

Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Rom 8:26-27)

The Holy Spirit bestows gifts upon us and produces godly fruit in our lives. The *gifts* are those things that empower us to serve others in Christ's name—wisdom, knowledge, faith, service, giving aid, acts of mercy, healing, working miracles, teaching, prophecy, exhortation, discernment of spirits, and tongues (Rom 12:6-8; 1 Cor 12:8-10). Through these gifts we are able to participate in the work of God's kingdom. We are not left on our own to try to conjure up the power and ability to face the weight of suffering and death in nursing; the Holy Spirit gives us all that we need. Once we realize that we do all good things in partnership with God, we can relax and allow him to work through us. Life—including nursing—becomes an amazing adventure where we are constantly surprised by God's great goodness.

The *fruit* of the Spirit is the character of God demonstrated in our lives—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal 5:22-23). Again, these are not personal accomplishments we have to strive toward. They are the natural results of having the Holy Spirit living within us. Jesus said, "I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing" (Jn 15:5). As we spend time with God in prayer and live our lives in obedience to him, we will demonstrate the fruit of his Spirit and experience his power in our daily lives—while at the same time becoming intensely aware of our own inadequacy and sinfulness.

The only appropriate response to an encounter with this true God is a humble recognition of our own sinfulness and powerlessness. John tells us that the Holy Spirit will "prove the world wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment" (Jn 16:8). When we stand before our Holy God, we lose any of our culture's pretensions about being "basically good" or having "a basically positive direction."¹⁴ The prophet Isaiah vividly described his response to an awesome encounter with God:

And I said: "Woe is me! I am lost, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I live among a people of unclean lips; yet my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts!" (Is 6:5)

Our culture tends to view this recognition of human sinfulness as negative and

¹⁴Carl R. Rogers, *On Becoming a Person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1961), p. 26. Rogers asserts that this understanding of persons as having strongly positive directional tendencies was basic to his personality theory.

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The Seen and Unseen

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goes to great lengths to avoid it. However, the biblical understanding of sin is one of the most liberating theological concepts in Christian doctrine. How else can we explain the ravages of war, illness, accidents, natural disasters and all the abuse and violence in human relationships? Even those who do not acknowledge God insist that we must recognize our problems before we can do anything about them. It is our confession of sin that drives us to Jesus Christ as Savior to find forgiveness and redemption. It restores our perspective to see that God is on his throne; his kingdom is secure. Confessing our own sinfulness and experiencing God's forgiveness frees us to delight in the joy of his salvation. This relationship of grace overflows into praise to God and a life of service to humanity. Nursing, as a public ministry of the church, developed out of this understanding of sin and redemption.

The Seen and Unseen

The Christian worldview includes a spiritual dimension—things that we cannot see. In our own culture, scientism has blinded us to the reality of the spiritual world. The Bible affirms that the personal, spiritual, unseen world is real and was created by God (Eph 6:12). The Nicene Creed affirms, "We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen."

Spiritual beings are not merely psychological projections. They are personal, intelligent beings, and they have intentions toward us (Lk 22:31; 1 Pet 5:8-9; Jas 4:7). One form of spiritual beings, angels, are God's servants under his authority (Col 1:16; Heb 1:14). God often directs them to protect and shelter his people (Gen 19:15; 1 Kings 19:5-7; Mt 4:6; Lk 1:30; 4:10; 22:43).

Another form of spiritual beings, evil spirits or demons, were also created by God but rebelled against him (Rev 12:9). They are beings who intend to deceive us about God and to control us, ultimately destroying us (1 Pet 5:8). We are not to worship angels or evil spirits or enter into collusion with them (Ps 91:11; Mt 26:53; Lk 4:10; Col 2:18).

Because demons deceive and destroy and because they are spiritually powerful and crafty, we are to have no dealings with them (1 Cor 10:20-21; 2 Cor 2:11; 1 Tim 4:1). Christians are protected from demons' power by being in Christ Jesus, but they constantly tempt us (Mt 28:18; Jn 8:31-32; Acts 19:11-20; Eph 6:11).

As we have noted already, the four basic concepts that shape the nature of nursing are the *person*, *environment*, *health* and *nursing*. We have found it necessary to begin with the concept of God to make sense of the concepts that follow. In the remainder of this chapter we will provide some basic definitions and understandings based on a Christian worldview. They are summarized in figure

3.2, "Worldviews in brief." Each concept will be more fully explored in the following chapters.

Person

Fawcett describes the person as "the recipient of nursing, including individuals, families, communities, and other groups."¹⁵ We would also include the nurse as a person, as well as all those human beings who are *not* presently recipients of nursing care.

In the modern worldview the person is reduced to what can be seen—anatomy and physiology. Although there is some recognition of the mind, or soul, it is dismissed because it cannot be quantified and measured. Health care in this worldview is medical and surgical technology. In the postmodern worldview the person is often viewed as "congealed energy." Health care involves manipulating the energy, or vital life force, to restore balance. Increasingly, it is openly moving toward manipulation of spirits as well.

A Christian worldview regards all people as created by God in his image (Gen 1:26) to live in loving relationship with God, self and others (Deut 6:4-6; Mt 22:37-39). God made people to be responsible stewards of the environment (Gen 1:26). Every person is separated from God by sin, but that relationship is restored by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, in whom we are redeemed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit (Rom 3:22-28; 1 Cor 6:11). The person is a physically, psychosocially and spiritually integrated being with intrinsic value and significance (Ps 8:4-8; 1 Thess 5:23; Heb 2:11-17). Each person is responsible to live a healthful lifestyle (1 Cor 3:16-17; Eph 5:29) and to promote health (Ex 15:26; 3 Jn 2), but also to find meaning in suffering and death (Rom 5:3-5; 1 Cor 15:54; 1 Thess 4:13-14).

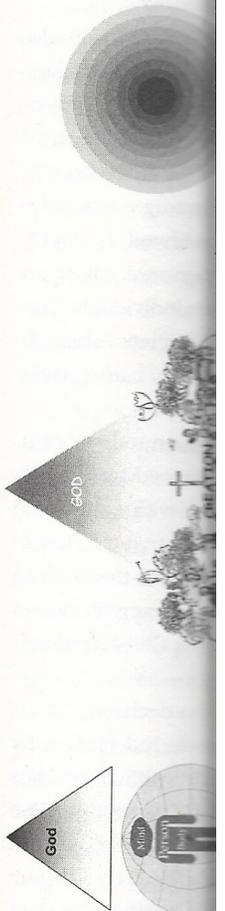
Environment

According to Fawcett the *environment* "refers to the person's significant others and physical surroundings, as well as to the setting in which nursing occurs, which ranges from the person's home to clinical agencies to society as a whole."¹⁶

How do worldviews affect the context of nursing? Look around you. If you are in a high-tech, low-touch setting, your environment has probably been shaped by Western dualism. If you are surrounded by colleagues practicing therapeutic touch and crystal therapy, you have entered the New Paradigm. If

¹⁵Jacqueline Fawcett, *Analysis and Evaluation of Conceptual Models of Nursing*, 3rd ed. (Philadelphia: F. A. Davis, 1995), p. 7.

¹⁶*Ibid.*



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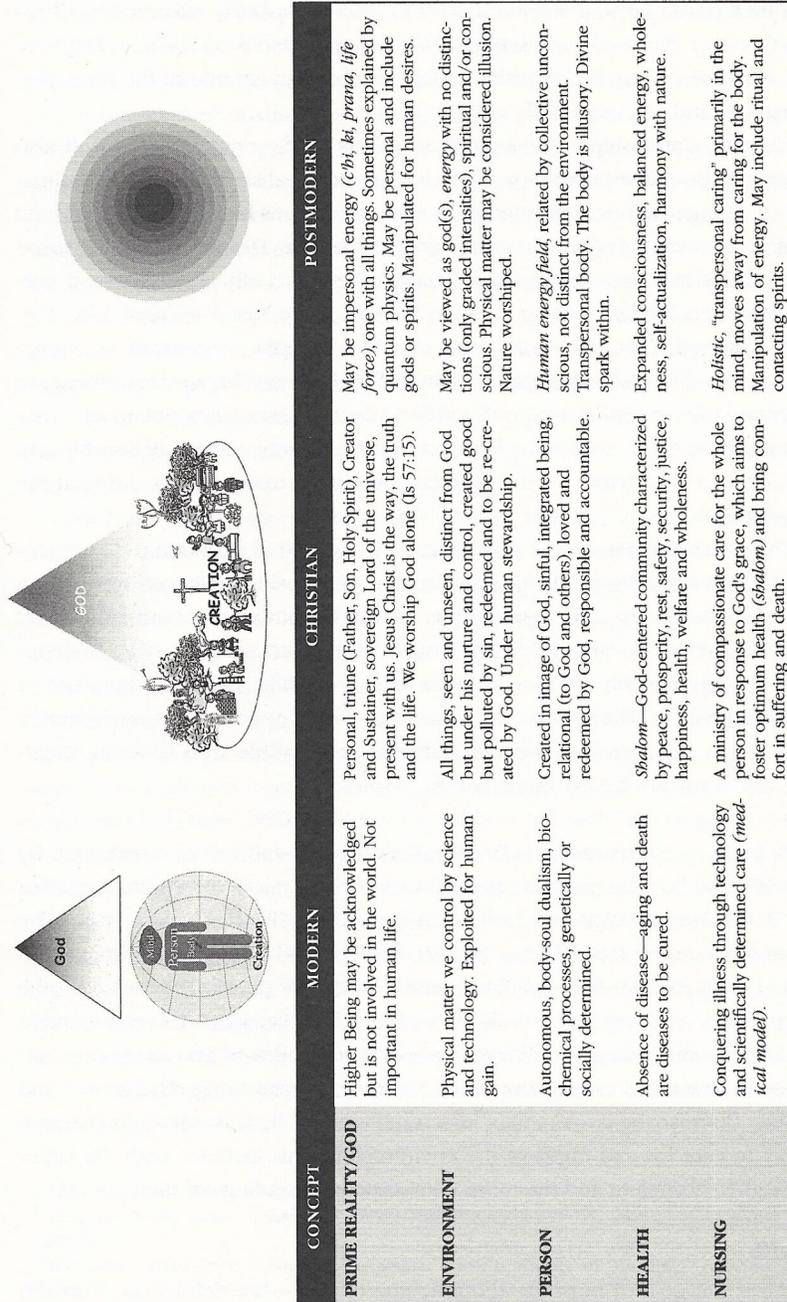


Figure 3.2. Worldviews in brief

you are a parish nurse in a church, your practice is probably informed by Christian theology. None of these settings will be purely one worldview; in fact, several worldviews may be operating in tension, but usually one of the three predominates and will eventually win out.

Human relationships—the significant others in the environment—will also differ according to a person's worldview. Western dualism tends toward utilitarianism. Human value is determined by whatever seems best for society and, on a personal level, whatever is most beneficial to me. Despite its appeal to be more caring and holistic, the New Paradigm tends to ultimately discount personal relationship by focusing more on the self. Some New Paradigm nurse theorists advocate *transpersonal caring* in which people are viewed as energy fields. In so doing, the therapeutic relationship becomes impersonal. There are no boundaries or distinctions, only graded intensities, between individuals. True community assumes that individuals retain their identity within relationships. In the Christian worldview we find human community and practical caring at the deepest level.

The physical environment is receiving a great deal of attention today. Scientists wrestle with the problem of global warming, using advanced technology and quantitative research. Ecofeminists turn to becoming one with nature and conduct services worshipping "Earth Mother." Christians are also trying to determine appropriate ways to be good stewards of creation, caring for the earth in responsible ways. The various worldviews, however, approach the environment from widely different perspectives. Some are compatible with Christian theology, and some are clearly incompatible.

According to the Bible the world was created by God, who declared it *good* (Gen 1). The environment has been polluted by sin and awaits redemption by God (Rom 8:22). The environment includes both physical and spiritual realities (Col 1:16) and encompasses the human community (Ps 24:1) and culture. The creation is separate from God (Is 55:8-9). It is not God and cannot become God (Gen 2:7; Ex 20:23; Is 44:6-20). Each person has the responsibility to care for the environment as a steward of God's gifts (Gen 1:28; 1 Pet 4:10). The environment can bring both healing and illness. The effects of pollution and stress can contribute to disease. A clean, supportive environment can bring refreshment and healing. Because the environment affects human health, nurses have the responsibility to care for and improve the environment. This includes both the larger physical environment and the more immediate surroundings of their patients.

Health

Health is the goal of nursing—the outcome of care—but definitions of health

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¹⁷Margaret A. Newman
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¹⁸Rosemarie Risso
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vary greatly in our society and from culture to culture. The way we define health will have major ramifications in the way we practice nursing. It will shape our assessments and interventions, as well as the way we determine success.

For the Western dualist, health is simply the absence of disease. The goal of nursing is to maintain optimal biological functioning, often with little regard for emotional and spiritual concerns. The extreme application of this definition has led to abuses of heroic measures, such as repeatedly resuscitating terminally ill cancer patients or maintaining brain-dead persons on life-support systems. However, we also see it reflected in nursing's attempts to quantify the causes and effects in nursing practice: nursing process, nursing diagnosis, and intervention and outcome classification. We can appreciate many of the positive results in patient care gained through viewing health as the absence of disease, but its usefulness is limited. Not all people respond to prescribed policies and procedures, or drugs and treatments, in the same way. Dualism does not account for the spiritual and unseen—the *human factor*.

The New Paradigm attempts to deal with the human factor and take into account the emotional and spiritual variables that make each individual unique. In the New Paradigm, health is seen as something that you must define for yourself. Margaret Newman sees health as "expanding consciousness."¹⁷ Rosemarie Parse sees it as "the quality of life as experienced by the person."¹⁸ The problem with these definitions of health is that nursing ends up with no goals, or at best conflicting goals. Nursing may range from standing by without any physical interventions to performing potentially harmful procedures that the patient desires. The movement toward assisted suicide grows out of this loose definition of health.

In a Christian worldview, wellness, or health, is being able to live as God created us to live—as an integrated whole living in loving relationship with God, self and others (Ps 16). It is dependent on the cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Is 53:5; 1 Pet 2:24). Health is central to the Old Testament concept of *shalom* (Ps 38:3; Jer 33:6) and the New Testament understanding of *salvation* (Lk 18:42). The presence of sin in the world and the predilection of each person to sin impinge on health spiritually, physically and psychosocially (Ex 20:5; Ps 32:3-4; Lk 5:17-25). Physical or psychosocial dysfunction can also cause spiritual distress (Job 16:7-9; Ps 13; 22). While God's ultimate plan for us is complete

¹⁷Margaret A. Newman, *Health as Expanding Consciousness* (St. Louis: Mosby-Year Book, 1987).

¹⁸Rosemarie Risso Parse, "Human Becoming: Parse's Theory of Nursing," *Nursing Science Quarterly* 5 (1992): 35-42.

health, a person can be spiritually healthy while physically or psychosocially limited (1 Cor 1:27-29; 2 Cor 11:7-9). Health is the goal of nursing and a sign of the kingdom of God (Rev 21:1-7).

Nursing

We have already discussed how shifting worldviews have brought tremendous changes to nursing and health care. In later chapters we will examine the roots and implications of these paradigm shifts, but here we want to clearly establish what we are talking about as *nursing*. In a Christian worldview, nursing is a ministry of compassionate care for the whole person, in response to God's grace, which aims to foster optimum health (shalom) and bring comfort in suffering and death. Nursing includes the comprehensive physical, psychosocial and spiritual care of individuals in the context of families and communities. Because the healing work of Christ is a sign of the kingdom and a response to God's mercy (Lk 10:1-9), nurses follow Christ's command to "go and do likewise" (Lk 10:37). Nurses compassionately care for anyone in need, regardless of ethnic identity, race, gender, age, status, diagnosis or ability to pay (Is 61:1-3; Mt 25:35-36; Lk 4:18-19; 16:19-25; Gal 3:28).

The actual tasks of nursing may vary as needs, contexts and resources change, but Christian nursing is always a faithful response to God's gift of salvation. We love others because God first loved us. That love is lived out in compassionate action toward our neighbors.

For Further Thinking

Summarize what you believe about the following in one or two sentences:

God	
Person	
Environment	
Health	
Nursing (caring)	

Theological Reflection

Read Colossians 1, and fill in the chart again, using the information in this passage to define each of the concepts in the nursing metaparadigm:

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1. How do the definitions according to Colossians 1 compare with your earlier definitions?
2. What would nursing look like, in practical terms, if it were based on these definitions?
3. How do the worldviews demonstrated in your own nursing environment compare with a Christian worldview?
4. What tensions arise from the differing worldviews of your employer, colleagues and those in your care?

CASE STUDY: A Spiritual Journey

Although JoAnn grew up in a Catholic family and attended a Baptist school of nursing, faith came hard for her. As a child, she explains, "I looked for him at church, through the Mass and the music, but I was never sure I had really discovered him." Sometimes she would challenge God to make a candle flicker at her command, but saw no response. She relates, "When I was a teenager, my view of Christianity was rather nebulous. I knew I was a sinner and felt guilty in God's presence, fearing his punishment, I didn't think much about Jesus' resurrection or his love for me. . . . Christianity wasn't too useful to me." However, because of her family's strong faith, she kept seeking God.

In high school she became intrigued with the transcendentalism of Emerson and Thoreau, which introduced her to Buddhist philosophy. She pursued Buddhism in college and volunteered to go to Vietnam as an Army nurse, hoping to learn more about Buddhism there. "Buddhism was attractive to me because it paralleled my own work ethic. Buddha is not a loving, interfering god, but is rather dispassionate and inaccessible. Thus the only love you find is what you create with your good works, what you do for yourself and others.

"I didn't want to rely on a god; I wanted to do things myself, get myself out of my own jams, fix undesirable things in my life through meditation. I liked the

idea that human beings can learn to become Buddha, able to take care of all problems. In fact my approach to nursing was to help people help themselves."

After returning from Vietnam she worked on a master's degree then began teaching nursing in a university program. Eventually her life began to unravel. Vietnam left lingering questions. Then a relationship with a man she loved ended. She explains, "At this point, I began to realize that Buddhism was not fulfilling my needs. It seemed as if my whole world had turned upside-down. I didn't know who I was or where I was going and could find nothing but futility in my life.

"My inner emptiness came clear to me one night in the hospital." A patient she had worked with for almost a year became seriously ill and asked JoAnn to pray for her. Feeling unable to pray, she replied, "I'll have to get somebody else to do it."

JoAnn explains, "That cut me to the core. I knew this woman and wanted to help her. But I had nothing to offer. I felt completely inadequate. I couldn't pray; I couldn't help her at all.

"I didn't realize that the Lord was working on me, pestering me! As it turned out, a whole group of students was praying for the faculty and specifically for me."

The students often talked about Jesus within JoAnn's hearing, gave her tracts and offered to talk further with her. Eventually JoAnn read some of the tracts and was struck by a personal God who loved her enough to send his son. She began frequenting a Christian bookstore and reading the Bible and books recommended by the store clerk. From her reading, she decided that she wanted to become a Christian. She then looked up the student who had offered to talk to her about Jesus to tell her of her new commitment. The student drove weekly to JoAnn's home to meet for Bible study and prayer.

JoAnn continues, "I had become a Buddhist for the security of being able to do everything for myself. Now I came to the Lord, gratefully letting go of that burden. The Lord gave me inner healing and understanding of who I am. He gave me knowledge that I am really loved, that I belong to him, that I can relinquish my feelings of inadequacy. I can just come to the Lord and say, 'You are completely able; my adequacy comes from you.' For me this is a whole new identity. . . . In fact I have become an agent of his healing. Several years ago my students were praying and reaching out to me. Now after experiencing God's love, forgiveness and healing, I'm eager to reach out to others."

(Adapted from JoAnn Rollings, "My Search for God," *Journal of Christian Nursing*, summer 1988, pp. 14-17.)

Discussion

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Discussion Questions

1. What did JoAnn seem to be seeking as a teenager?
2. How does JoAnn describe her worldview as a Buddhist?
3. How did Buddhism affect her nursing practice?
4. How did her worldview change when she became a Christian?
5. What changed in her relationships with others? in her nursing practice?
6. In what ways does Christian faith foster excellence in nursing practice?