correlate the strands with the nine provisions. At the beginning of each chapter, the authors define the specific provision they are discussing and, throughout the chapter, discuss the meaning of the provision and how it relates to professional nursing practice. After each provision segment, the biblical perspective outlining specific verses is referenced to reinforce alignment with the provision. At the end of each chapter is a section labeled Clinical Voices, which brings the discussion down to a level where a nursing student can identify how to use these concepts.

The book discusses various approaches that nurses can use to help navigate ethical dilemmas. It discusses how critical thinking, collaboration, and reflection are imperative in ethical decision-making, ultimately empowering nurses to make well-informed choices that align with their Christian values. Exemplary passages provide insight into how individuals represented virtues such as healer, problem-solver, public servant, and patient advocate.

Specific chapter highlights include chapters 2 and 5. In chapter 2, "The Nurse as a Healing Presence," the authors address a fundamental question confronting many nursing students: Why did nurses choose to enter the nursing profession? The chapter summarizes how the ANA Code and the Scriptures complement each other so the nurse can be a healing presence to others. Although a nurse is described as caring and trusting, these characteristics pose a challenge in the clinical setting. Care and trust can be ambiguous, yet the nurse can integrate their own moral and professional values. A novice nurse may enter the workforce with expectations of a nurse's behavior based on ethical standards that could change with experience. The book describes patients to whom it may be difficult for the nurse to care, such as someone who has committed

horrendous crimes or displays uncivil behavior toward the nurse.

Chapter 5 is perhaps the most impactful because it focuses on moral maturity in Christian nursing. The chapter provides an example of a nurse who applied moral maturity in the complex care of a pediatric patient. The Christian nurse cared for her patient based on her belief in everyone being born in the image of God, dealing graciously with respect and therapeutic listening. The authors describe how the nurse managed the child based on moral discourse from Scripture.

The book presented information in metaphysical content, which could be viewed by some readers as a weakness due to the complexity of biblical and practical alignment. The book's audience is nursing students; however, the information provided in the book insinuates certain assumptions and experiences of all students. The first assumption is that students have a religious background with exposure to the Bible. A non-Christian reader may not be interested in the correlation between Scripture and the ANA Code. However, the authors clarify that they do not assume that only Christian nurses can display characteristics of the ANA Code that correlate with the strands. The second assumption is that the students have had some practical patient care exposure to understand the analogies the author is trying to make between the nursing code of ethics and the biblical verses. Such an assumption may or may not be the case.

Nurse educators at a Christian college may choose this book as a pre-requisite text to provide a foundation for addressing ethical dilemmas and understanding moral obligations in nursing. This book could also be used as a senior practicum project, where the student nurse prepares for the role of a nurse graduate to ensure readiness for ethical dilemmas, patient advocacy, decision-making, and disparities in health care. Nurses will be confronted with ethical issues in their clinical practice. The ANA Code represents foundational knowledge. In April 2023, the National Council Licensure Examination (NCLEX), which is required for nurse graduates to become licensed as a Registered Nurse (RN), changed to Next Generation Nursing (NGN) questions. Those questions require

decision-making and clinical judgment. *Christian Ethics and Nursing Practice* can assist a nursing student address these new ethical challenges by identifying Scripture with the ANA Code to support decision-making from a biblical and ethical perspective.

Reviewer Information

Kristin Fontaine
California Baptist University, Riverside
KristinDiane.Fontaine@calbaptist.edu

Gina Weeks
California Baptist University, Riverside
Gina.Weeks@calbaptist.edu