

## From the editor ...

This issue of ANS, on the topic of Ethics and Values, serves two functions in relation to the development of science in nursing. The first is to develop the sciences of ethics and axiology (values) in relation to nursing research and practice. The second is to examine the influence of ethics and values on research and practice.

Ethics as a science is integral and necessary for nursing because of nursing's commitment to nurturing the health of the whole person, body, soul and spirit. Ethics, which is a disciplined study devoted to rational analysis and justification of moral principles, provides knowledge and insight regarding what we ought to do in order to attain the most of what is best in human life. The purposes of other sciences, such as the physical, biological, psychological and social sciences, are distinctly different from those of the science of ethics. The purpose of ethics is to understand problems of "oughtness," obligation, duty, rights, wrongs, justice, conscience, choice, intention and responsibility.

Axiology, or the science of values, is distinctly defined by its purposes and problems, which concern goodness, badness, means and ends, instrumental and intrinsic values, subjective and real values, potential and actual values. The reader is referred to Robert W. Tucker's article, "The Value Decisions We Know as

Science" (ANS 1:2, January 1979), which analyzes the values of science.

The problems of ethics and values are inherent in all nursing acts. They are also problems central to the human experience and to health maintenance. If nursing is to develop a science which promotes the total health of the person, then critical, rigorous establishment of a body of knowledge concerning ethics and values is needed.

While ethics and axiology are distinctly different from other sciences, including the developing science of nursing, these distinct disciplines are integrally related and dependent upon the other sciences. This interdependence arises from the wholeness of existence and the basic nature of wholeness which makes it impossible to solve any one problem apart from solutions to problems in other areas of existence. Thus knowledge derived from all of the sciences contributes to our knowing what is best, or to our being more sure of what we ought to do. As nursing pursues disciplined study of the phenomena central to our area of concern, we will evolve knowledge and facts from a wide range of study which contribute to a full understanding of the whole of the human experience. The scientific enterprise, whether focusing on pure theory or upon practical technology, and including ethics and axiology, is needed in order to develop a more adequate unity in science.

The articles in this issue and in each of the preceding issues attest to nursing's growing philosophical commitment to the development of a science and practice grounded in a holistic view of health and human experience. Many vital issues and questions have been presented to you, the reader, and we welcome your continued response and critique.

—Peggy L. Chinn, R.N., Ph.D.  
Editor