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Finding a Self in the Connections: Calvinist Theology and Female Psychology

Sherrie Rubingh Lowly
Loyola University Chicago

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FINDING A SELF IN THE CONNECTIONS:

CALVINIST THEOLOGY AND

FEMALE PSYCHOLOGY

by

Sherrie Rubingh Lowly

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School

of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Master of Arts in Pastoral Counseling

January, 1992

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

This thesis has been a long time in coming. I write with a lot of history in mind which carries me to this point, another step in a continuing journey. When I reflect on some of my personal history I go back to a time of individual retreat at a women's retreat center in the woods of northern Michigan. I went on retreat at Morningstar Adventures in August, 1985 when I was pregnant with our daughter Temma. The journal entries of that time reflect a growing love of myself, of God, of my friends, my husband, and the life growing inside of me. Yet there was also a very real struggle with the reality of death deep in my center. A struggle with fear and insecurity; fear of the death of my own self, a fear of reaching out and creating myself, and a fear of the violence around me. I felt as though I was wrestling with God, wrestling to know God's love so deeply that I would no longer be afraid.

An article by Henri Nouwen which I was reading at that time gave words to my struggle:

> Freedom is the true human goal. Life is only true if it is free.
> An obsessive concern for security freezes us; it creates rigidity,
> fixation, and eventually death. . . .The world is waiting for new
> saints, ecstatic men and women who are so deeply rooted in the
> love of God that they are free to imagine a new international
> order in which violence, war, and destruction no longer need be
> the preferred way to solve conflicts among nations. . . .a joy
> that is truly ecstatic--always moving away from the house of fear

into the house of love, always proclaiming that death no longer
has a final say, even though its noise remains very loud and its
devastation visible. (Nouwen 1985)

I felt that I was hanging on to something that I needed to let go of.

Yet I was afraid to let go. I wrote: "Oh dear God, I cry out to you, to

be able to let go of my fear. To know your love enough that I can take

the risk and let go. Here is where the healing needs to come."

I continued to wrestle with my fear and felt like the tall trees

that surrounded me, bending and waving in the wind. The trees needed to

drop their dead leaves, to be stripped bare, to prepare for winter and

death, to go through a change in their very identity in order to bring

forth new life. I read in the gospel of John of the Spirit being like

the wind: "The wind blows where it wishes and you hear the sound of it,

but do not know where it comes from and where it is going; so is every

one who is born of the Spirit."

I knew the Spirit was blowing in me. As I walked among the pine

trees I heard God whispering in the trees and in my heart. As I read

through the Gospel of John I was struck by Jesus' deep desire to keep me

free from fear in order that I could see God. I came away from that

place with a deep sense of gratitude and a desire to "keep these words

in my heart."

A little over a month after this retreat my daughter, Temma Day,

was born. Two days after her birth she stopped breathing and, the life

I had dreamed of, the baby I had expected, died. To allow my

expectations and securities to die with that baby has made space for new

love and hope for the Temma who is with us. This has been a long

struggle. To live with a child who, in every sense of the word is

dependent, who is diagnosed severely or profoundly impaired, to identify my own inner child with her and come to know God there has meant a painful and deeply joyful work of the Spirit in my life.

Temma has led me into a search for truth and self. She has drawn others into our lives with, what one writer suggests as the "human bond of encouragement" which "transcends death and transforms loss if, . . . we are faithful" (Orr, 1987, 159). I have come to know and live with a God who shares in my circumstances. A God who is on the journey with me and is faithful with me in a hope for change which continues despite injustices and limitations.

A sense of divine and human interconnectedness is becoming the foundation of both my religious and psychological consciousness. A sense of interconnectedness that forms a complex web of life in which self and divine is grounded.

> . . .divinity is grounded in our world and comes into full Being with us in our own hearing and speaking. We deny sacred Being when we deny the Being in ourselves and others. We experience the process of Being Becoming in the encouragement of all humanity toward self-discovery and celebration. (Orr, p. 159).

My own journey to know myself, to give voice to these parts of myself has led through some other key experiences. One of these was being a part of a lay community and church, a part of the Christian Reformed Church, the same denomination my parents and I grew up in. Another was an experience in an inner-city house of prayer, retreat, and spiritual guidance for women. Both of these "homes" brought deep relationships and bonding and thus more experience of grief and loss when they could not go on as they were and needed to die. These were significant marks on my journey here to Loyola University and the

pastoral counseling program. I needed to separate myself from each of these homes and from my family-of-origin in order to do the work of differentiation.

In the classes I've taken as part of this program, together with my companions and guides, I've continued the search for myself, my values, my "voice." In the process of doing my family genogram for the "Healing in the Family" class I discovered a paternal great grandmother who emigrated from northern Germany and whom I identified as a strong and deeply religious woman whose life was shaped by the Reformed Church and who helped shape its form where she and her family lived in northern Michigan.

In other classes I began to sift through my past experiences to find my own values and make choices around forming my identity. Readings in the works of Carol Gilligan, Ruthellen Josselson, and Nancy Chodorow for the class of Theology and Psychology of Human Development opened up further my own feminist voice and feminine values in psychology and provided a sense of grounding for me to search out these values in other classes such as The Church class and the class on Psychopathology.

The thesis is my attempt to integrate the values and thought of the Protestant Reformation, most specifically the theological anthropology of John Calvin as written in the Institutes and further studied by T.W. Torrance, Jane Dempsey Douglass, and Francois Wendel with women's psychological development and experience as described by Mary Field Belenky et al., Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, Catherine Keller, Jean Baker Miller, and Sara Ruddick. It is an attempt to make

meaning out of these two perspectives as they come together and to transform these meanings and understandings into a self.

The work of the thesis integrates my own process of differentiation within community, grounded in my own experience and struggle for "freedom and the search for truth" (Orr 1987, 162). Orr gives words to describe the integration process:

> Truest being is life that comes to self-consciousness comprehending one's past and making a choice for life in terms of one's own discovered values. . .how to conjoin truths, to integrate what one knows and feels as deepest and most valuable from the disparate experiences of one's life, this is wholeness or holiness. Becoming fully human means "coming to one's own truth," ascending toward the voice that is both inner and outer, grounded in self and calling from the mystery of creation larger than oneself" (Orr 1987, 152).

The definition of "self" as I use it here is: the organization of a person's experience and construction of reality which illuminates the purpose and directionality of his/her behavior. It is an ongoing activity of meaning-making, taking what is new and novel and incorporating it into what is the integrity of the person--the self. I believe the work of pastoral counseling is to help and walk with a person in this active process of finding a self.

Thus the purpose of the thesis is twofold: to work a further integration of my own self and identity as a pastoral counselor and my hope is that it will also provide encouragement and a model for others who are on the journey toward self-discovery and celebration of the fullness of their real self.

History of Calvin

In order to sift through my experiences and integrate my own truth I must look at the theology of John Calvin, an acknowledged leader of Protestantism in Western Europe and the strategist of the second militant phase of the Protestant Reformation. The Christian Reformed Church, the church of my family and ancestors, ultimately hails John Calvin as its founder and shaper.

Jean Cauvin, or John Calvin, was born at Noyon, France on July 10th, 1509. "His own family had risen to the petty bourgeoisie through the tenacity and ambition of his father, Gerard Cauvin, who had emerged from among the artisans and boatmen" (Wendel 1963, 16). Not much is known about Calvin's mother except that she had a great reputation for piety and that she died in John's childhood. "The Cauvins were loyal Catholics, and though not of great wealth they were people of social standing in Noyon" (Harkness 1931, 3). Jean's father, it seems, had great ambitions for Jean. He first secured a chaplaincy position for Jean to the altar in Noyon Cathedral.

In 1523 Calvin was sent to Paris to continue his studies. It is likely that Calvin was influenced there by theologians such as John Mair who published a commentary in "which he sought to defend the Roman teaching against the innovations of Wycliffe, Huss and Luther" (Wendel 1963, 19). Calvin made contact with the Church Fathers in his studies, most notably St. Augustine. He also came in contact with other young men who had already been won over to the Reform and showed a lively interest in the humanism then in fashion. Yet there was no indication

during this time that Calvin was influenced by those who were arguing a break with Rome.

In 1528 or 1529 Calvin's father caused his son to abandon his study of theology and the goal of entering the priesthood and instead sent Jean to pursue legal studies at Orleans. ". . .though Calvin applied himself strenuously to his legal studies, at Orleans he found the means to pursue other studies too, and these nearer to the humanist ideal" (Wendel 1963, 22).

The death of his father when Calvin was twenty-two-years-old left him free to pursue what career he chose. He went back to Paris, "meaning to devote himself to literary studies, though without completely giving up the law" (Wendel 1963, 25). Calvin yielded more and more to the humanist ideal and in 1532 he published his first book, a commentary upon Senaca's De Clementia, which placed him among the humanists of renown.

Wendel states that "Calvin remained always more or less the humanist he had been in 1532" (Wendel 1963, 33), and we see evidence of his struggle over whether to oppose or include humanist values in his writings. Yet we know from his writings that Calvin remained humanistic in method and in his particular type of intellectual outlook which distinguishes him from the other reformers. ". . .what is clearly humanist is his insistence upon the natural law to which all must conform" (Wendel 1963, 31).

Calvin was much less open and articulate about his own personal spiritual development than was Luther and as a result not much is known about the circumstances or even the date of Calvin's conversion to

protestantism--occurring sometime between August, 1533 and May 1534.
Calvin affirms that his conversion was sudden. ". . .it must have been
one of those abrupt changes of direction such as Luther had known, which
are usually the result of a long unconscious preparation" and as in the
conversion of Luther, though in a far less dramatic manner, "an
awakening to the consciousness of sin was the decisive moment in
Calvin's conversion" (Wendel 1963, 38, 44). He speaks himself of his
"sudden conversion" as coming direct from God. In his book on the
Protestant Reformation Lewis Spitz speaks of the "intellectual character
of Calvin's conversion while Calvin's teachings "vibrated with a real
religious experience. In Calvin's case these two characteristics cannot
be dissociated from each other" (Spitz 1985, 210).

While in seclusion at Basle in 1536 Calvin published the first
edition of his great work, The Institutes of the Christian Religion,
with its dedicating letter addressed to King Francis, calling him to
account for his persecution of the saints. This work went through five
editions in Calvin's lifetime, being successively revised and enlarged
until it grew from six to eighty chapters. After the publication of the
Institutes Calvin did some traveling. On his way to Strassburg where he
hoped to retire to study and write, he was forced to take a roundabout
way through Geneva--"a circumstance of immense consequence for the rest
of his career" (Wendel 1963, 48). Calvin met William Farel in Geneva,
"who was then in the throes of a vigorous but unorganized attempt to
establish the new Genevan Protestant church" (Harkness 1931, 7). Farel
enjoined Calvin to stay in Geneva and help him in the work of organizing

the city and establishing Protestantism and after some argument Calvin

finally yielded. In August 1536 Calvin began his ministry at Geneva.

Calvin's work in Geneva involved exegesis and dogmatics, preaching

and the reconstitution of the Church. Farel and Calvin drew up articles

of church government along with a Confession of Faith which was a

summary of central Christian doctrine, and a Catechism. The Confession

of Faith began with the affirmation that "we desire to follow Scripture

alone as a rule of faith and religion" (Spitz 1985, 213). Difficulties

arose when the Magistrate set about the submission of the Confession to

the general population of the city. There were many conflicts and

Calvin was not good at putting up with contradictions.

In 1538 a conflict arose between the Bernese and the Reformers of

Geneva over questions of liturgy and what Calvin considered an

infringement of the autonomy he was claiming for the Church. Calvin,

Farel and another minister were deprived of their functions and ordered

to leave the town. Calvin went to Strassburg and accepted a position

there as preacher and professor of theology. While in Strassburg he

married Idelette de Bure, the widow of an Anabaptist who was one of his

own converts.

Meanwhile changes continued in Geneva and in 1540 the Council

voted to try to find means of bringing Calvin back to Geneva. Calvin

was apprehensive about returning to Geneva and dreaded the turmoil he

knew awaited him there, yet "he believed that the will of God must be

done" (Harkness 1931, 20), and in 1541 he returned. Upon his return he

settled down into what turned out to be his life work, the remolding of

Geneva into a city of God. From 1555 to his death in 1564 Calvin's prestige and influence in Geneva were very great.

Calvin was noted for "self-discipline, rigid morality, an inclination toward legalism, and strong sense of vocation not only to the religious life but to his secular occupation as well. His reformation was not only of religion but all of life. "The Calvinists developed a certain moral earnestness and militancy not known among the evangelical Lutherans (Spitz 1985, 225). Calvin laid stress upon the Scriptures as the ultimate authority for all of life and he worked to establish purity of doctrine and purity of living. Calvin believed that above all else, God's glory must be upheld.

The fight for orthodoxy, which in his eyes was a fight for the integrity of the Word of God, has left numerous traces in Calvin's writings, most of all in the Institutes. In the introduction to the Institutes John T. McNeill writes, "Holy Scripture assumes for Calvin unquestionable and infallible authority and is made his constant reliance and resource. His whole emphasis is thrown on the message or content of Scripture rather than on the words. . .his prevailing concern is nevertheless to carry the reader beyond the words to the message" (Instit., liv, lv).

As noted already in the brief historical outline of Calvin's life and work, he is clearly concerned with growth that starts on firm foundations. It was his desire to reduce Christianity to its own source, "and to restore it, as it were, cleansed from all filthiness to its own purity" (Wendel 1963, 38). The Reformation was a radically new spiritual rebirth bringing all of life in touch with Scripture.

Calvin's Theological Anthropology

Calvin's understanding and practice of the Christian faith and life is centered around his interpretations of piety and religion. Piety is: "that reverence joined with love of God which the knowledge of his benefits induces" (Instit., 1. 2. 1.); and religion is: ". . . faith so joined with an earnest fear of God that this fear also embraces willing reverence, and carries with it such legitimate worship as is prescribed in the law" (Instit., 1. 2. 2). A true knowledge of God and of ourselves, a consciousness of our absolute dependence on God, formed the heart of Calvin's view of piety and religion--a piety of gratitude and religion of reverence and a true worship of God.

The connection between piety and religion is a connection between love of and faith in a God whom we come to know through God's Word. God's word, heard and known in Scripture, becomes known to us through the life and practice of Jesus Christ. Jesus becomes the Word of God we know and hear in our current experience. As John McNeill writes in the introduction to Calvin's Institutes:

> The focal point of the Institutes is not found in God's sovereignty, or in predestination, or in insistence on obedience to God's Word itself, apart from constant reference to Jesus Christ, whom the written Word makes known" (Instit., lvi).

It is through our faith and ultimately our participation in Christ where we find our true knowledge of God and of ourselves. In our life of "gratitude before the grace of God" and our religion of "humility before the glory of God" can we know God in such a way as in our "knowing actually to image the grace and glory of God" (Instit., 2. I. If.), to become our true self. Thus the knowledge of ourselves and of God become

reflexive of each other when based on the foundation of God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Calvin's understanding of the human person is found within this context of a lived piety and experienced faith in God's Word. There is no focus on the human in Calvin's writings apart from God, as also, "we cannot clearly and properly know God unless the knowledge of ourselves be added" (Instit., I. 15. I). A knowledge and understanding of ourselves and of God (anthropology and theology) are not separate but are intricately intertwined. I have come to image this connection between our knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves as a "circle-of--knowing." In this section I will expand on this image, following the systematic structure of Calvin's doctrine as found in the Institutes, to reveal an understanding of the human person, a knowledge of the self in constant communion with a knowledge of God mediated by God's Word.

The Word

The direction and motion of the circle-of-knowing begins with knowing God. This "corresponds to the essential direction and motion of grace" (Torrance 1952, 14) which is the ground of our being and the end for which we were created. ". . .it is clear that all those who do not direct every thought and action in their lives to this goal degenerate from the law of their creation" (Instit., 1. 3. 3). The goal is to know God, to fear God, then to trust in God and worship God.

One means of leading us to know God's glory is through creation. God images God's self in the works of His hand. God's imprint also shines in God's creatures. Human beings are created as the "loftiest

proof of divine wisdom," "a workshop graced with God's unnumbered works and. . .a storehouse overflowing with inestimable riches" (Instit., 1. 5. 4). Yet the evidence of God in creation and in human beings is obscured and distorted so that we need Scripture as our guide and teacher if we want to come to know God the creator (Instit., 1. 6. 1). Calvin uses the metaphor of spectacles, for we need the Word as a pair of spectacles in order to be able to see the imaging of the glory of God in nature and in our own being. We are dependent on God's Word to know God.

How we ultimately come to know God is a mystery of the Spirit. "The Spirit, by a wonderful and singular power forms our ears to hear and our minds to understand" (Instit., 2. 2. 20, 21). In faith which is the obedience of the mind toward God, the Spirit makes God's Word known to us. The Spirit uses metaphors, the sacraments, or other signs and analogies to bring us to a knowledge of God, but the emphasis for Calvin is always on God's Word. "Unless God's Word, made efficacious through the Spirit, is dominant, all human symbols are nothing but dumb idols" (Torrance 1952, 142).

Knowing God is an operation of grace beyond the natural capacity of the human mind. We cannot measure God by the acuteness of our intellects, or subject His Truth to our capacity. God accommodates God's self to our understanding and also raises our minds up to know God through the power of the Spirit and the Word. That is the importance, Calvin says, of the Old Testament insistence that it is only through His voice that God gives Himself to be known: "that is, in such a way that we may know Him without subduing Him to the will of our own minds, but

must rather be imprisoned to His voice, and be content to be taught by Him" (Serm. on Deut. 4:10f (Torrance 1952, 131). We are kept dependent on God to truly know God's self. There is no reasoning on our own which can lead us to God. True knowledge of God is acknowledgment, not an exercise of our own mind. Our response is one of faith through the work of the Holy Spirit.

Creatures of God

God's Word calls us to know God, but our knowledge is incomplete "unless it is accompanied by a corresponding knowledge of ourselves" (Instit., 1. 15. 1) within the circle-of-knowing. There is a special relation between God and God's creatures. The human person reflects a particular sense of the image of God, apart from the more general sense in which all creation is said to reflect the glory of God. God utters God's Word in full in the creation of human beings, in distinction from the utterance of the bare Word upon which all creation depends for being.

Calvin recognizes the person as a unified being and only distinguishes between the physical body and that which enlivens it. The enlivening of the human body is the function of the soul. "It can thus be a function of the soul to lead a person to the understanding of the true religion in life" (Instit., 1. 15. 7). The soul bears the proper image of God, yet neither the soul or the body has life apart from God through God's Spirit. Both body and soul depend for their being entirely on the grace of God. "If God were for one instant to withdraw

the presence of His Spirit we would drop into the nothingness from which
we are called into being" (Torrance 1952, 29).

Thus we see that the imago dei is essentially spiritual, and is
apparent in our witness to the Truth as it is sealed in our heart by the
Word and the Spirit. It is a spiritual reflection of wholeness or
holiness in the soul, not our natural possession, but a spiritual
possession.

The way in which we come to know God and bear the image of God, is
through our special gifts of intelligence, reason, and will. As
creatures created by God we are different from the rest of creation in
that we have "been endowed with intelligence that [we] may have a
special and familiar relation to God through the Word which addresses
[us] personally and calls [us] to a life of communion with [God]"
(Torrance 1952, 23). We also have reason as that part of the soul which
is reckoned most noble and excellent, since it is through our gift of
reason that we can comprehend and know God. To our mind, with the light
of reason as guide, God joined our free will, under whose control is
choice. (Instit., 1. 15. 8). In our original nobility and integrity as
created by God, we had the power by our free will, to attain eternal
life.

These special endowments of understanding, reason, and will, are
of use to continually acknowledge and respond to God's Word of grace.
"Therefore man's true life consists in the light of his understanding in
so far as that is reflexive of the glory of God revealed through His
Word. It is thus that men resemble God" (Comm. on Acts 17:28; on
Ps. 36:9; 119:73; Instit. I. 15. 3 and 4, and Torrance 1952, 31). It is

in our response to the Word, our intelligent life answer to God's grace, that we reflect (as in a mirror) the glory of God, that we bear the image of God, the _imago_ _dei_. It is by these excellent gifts that we find ourselves intimately connected with God in the circle-of-knowing.

God's Love and Grace

God holds the world and God's creatures in the divine initiative of grace. Calvin speaks of creation as God's gracious act graciously maintained. God's "love for the creation arises out of the fact that the creation _is_, that it _exists_, and this is followed by a love for what it can become" (Van Gelder 1982, 46). Calvin expressed this love of God for creation as providence, a specific care for all events and each individual person.

The evidence of love in God's providence starts at creation when the individual was created as a social person, in need of relationships of love with God and other persons. This is part of the created person even before restoration, and is part of God's gracious providence even outside of the redemptive act of Christ. The image of God as a gracious gift is operative even in those who deny its presence.

Providence is God's hand always stretched out toward us. We live and all of creation lives by divine visitation.

> But faith ought to penetrate more deeply, namely, having found him
> Creator of all, forthwith to conclude he is also everlasting
> Governor and Preserver--not only in that he drives the celestial
> frame as well as its several parts by a universal motion, but also
> in that he sustains, nourishes, and cares for, everything he has
> made, even to the least sparrow." "And truly God claims, and
> would have us grant him, omnipotence--not the empty, idle, and
> almost unconscious sort. . .but a watchful, effective, active
> sort, engaged in ceaseless activity. (Instit., 1. 16. 1 and 3).

It is this providence of God that calls us into and holds us in the
circle-of-knowing. We fearlessly dare to commit ourselves to this
intimate kind of knowing, when we know the joyous trust in God's grace
and love.

Sin

It is only after clearly outlining the character of the image of
God in humanity and the world founded on God's grace that Calvin turns
to an explanation of sin. He refuses to enunciate a doctrine of sin
apart from the doctrine of creation, and except in the context of
grace. It is because Calvin saw the terms of God's grace in Jesus
Christ as total, so too must the doctrine of depravity be in total
terms.

The total terms required by the Gospel of a new creation provided
Calvin with a problem. On one hand, he admits that the image has been
wholly defaced from humanity, no portion of the image remains and yet he
says that there is still a portion of the image of God in fallen
humanity (Instit., 2. 2. 17). Here Calvin makes a distinction between
the spiritual and the natural. At the fall, humanity was totally
deprived of all spiritual gifts, and corrupted in their natural gifts,
and that means the corruption of the whole human nature.

Spiritually, we are seen as dead apart from God. The loss of the
original right relation between ourselves and God means the spiritual
destruction and death of the whole soul. The only remnant of _imago dei_
refers to our natural gifts. Our natural gifts are used in the
reflection of the spiritual image but are not the spiritual image.

"Some light and seed of religion have been left in man, but these partake of the total perversity" (Torrance 1952, 84). Whatever are left of our natural gifts such as sense and understanding and will are so perverted that they only operate to further alienate us from God. The natural gifts cannot serve to lead us to back into relationship with God but God uses these gifts to make us conscious of the need for salvation.

Sin means a total corruption of the whole person in a spiritual sense. There is not a shred of the spiritual image left so that we needs an entirely new creation by which the old or whatever is left of it is destroyed (Serm. on Eph. 2:1f; 2:3f (Torrance 1952, 88). The original order of grace upon which the _imago_ _dei_ was grounded is utterly perverted, but God does not let go of his original intention. Calvin thinks of God as suspending full judgment on humanity's sin, else we would be utterly annihilated.

We are not reduced to nothing by sin because we live and move in God but the relation with God is totally perverted, depraved, and corrupt. "In the fall of the human race there was an act of humanity leaving the goodness of God, the grace of God, and desiring to govern itself" (Van Gelder 1982, 53).

We can only interpret Calvin's doctrine of total perversity in line with what we already saw in his doctrine of the dynamic relation of the human person to God. Our life, the _imago_ _dei_, grounded by grace in a continuous relation with the living God has been perverted into an existence in which we are continually turned away from God. The original direction of our life in the circle-of-knowing, the life – motion, the motion of faith and being has become the contrary motion of

ingratitude and rebellion, which Calvin speaks of as incredulity and
unbelief. Humanity was created free to be in relationship with God and
instead chose to find good within self rather than in God.
". . . .contemptuous of truth, he turned aside to falsehood. And
surely, once we hold God's Word in contempt, we shake off all reverence
for him. Unfaithfulness, then, was the root of the Fall"
(Instit., 2. 1. 4).

The thought that we deface and disclaim God's image by taking on
all that it implies as though it was our own is consistent throughout
Calvin's writings. This perversity never ceases. We are continually
turned away from God. What is actually found is a contrary law
inscribed on human's hearts, which fights against the Law of God, and
the true law of our being. This contrary law is in reality the _imago
dei_ turned into its opposite. A complete conversion, a radical
alternative, of our relation with God is required. The soul has lost
the capacity to enliven the person to such a degree that it needs to be
enlivened and guided by the Holy Spirit in order to perform its true
function.

Law and Gospel

The way in which we come to realize our sin and lack of rela-
tionship with God is through the Law. God has given us the written law
as a means to grace; a means to truly know ourselves. A truly Biblical
self-knowledge is found through the law, "which enables man to see
himself as he really is in comparison with his original truth which is
the law of his being" (Torrance 1952, 13). The law becomes our wisdom

and discipline. "The law shows the righteousness of God, and as a mirror discloses our sinfulness, leading us to implore divine help" (Instit., 2. 7. 6-9).

The Word of God tells us that we are fallen from the image of God and that we are unable to keep the law in our strength. Yet we are not to be left in despair. "The knowledge of man in his humble creaturehood, and the knowledge which strips him bare of his pride and self-righteousness are not intended 'that he should lie down in disgrace' (Comm. on Jer. 9:23), but are only of avail if they lead men to the acknowledgment of the pure grace of God, and the adoration of His glory" (Serm. on Job 7:7f. and Instit., 2. 2. I). Calvin is clear that the direction is not to despair, to give up on ever being able to live up to our true self, but to lead us to God's grace. We are not allowed to despair or despise ourselves, for we are creatures of God. It is only because he believes that grace does away with all of our own claims to righteousness and wisdom, and that we can't really know grace until we get to the point of humility, that Calvin uses every didactic method he can think of to deflate humanity's pride in his own integrity and achievements.

Jane Dempsey Douglass affirms this to be Calvin's chief aim in his use of metaphors for God. She points out that Calvin used the metaphor of God as enemy, or the wrath of God as an expression accommodated to our capacity that we may better understand the tragedy of our condition is apart from Christ. "For if it had not been clearly stated that the wrath and vengeance of God and eternal death rested upon us, we would scarcely have recognized how miserable we would have been without God's

mercy, and we would have underestimated the benefit of liberation" (Instit., 2. 16. 1; Douglass, 1986, 127).

Therefore when Calvin in the Institutes speaks of God as enemy or humanity as God's enemy, it is for the purpose of moving the reader to a more profound understanding of the incarnation. ". . .so the image of God as wrathful and hostile, an enemy, serves as a pedagogical device to impress sinners with the awesome meaning of their liberation from sin and to arouse gratitude for God's love revealed in Christ" (Douglass 1986, 129). ". . .God, who anticipates us by his mercy, should have been our enemy until he was reconciled to us through Christ" (Instit., 2. 16. 2.). When viewed from this standpoint we can understand that Calvin must produce his doctrine of "total" depravity because God's grace in Jesus Christ "totally" undercuts all of our own righteousness and wisdom.

It is not only the Word of God's law that brings us knowledge of ourselves, but also the Word of grace, the Gospel where we are renewed and restored to our true nature. In the Gospel we see how we can become what we were meant to be, creatures created in the image of God. Here we find and affirm the heart of Calvin's knowledge of the human person--that of the grace of God in Jesus Christ. He insists again and again that we can only truly form a knowledge of the human person from the standpoint of God's grace.

So Calvin can say at times that "there is not a single drop of uprightness in us" and at other times he admits that "there are splendid virtues even in fallen man, and that whatever of good we see there we must attribute to divine action" (Instit., 1. 5. 6; 2. 2. 12; 2. 3. 3f;

3.14.2). Both are correct if they are seen from the foundational viewpoint of grace.

Restoration and Sanctification

The total conversion and radical alternative of relationship that is needed to heal and restore our knowledge of God and self in the circle-of-knowing is found in Jesus Christ and our uniting with him. It is by Christ's death that the perverted order of things is straightened out and true knowledge becomes possible. Christ's obedience unto death and his resurrection have become the basis of our redemption and restoration. Repentance, a turning to God and a renewal of our life in relationship with God, happens "to us by participation in Christ" (Instit., 3. 3. 9) The nature of our union with Christ is:

> . . .that joining together of Head and members, that indwelling of Christ in our hearts--in short, that mystical union. . . . so that Christ, having been made ours, makes us sharers with him in the gifts with which he has been endowed. We do not, therefore, contemplate him outside ourselves from afar in order that his righteousness may be imputed to us but because we put on Christ and are engrafted into his body--in short, because he deigns to make us one with him. (Instit., 3. 11. 10).

We obtain forgiveness and restoration of our relationship with God through Christ, "who is also called the Second Adam for the reason that he restores us to true and complete integrity" (Instit., 1. 15. 4). The relationship with God and the Holy Spirit that Christ has becomes ours when we become one with him.

The only way in which we can rise to God is to be "reduced to nothing" in ourselves, and be "brought to nothing in our own estimation" (Comm. on I Cor. 1:31 (Torrance 1952, 144), conforming to the death and

resurrection of Jesus Christ. The essential motion of true knowledge
entails "the submission of the whole of intellectual wisdom to the
foolishness of the Cross" (Torrance 1952, 178). The motion of faith by
which we are made empty in ourself is through and through the action of
grace. This self-emptying is not to degrade us or bring us into
submission to authority but to bring us to life. It is a life--
movement. In this life-movement we must not only know that God is but
we must also be assured of God's will to love and embrace us in Christ.
We must come to the point, which we can reach only at the Cross, where
"God bestows His grace upon us that we may know that we are nothing,
that we stand only in the mercy of God" (Instit., 2. 2. 11).

When we are "engrafted into the body of the only-begotten Son" we
are restored to our relationship as "children of God"
(Instit., 2. 6. 1). Christ is the "bond of our adoption" (Instit.,
3. 6. 3) by God. The gracious will of God to adopt us cannot be set
aside or thwarted by sin. "For although the effectiveness of the
promises only appears when they have aroused faith in us, yet the force
and peculiar nature of the promises are never extinguished by our
unfaithfulness and ingratitude" (Instit., 3. 2. 32). It is God's
intention to restore and maintain the imago dei in us and in nature.

Our response of hope and faith in repentance and gratitude for
this great grace and mercy found in Jesus Christ is not a virtue of our
own nature, it is only possible through the quickening Word of the
Spirit. Faith--a full persuasion of God's mercy and of God's divine
intention for us and for the world--stands clear of works and the law,
since it has for it's primary object Christ and is imparted by the Holy

Spirit.

> . . .the inheritance arises from faith in order to establish the
> promise according to grace. For it is abundantly confirmed when
> it rests solely upon God's mercy, since mercy and truth are joined
> together by an everlasting bond" (Instit., 3. 13. 4).

It is this certainty of faith and trust in God's mercy and truth in

Christ that restores us to a true worship of God.

> Trust is the necessary starting point for worshiping God because
> of its liberating effect on the Christian person. . . .in the
> Catechism Calvin explains trust in terms of a saving knowledge of
> God's good favor and mercy in Jesus Christ; trust is a gift of the
> Holy Spirit. Trust opens a free and confident relationship with
> God in strong contrast to Calvin's description of the sinner's
> anxious, "shut-up," restricted, fearful relationship to God. -
> (Douglass 1985, 111).

Through the work of the Holy Spirit to unite us to Christ, the

soul is enlivened and is restored to its capacity of promoting our right

relationship with God. In this restoration, our light (which Calvin saw

as the ability to reason) is connected to the source of light and life.

> We are not our own: let not our reason nor our will, therefore,
> sway our plans and deeds. . .the Christian philosophy bids reason
> give way to, submit and subject itself to, the Holy Spirit so that
> the persons themselves may no longer live but hear Christ living
> and reigning within them (Instit., 3. 7. 1).

Our duty is to respond to the grace of God with thankfulness, in which

response we reflect the glory of God. The imago dei in Calvin's

exposition has always to do with the glory of God, which becomes our

aim, our wisdom, our true life and integrity through the regeneration of

the Spirit. "The work of the Spirit in our hearts is to begin to reform

us to the image of God with a view to the complete restoration of that

image both in ourselves and in the whole world" (Van Gelder 1982, 67).

The life of faith in which we reflect the image of God is in no

sense a static but a dynamic reflection by way of active response to the

Word and Will of God. It must be a continuous relation of our mind and will in response to God. It is a dynamic order, a constant life-motion, conforming us to the image of God through our constant obedience to God's claim upon us.

> Our restoration does not take place in one moment or one day or one year; but through continual and sometimes even slow advances God wipes out in his elect the corruptions of the flesh, cleanses them of guilt, consecrates them to himself as temples renewing all their minds to true purity that they may practice repentance throughout their lives and know that this warfare will end only at death" (Instit., 3. 3. 9).

We must continually be renewing our faith and hope in God's Word made known to us in Christ. God's Word continually calls us into communion and restores our capacity to be in communion with God. God's intent is to redeem, to heal and restore us into the communion of the circle-of-knowing made possible by our participation in the life of Christ.

Freedom, Women, and the Church

The sixteenth century was a time of intellectual upheaval and social change. There was great ambivalence about the role and equality of women. The Reformer's belief in the priesthood of all believers meant new freedom for both men and women in destroying the control of the clerical hierarchy and giving a new sense of dignity to the lay person. Calvin insists that not only the male, but also the female, are included in the renewal of the image of Christ. (DeBoer 1976, 252) The reforms that Calvin introduced in Geneva show that he agreed that the liberation and equality should take place. On the matter of divorce Calvin took a more egalitarian approach than was customary for his day

and, along with other Reformers, he honored the estate of marriage which worked toward elevating woman's place and role. (DeBoer 1976, 254)

Douglass studied Calvin's views and understanding of women's nature and role, placing the question in the context of Calvin's understanding of freedom and order. Calvin frames his basic under- standing of Christian freedom in these terms: "Emancipation into freedom through the liberality of God's work in the incarnation for those who have been oppressed by bondage and wearied by anxiety of conscience" (Instit., 2. 11. 9). Through Christ's work we are freed from a troubled conscience, from fear, from timorous obedience to laws not found in Scripture, and empowered by the Spirit to stand courageously against evil." (Douglass 1985, 20). Calvin had a very strong vision of freedom which applied to everyone, including both men and women. His doctrine of freedom within the Christian community centered around three parts: (1) freedom from the law. ". . .the consciences of believers, in seeking assurance of their justification before God, should rise above and advance beyond the law, forgetting all law righteousness" (Instit., 3. 19. 2). (2) freedom to willingly obey the law. "The second part, dependent upon the first, is that consciences observe the law, not as if constrained by the necessity of the law, but that freed from the law's yoke they willingly obey God's will in joyous obedience" (Instit., 3. 19. 4-5). (3) freedom in "things indifferent".

> The third part of Christian freedom lies in this: regarding outward things that are of themselves "indifferent," we are not bound before God by any religious obligation preventing us from sometimes using them and other times not using them, indiffer- ently" (Instit., 3. 19. 7).

The Christian's freedom is rooted in the freedom of God. Since

Calvin understands God as a God of freedom, the experience of Christian freedom is an aspect of participation in divine life. Since the fall humans experience by nature only a limited and deformed freedom. But as we've already seen, when we are engrafted into Christ through the gift of faith, the Holy Spirit transforms us and begins to restore our freedom. "The significance of Christian freedom for Calvin is its existence within restored humanity as a sign of the presence of Christ's kingdom already alive in the midst of a fallen world. "The heart of Christian freedom as Calvin understands it is the experience of transformation by the Holy Spirit" (Douglass 1985, 119). He regularly identifies enlivening, courage, strength, and boldness with the state of Christian freedom as a sign of the Spirit's activity.

Within this understanding of an ongoing working out of our freedom, Douglass searches out Calvin's meaning of order. We've already noted how all of creation depends on God's divinely appointed order, complete dependence on God's Word, God's order of grace. This order is not static but dynamic. The restoration of order is not fully accomplished but is being worked out in the church and the world. Calvin believed that the church is displaying the renewed image of God in a special way. Christ is the basis of this new order in the church. The church receives Christ's life-giving capacity through the transforming work of the Holy Spirit. The members of the church are now equal before the sight of God insofar as their status in Jesus Christ. "Whatever other differences there may be, the one Christ suffices to unite them all" (Comm. on Gal. 3:28 (Van Gelder 1982, 217).

"The church [for Calvin] is not so much an institution in history in which the restoration of order has been accomplished, as it is itself the history of that restoration" (Douglass 1985, 25). Both natural order and political order are informed by the ongoing lively activity of the Holy Spirit, who is moving human order in the direction of the freedom of the kingdom of God. "Calvin does not . . . advocate any servile imitation of the institutions of the primitive church" (Wendel 1963, 302). It is an alive and continually reforming community of believers. "Above all, the order of the church must reflect the freedom of the Holy Spirit to give to each member differing gifts that are needed in turn by the larger community" (Douglass 1985, 40).

Such a dynamic view of order rooted in a strong vision of freedom provides the key to finding some consistency in how Calvin understands biblical texts dealing with women. "In almost every case where he refers to the fact of women's subordinate role in society, he clarifies that this is a matter of the "political" order of human governance" (Douglass 1985, 51). Calvin is clear that no eternal law of God requires women's silence in church, and that customs which serve the edification of the church in one era can well be changed in another if they cease to serve the edification of the church.

> But because [God] did not will in outward discipline and cere-
> monies to prescribe in detail what we ought to do (because he
> foresaw that this depended upon the state of the times, and he did
> not deem one form suitable for all ages), here we must take refuge
> in those general rules which he has given, that whatever the
> necessity of the church will demand to be taught for order and
> decorum should be tested against these. Lastly, because he has
> taught nothing specifically, and because these things are not
> necessary to salvation, and for the upbuilding of the church ought
> to be variously accommodated to the customs of each nation and
> age, it will be as fitting (as the advantage of the church will
> require) to change and abrogate traditional practices as to

establish new ones. Indeed, I admit that we ought not to charge into innovation rashly, suddenly, nor for insufficient cause. But love will best judge what may hurt or edify; and if we let love be our guide, all will be safe" (Instit., 4. 10. 30).

There are areas, then, where humanity is free to adapt and transform tradition as necessary to carry out God's purposes in a changing world. Yet we must adapt our forms within the expression of the life of a community of love and mutual responsibility. Freedom has been given us to "in order that [we] may be the more ready for all the duties of love" (Instit., 3. 19. 12).

We are made free by Christ's work to enter into the bonds of a love relationship with God. The "sacred bond of the imago dei" (Comm. on Ps. 8:5) that binds us together with God also binds us together in love with all people since all bear the image of God. When we are bound together with God through Christ we "experience freedom to participate in history in the Holy Spirit's creation of the new society envisioned and empowered by God" (Douglass 1985, 121). The motion of the circle-of-knowing proceeds outward, becoming the basis for a new order, for new relationships based on strong and sacred bonds of love rather than inequities or human hierarchy. Within the bonds of the circle-of-knowing we are freed to be open to change, renewal, to a motion and direction that is always healing and reforming. With this vision of restoration and freedom in strong and sacred bonds of love I now turn to look at the psychology of the female.

CHAPTER II

Introduction

In this section I will attempt to uncover the voice of women's experiences and values, to give language to female development. With the aid of work done by Nancy Chodorow, Carol Gilligan, Jean Baker Miller, Catherine Keller, and Mary Field Belenky, et. al., who have examined and described women's realities, I will show how female development is a process of developing a capacity for relationships.

I have looked to the work of these women in psychological theory to inform my task of considering a specifically female structure of the development of self. As I read the work of these women, as I learn about women's lives and reflect on the experiences of my own life, the theory that women find self-definition and growth occurring in a network of both internal and external relationships is strengthened. Jean Baker Miller described this concept of self as a "self-in-relation." Women become and express who they are as they both form and are formed by and in their relationships. The image I've chosen to focus on to describe this experience is that of a web, a web of connections, of relationships. Female development of self and way of knowing is defined in the context of this web and judged by a standard of responsibility and care within the attachments of the web.

This model of female development will critique and be critiqued by the prevailing male model of development. The fact that masculine values and experiences have become the public voice of authority has had

many consequences for women. I will not be focusing on the history of these consequences in this paper or comparing and critiquing the male model with that of the female, yet I must mention this history here as background and context for female development.

In the context of hiding and doubting their experiences because they are different from many of the models and theories provided by psychology, women struggle to view their own experiences as valid and bring their experiences and realities into public view. Women's history has been trapped and hidden beneath the facades of what society and culture have defined as femininity. Part of the struggle of developing a female model of development is to separate out the stereotypes of what is feminine and what women have accepted as their values as defined by a patriarchal society and culture from what is actual female reality.

Female experience often presented a problem for theorists of human development. Freud was unable to fit women's experiences into his theory. Freud built his theory of psychosexual development around the experiences of the male child whose early helplessness and connection with the mother gives way to separation. In this model the development of loving relationships with others or "objects" is based on separation or aggression. Freud recognized women's different experience of love resulting from a different line of development in maintaining attachments, yet he considered women's strong attachment to their mothers to be developmental failure and a result of a deprivation in women's very nature.

Erikson formed a model of development based on the male experience. He recognized the female experience as departing from his model

but he chose to ignore this and did not change his structure to include the female. In Erikson's eight stages of human development, the fifth stage is adolescence whose task is to forge an identity. His theory set the adolescent's task of identity formation in the context of detachment from parents and other relationships, to separate in order to become autonomous and independent. Erikson viewed this task as preceding the tasks of developing intimacy and vocation. He recognized the female's development as progressing through a different sequence but let it go.

The women writers and theorists on which I've chosen to focus present a different structure of development from those presented by Freud, Erikson, and others. These women pick up what Erikson and Freud saw and discarded or labeled as inferior or mysterious. They examine the history and causes of the fear and objectification of women and the casting of woman as other. Out of their intention to listen to women and to recognize the differences in female development, they assert a new model of development, a "new psychology" that includes the experiences and perspectives of women.

A potential for a more cooperative and creative way of life tied to a belief in the need for human communion is asserted in this model of female development. As the self is constructed in a relational web and includes aspects of the other, it can better recognize the other as a self and so obviate the need to objectify or dominate. The development of mature interdependence in relationships ultimately forms the web of community.

The framework I will use to describe female development, centered around the metaphor of a web of connections, begins with psychoanalyst's

Nancy Chodorow's work in describing the early years (pre-Oedipal) of the female infant's relationship with the primary caretaker, usually the mother, who is herself female. Moving on to adolescence, Carol Gilligan, Nona Lyons, and Trudy Hanmer, in a study of adolescent girls at Emma Willard School in Troy, New York describe the adolescent girl's experiences as a crisis of connection. Chodorow and Gilligan show that girls' differentiation process takes place in ongoing relationships. Theologian Catherine Keller builds on the work of Chodorow and Gilligan to describe means of gathering and weaving the web of interconnections by reclaiming our early attachments.

Jean Baker Miller gives definition to women's psychology, describing how it is to be woman in attachment and affiliation with others and how to build on the strengths women have gained in these connections to grow into maturity. Gilligan also concentrates on the maturing woman in her study In A Different Voice. She shows how a maturing woman's moral development centers on elaborating their knowledge of the importance of belongingness or connectedness. Mary Field Belenky, Blythe McVicker Clinchy, Nancy Rule Goldberger, and Jill Mattuck Tarule further explicate and delineate women's development and growing experience of the web of connections in their study of "women's ways of knowing."

At the end of this section I employ an essay by Chodorow and Susan Contratto to assert the need to include mothers in the selfhood found in the web of connections. In the end the model of female development described here can begin to transform being mother, being parent, being woman and being human in a world that so desperately needs the communion

of connections. This structure and image of female development offers a way of knowing, hearing, and seeing the world whose release may benefit all.

Pre-Oedipal Period

Nancy Chodorow, in trying to account for "the reproduction of general and almost universal gender differences in personality and roles, finds the answer not in women's anatomy but rather in "the fact that women, universally, are largely responsible for early child care" (Chodorow 1989, 45). Chodorow draws on the psychoanalytic movement known as object relations theory which moved psychoanalysis into the realm of the interpersonal. This theory sees the infant from birth as a self capable of relation and therefore motivated by more than mere needs and drives.

Chodorow recognizes the existence of sex differences in the early experiences of individuation and relationship. For both sexes the primary caretaker in the first three years of life is typically female so the interpersonal dynamics of gender identity formation is different for boys and girls. Identity formation for girls takes place in ongoing relationship since "mothers tend to experience their daughters as more like, and continuous with, themselves" (Chodorow 1978, 150).

Girls never have to separate totally from their primary caretaker in order to gain gender identity as boys do. Because of the unique primary identification with a caretaker of the same sex, the girl will "continue to experience herself in issues of merging and separation, and in attachment characterized by primary identification (a sense of

oneness) and the fusion of identification and object choice (not differentiating between her own and her mother's interests). (Chodorow 1978, 166). The process of differentiation from the mother is gradual and convoluted in the female, while in the male child the transition is abrupt.

The girl "retains and builds upon her preoedipal tie to her mother. She retains the (internalized) early relationship, including its implications for the nature of her unconscious but fundamental definition of self in relationship, and internalizes other relationships in addition, and not as replacement" (Chodorow 1989, 69). The internal and external relational situation of the feminine oedipus is complex and multi-layered. The experience of self in the original mother-relation remains both seductive and frightening: unity was bliss, yet means the loss of self and absolute dependence. ". . .a mother, rather than confirming her daughter's oppositeness and specialness, experiences her as one with herself; her relationship to her daughter is more "narcissistic" (Chodorow 1989, 72).

As the mother's caretaking is rarely shared by other--including male--primary figures, the mother-daughter bond may work to asphyxiate the daughter's sense of self. The mother, coming from comparable bonding with her mother, had few chances to actualize her own potential in the larger world and may seek her own life in her identification with her daughter. She may innocently expect from the daughter an uninterrupted intimacy of like interests and aims, a perpetual availability for emotional empathy and for friendship, and a certain guilt-prone stasis, which all too easily collaborates with society at

large to keep the daughter from establishing a clear sense of self.

The little girl never actually gives up her first mother relation in favor of the father. She only gradually draws him into the alliance. Females very young perceive and resent the familial and cultural disempowerment of the women with whom they identify. Anger at her mother's impotence may lead her into an alliance with the father, idealized in his distance and social power. But it is precisely this idealization of the traditional father that will result in the ways of passive femininity and in the desire to have a baby later by a father figure, which leads to what Chodorow described as the "reproduction of mothering." The daughter picks up the thread of her earlier identification with the mother, but now as primarily man-centered.

The very structure of a family in which women are primary caretakers preprograms daughters to identify with their mothers, with whom they also relate intimately; they consequently experience self-identity as intrinsically relational, but become entangled in emotional obstacles to self-differentiation. It is precisely the female child's affective expressiveness that, under the circumstances of overidentification with the mother, will hinder her emergence as a distinctive self. "The situation reinforces itself in circular fashion." A mother grows up without establishing adequate ego boundaries or a firm sense of self" (Chodorow 1989, 59). So she does not provide experiences of differentiating ego development for her daughter and the daughter makes a rather unsatisfactory attempt to establish boundaries.

So it is that Chodorow shows how the feminine self emerges from the Oedipal period with the establishment of a base of self-in-relation through relation to their mother. There is a "fundamental internal as well as external relatedness to the other" (Chodorow 1989, 159). This presents the girl with liabilities as well as strengths. "Girls emerge with a basis for 'empathy' built into their primary definition of self in a way that boys do not. Girls emerge with a stronger basis for experiencing another's needs or feelings as one's own (or of thinking that one is so experiencing another's needs and feelings). Girls do not define themselves in terms of denial of preoedipal relational modes and therefore, regression to these modes tends not to feel as much a basic threat to their ego.

From very early, then, because they are parented by a person of the same gender ... girls come to experience themselves as less differentiated than boys, as more continuous with and related to the external object world, and as differently oriented to their inner object-world as well" (Chodorow 1978, 167). "Most generally, I would suggest that a quality of embeddedness in social interaction and personal relationships characterizes women's life relative to men's" (Chodorow 1989, 57).

Yet girls are, at the same time, prepared to confuse another's desires with her own--and so indeed to become prey to self-loss and "second sex" status. The supposed need to be needed, the readiness to sacrifice talent, time, energy and finally self to others, especially to family--that need upon which the patriarchal nuclear family depends--is nourished in this process of gender formation.

Adolescence

In her study of the developmental sequence of adolescent girls and adult women, Carol Gilligan found her sequence to be rooted in the crisis of adolescence. She found the crisis of adolescent girls to be that of connection rather than separation. The absence of a voice to represent her experience of relationships and her sense of self becomes central during the female's adolescence. "The crisis of connection in girls' lives at adolescence links the psychology of women with the most basic questions about relationships and the definition of reality" (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 25).

Adolescence is when the female confronts the task of some sort of breaking away to establish independence while at the same time struggling to connect in relationships. ". . .theory tells us that by virtue of being female, adolescent girls especially value their connection; while by virtue of being adolescent, they are attending particularly to their separation" (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 73). Adolescent females experience themselves to be at a crossroads in their lives where they must shift from a relational approach to life to an autonomous one--a shift that can represent an intolerable loss when independence is associated with isolation" (1990, 173). Within this framework there is a redefinition of the words independence and dependence to mean confident and self-respecting rather than unconnected or on one's own. Responsibility also takes on a new meaning--to combine control with a sense of connection.

The adolescent girl finds herself in the middle of a problem of resistance. In order to remain responsive to self, they must resist the

tradition of feminine goodness which means sacrificing self and in order

to remain responsive to others they must resist the values of

independence and autonomy.

> Thus for girls to develop a clear sense of self in relationship
> with others means--at least within the mainstream of North
> American culture--to take on the problem of resistance and also to
> take up the question of what relationship means to themselves, to
> others, and to the world (Gilligan et al., 1990, 10).

The adolescent girl seems to go "underground" with her knowledge

of the intricacies of relationships and her learning experiences outside

of school. Such knowledge is not represented in descriptions of

psychological development or in clinical case studies and is often

disclaimed by adolescent girls themselves by saying, "I don't know" and

their corresponding codeword for those who are part of their underground

world "you know." (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 14-15).

> . . . the secrets of the female adolescent pertain to the
> silencing of her own voice, a silencing enforced by the wish not
> to hurt others but also by the fear that, in speaking, her voice
> will not be heard. . . . an underground world kept secret because
> it is branded by others as selfish and wrong" (Gilligan 1982, 51).

In a study involving interviews with adolescent girls at Emma

Willard School in Troy, New York, Gilligan and her colleagues heard a

"complex understanding of relationship" in how the girls describe their

"increased individual capabilities (resembling "independence") used to

build and maintain relationships rather than to foster breaking away.

"Thus separation is not pitted against connection but involves a

redefined ability to respond to (and consequently to connect with) the

other" (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 85).

The identity process for the adolescent female is to develop a

distinct sense of self, to differentiate, to search for her distinct

voice, but still be connected to others. Since females develop a sense of self in the context of relationships, girls are naturally more dependent on and vulnerable to external influences impacting on their sense of identity. She hears from home, school, the media and the culture at large to be compliant, dependent, and interpersonally sensitive, while at the same time the culture values the masculine characteristics of dominance, autonomy, independence, and competence and devalues the principles of sharing, caring, and interrelatedness.

As Baker Miller (1976) put it: women are, in conventional terms, "doing good and feeling bad." "Girls' and women's solutions to this dilemma have often been either to deny difference in the name of equality, or to deny self in the name of morality, as though the self were not affected in significant ways by gender" (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 328). Thus one of "the major challenges that the adolescent female faces is to confirm the worth of her interest in relationships and in so doing to develop a sense of her own self-worth as an individual" (Gilligan 1982).

Gilligan points out that adolescent girls (daughters), "because of their more acute personal encounter with disconnection at adolescence" are "alerted to problems of connection" (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 11). "Perhaps for this reason, girls often speak about conflict in their relationships with their mothers--the person who, one girl said, "will always welcome me." "Girls willingness to fight for genuine connections with their mothers" is shown especially in their wish for someone who will remain connected even if they disagree. (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 25). The girls questions about relationships and violence stir up

conflict and disagreement and thus are more likely to be spoken in rela-
tionships where no one will leave and someone will listen.

In Gilligan's interviews with students at Emma Willard it was
noted that "while the girls no longer needed their parents to help with
the practical end of caregiving, they did count on them to "be there" in
the spiritual sense, to offer solace and support and to remain as a
"secure base" from which they could venture out into the world or return
in difficult times" (Gilligan et. al. 1990, 113). The interviews
suggest that girls' views of themselves are intricately related to their
views of their relationships with their mothers. Both the girls and
their mothers voice their ideas and struggle to maintain their
connection. In light of traditional developmental theory which has long
held that an important developmental task for adolescents was to
separate from their parents, especially mothers, the girls at Emma
Willard offer a new perspective.

As those who take up the problem of resistance, adolescent girls
are also especially prone to notice and question the compliance of women
to male authority. Eleven-and twelve-year-old girls observe where and
when women speak and when they are silent.

> The choices that women make in order to survive or to appear good
> in the eyes of others (and thus sustain their protection) are
> often at the expense of women's relationships with one another,
> and girls begin to observe and comment on these choices around the
> age of eleven or twelve. If women can stay in the gaze of girls
> so that girls do not have to look and not see, if women can be
> seen by girls, including the twelve-year-old in themselves, if
> women can sustain girls' gaze and respond to girls' voices, then
> perhaps. . . (Gilligan et al. 1990, 26-27).

. . . .then perhaps women can recover their voice, a voice that asserts

the value of a web of relationships, including relationships with mothers and women's relationships with one another.

Theologian Catherine Keller builds on the works of Chodorow and Gilligan to describe how women can validate the web that they come out of and how it can be cultivated into maturity. Keller uses Chodorow's description of the complex and rich, ongoing inner object world of women--the web--as basis for a different concept of self-differentiation. Keller maintains that the complexity of relations provides the only basis for self-differentiation. ". . .one becomes more and different by taking in more of what is different" (Keller 1986, 136). She holds that "connection may provide the germs for a different concept of differentiation" (Keller, 134) . . .a different voice to which Chodorow, Gilligan, and Miller are listening.

In the new concept of differentiation in connection that Keller describes she points out that it is crucial to distinguish between real and false empathy as portrayed in the mother-daughter relationship. Real empathy, rather than false empathy which is based on self-deprivation and need, is a connection which can encourage the daughter's individualization rather than promote dependency.

Keller claims that "the female connection to mother and world preserves the oceanic feeling of an empathic continuum initially common to both sexes" (p. 136). Separation is inflicted on boys and is not natural as is connection turned in on itself in isolation unnatural for girls. The fluid bondedness and empathic continuum may contain its own self-transforming principle of differentiation.

Along with Gilligan, Keller uses the image of a web to describe the interconnection of relationships where the fluid bondedness and empathic continuum emerge. Gilligan described how ". . .the interconnections of the web are dissolved by the hierarchical ordering of relationships," and nets or webs are "portrayed as dangerous entrapments, impeding flight rather than protecting against fall" (Gilligan 1982, 49). In a similar way, Keller says that "the web is not originally a trap" (Keller 1986, 137). She asks how the unconscious fear of the web resulting in domination over the other, can be overcome. "Can a trust in noncoercive influence again take the place of domination, a sense of depth and engagement replace the masculine defense?" (Keller 1986, 38). In other words, how can the web be transformed into a structure that can support differentiation?

In her assessment, Keller suggests that we affirm the empathic continuum from which we emerge. Not to cease to be nurturing or relational or adopt the patriarchal arrangement of stunting connectivity into the state of the dependent nurturer. "The connective selfhood of the preoedipal period, despite the threat of an undifferentiated narcissism, must and can be cultivated into maturity rather than stifled and superseded" (Keller 1986, 140). Women's self-transformation must lead the way within the web of a connective ego into a mature, centering and self-affirming sense of relation.

This way according to Keller leads us to reclaim and transform the "preoedipal phase" with the fluid boundaries of the child and retrace our steps to maturation. "Alice Miller shows that because we may have partly killed or buried the real past child early in life, its rebirth

requires mourning the lost child" (Keller 1986, 147). That inner child, who incarnates the energy of the "true self," is--however maimed--still there for us. A theory of the interrelatedness of all subjective life can help us see the truth, the theme of truth that Gilligan heard in women who gained the perspective of a moral equality between self and other. The truth that relationship implies the presence of both self and other as subjects.

In this new theory of interrelatedness, Keller says we would know ourselves neither bound to parent figures nor severed from them. Similar to what Gilligan found in adolescent girls, Keller describes development "not in dissociation from parents but in a widening net of relations in which parents would remain significant presences, real and symbolic" (Keller 1986, 153-154). A widening net of image and relationship will create both a more spacious world and a bigger self, never lacking in the "transitional objects" that liberate us from dependency. A state of interdependence, both within oneself and in the world, requires a field of infinitely diversifying and endlessly overlapping energies, male and female.

> We are searching for a path of differentiation within relation. Differentiation--becoming uniquely ourselves-must not be cast in the category of separation. This would permit women to remain faithful to the complex inner and outer connectivity that we may sense as integral to our selves, while liberating ourselves from the accompanying modes of dependency and self-suppression. It requires a reformulation of the concept of self. (Keller 1986, 161).

Keller describes a self in radical interconnection, not the soluble self who gives herself away which is how femininity has been traditionally defined. A self with integrity, who is not only reflexive

object but also subject. A self who stays in relation through tension, conflict, and difference. A strong, differentiated self who can be free to assert self and influence others without control. A self with a soft inner core maintained in self-centering. "Centering, we are not isolating or hardening ourselves but strengthening ourselves. We draw upon a peacefulness beyond the turbulence and treachery of particular relationships, particular obsessions and anxieties. But it is a stillness born of a greater width of connection, from a livelier attunement to being here now" (Keller 1986, 213). The world from this center is seen through a web, through a hermeneutics of connection.

Maturing Woman

Jean Baker Miller describes how it is for women to be in relationships of both temporary and permanent inequality, both "sides" of interdependent relationships. She maintains that women are able to recognize the possibilities of both care and oppression in these relationships. In relationships of temporary inequality, such as parent and child or teacher and student, power ideally is used to foster the development that removes the initial disparity. The overall task of such relationships is for the superior person to engage with the lesser in such a way as to bring the lesser member up to full equality.

In relationships of permanent inequality, "some people or groups of people are defined as unequal based on criteria of race, sex, class, nationality, religion, or other characteristics ascribed at birth" (Baker Miller 1986, 6). In these relationships power cements dominance

and subordination, and oppression is rationalized by theories that "explain" the need for its continuation.

Women's psychology reflects both kinds of relationships and in marriage and family life, women are entwined in both at the same time. From this unique perspective Miller contends that women can show the way to a mature sense of power and dependence, of strength through admitting weakness and vulnerability, and of a way of life that includes serving others without being subservient. She points out the "greater recognition of the essential cooperative nature of human existence" in women's psychology (Miller 1986, 41) and that women have assumed the greater responsibility for providing it.

Miller maintains that women are also attuned to psychological growth which means change. "People who are most attuned to psychological growth are those most closely in touch with it, those who are literally forced to keep changing if they are to continue to respond to the altering demands of those under their care. In a very immediate and day-to-day way women _live_ change" (Miller 1986, 55). Women have had to struggle to be creative in order to construct "an inner person who is different from the person most valued in this society" (Miller 1986, 44). Thus women, as they recognize the strengths they have developed as a result of the complexity of their relationships, can go on to build a "new psychology." Women have a "highly developed basis for this social advance" (Miller 1986, 72).

Along with Chodorow, Gilligan, and Keller, Miller recognizes the starting point of women's psychology as attachment and affiliation with others. "Women stay with, build on, and develop in a context of

connections with others. Women's sense of self becomes very much organized around being able to make, and then to maintain, affiliations and relationships" so that a threat of disruption of a relationship is not only the loss of relationship but closer to a total loss of self. (Miller 1976, 83). From this basis, with the abilities women have developed, and the additions of power and self-determination, Miller describes a female development into "a fuller not a lesser ability to encompass relationships to others, simultaneous with the fullest development of oneself" (Miller 1986, 95), a development that derives strength from the web of relationships.

Within this world comprised of a network of relationships, Gilligan illuminates the development of women's morality based on an ethic of care and responsibility. Gilligan finds that girls see the world through the "hermeneutics of connection" rather than of people standing alone, a world that coheres through human connection rather than through systems of rules. This network of connection for girls is sustained by communication and is what gives them a sense of identity. "The ideal of care is thus an activity of relationship, of seeing and responding to need, taking care of the world by sustaining the web of connection so that no one is left alone" (Gilligan 1982, 62).

Gilligan outlines a progression in female development by listening to the ways women speak about morality and about themselves. The themes she hears in the women's narratives have to do with "survival, with goodness, and with truth--specifically, truths about relationships and truths about violence" (Gilligan 1989, 8). She traces these truths through three perspectives on care by following shifts over time in the

thinking of college students and graduates and also in women who were pregnant and thinking about what to do. The central dilemma for these women was how to include both oneself and others in their inclusion of connection and care.

In the first perspective of her framework Gilligan heard a bare-bones concern with survival. In this perspective the focus of the women she interviewed is on care for self in order to ensure survival in a world perceived as exploitative and threatening. The transition from this perspective to the second happens when the woman begins to see her focus on survival as selfish and moves toward attachment and caring for others.

The second perspective shifts from survival to concerns about responsiveness to others as the condition for relationship. This perspective merges with traditional conventions of feminine goodness where the good woman is "selfless" in her devotion to caring for others. The woman is often willing to sacrifice herself for others in the hope that if she cares for others she will be loved and cared for by them. The problem in the first perspective is a feeling of abandonment, of being left alone, while the problem in the second perspective becomes the feeling she will abandon herself for others. Both of these are problems of disconnection.

In the second transition leading to the third perspective on care there is a shift from self-sacrifice to caring for oneself. The need to appear selfless and be the "good woman" with its strategies of indirection, lack of choice, and lack of responsibility in the second perspective shifts to a focus on the search for truth. In this

perspective the woman turns inward to acknowledge herself and accept responsibility for her own choices. She searches for "the psychological truth that relationship implies the presence of both self and other, and the social truth that caring for others requires resources but is associated with economic disadvantage in North American society" (Gilligan 1989, 9). Facing these truths, Gilligan found that women tended either to give up and ask "why care" or to struggle to find a way to live in connection with themselves, with others, and with the world.

If the woman is able to come to this psychological truth she asserts a moral equality between self and the other where she can include both in her compass of care. There is a shift in perspective in this third level to realize interdependence as both differentiated and connected. There is a recognition of the importance of both self and other and that responsiveness to self and responsiveness to others are connected rather than opposed. Here dependence and independence are not opposed, rather, "dependence is opposed to isolation and independence in the sense of autonomy [is] seen not to exist. . . . Instead, independence is seen as enhancing and enhanced by relationships" (Gilligan 1982). Moral decisions become informed by a deeper and more complex understanding of human relationships.

Gilligan finds that women have a different perspective on adult maturity. When women construct the adult domain, the world of relationships emerges and becomes the focus of attention and concern. Women are able to see the potential in interdependent relationships both for care and for oppression. Gilligan maintains the need for an integration of the female model of development based on a responsibility

of care for the web of relationships with that of the male model of
moral development based on rights. With the discovery of the
complementarity between rights and responsibilities, both sexes can
develop into maturity.

> . . .women come to see the violence inherent in inequality, while
> men come to see the limitations of a conception of justice blinded
> to the differences in human life. . . . Development for both sexes
> would therefore seem to entail an integration of rights and
> responsibilities through the discovery of the complementarity of
> these disparate views. (Gilligan 1982, 100).

The dilemma is the same for both sexes--a conflict between
integrity and care--but seen from different perspectives. "Thus the
counterpoint of identity and intimacy that marks the time between
childhood and adulthood is articulated through two different moralities
whose complementarity is the discovery of maturity" (Gilligan 1982,
165).

In such a new model of maturity, the ethic of care and responsi-
bility that Gilligan describes can become "a self-chosen anchor of
personal integrity and strength" (Gilligan 1982, 171), upholding and
building the self in the web. In this model the development of women
throughout the life-cycle can be viewed as a continuous line centered
around changes in her activities of care that affect her sense of self.
The self is represented in relationship "rather than being placed at
stages, steps, or positions and marked off by borders and boundaries"
(Gilligan et al. 1989, 314).

Rather than using the traditional visual imagery of the self as
fixed and still in terms denoting separation and autonomy with the
imagery of seeing and of mirrors, a language of "talking, of listening,

of being with, of being touched" (Gilligan et al. 1989, 316) is used with the imagery of a web being woven together. Rather than representing developmental progression in terms of steps, the female developmental model is conceived of as an "interplay of voices creating a theme, woven into the cycle of life" (Gilligan, 1982). Development is fraught with vulnerabilities, entails both losses and gains, and is open to the world beyond the individual's control, including changes in relationships critical to growth.

A study done by Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, and Tarule further explicates and describes how women develop a sense of self and a way of knowing the world through the web of changing connections. Because "'women's talk,' in both style (hesitant, qualified, question-posing) and content (concern for the everyday, the practical, and the interpersonal) is typically devalued by men and women alike" (Belenky et al. 1986, 17), this group of researchers chose to listen to women in interviews and to tell the stories of these women's experiences and problems as learners and knowers. They listened to the women's past histories for changing concepts of the self and relationships with others. They were particularly interested in "how maternal practice might shape women's thinking about human development and the teaching relationship. They listened for themes that were especially distinctive in the woman's voice.

Similar to Gilligan's work, Belenky et. al. describe epistemological perspectives in female development rather than structuring a linear model of development. The perspectives are ways in which women view and know the world. Five perspectives are described in the stories

of the women they interviewed: (1) silence, (2) received knowledge, (3) subjective knowledge, (4) procedural knowledge, and (5) constructed knowledge.

In the first perspective of silence there is an extreme denial of the woman's self and a dependence on external authority for direction. These women remain in isolation from others and from self without real interchanges and without tools for representing their experiences.

In the second perspective of received knowledge words are central to the women's knowing process. Herein women rely on authorities to give them the truth in sharp dichotomies and intolerance of ambiguity. These are the women that Gilligan found to be "selfless" in their moral thought.

There is a noted symbiotic quality of relationships between young received knowers and their friends, yet these relationships are important for women's growth and development.

> The young received knowers have a literal faith that they and their friends share exactly the same thoughts and experiences. . . . But it is exactly these kinds of relationships that provide women with experiences of mutuality, equality, and reciprocity that are most helpful in eventually enabling them to disentangle their own voice from the voices of others. It is from just such relationships that women seem to emerge with a powerful sense of their own capacities for knowing (Belenky et al. 1986, 38).

In the third perspective of subjective knowledge the women seem to move to a perspective of greater autonomy and begin to listen to their own inner voice. For some women the move to this perspective leaves her feeling vulnerable and unanchored with the realization of multiple personal truths. As a result these women go "underground" and do not

share in public their private "voice." They deny logic, analysis, and
abstraction as belonging to the male world.

An important step on the route to subjective knowing is the
woman's connection with maternal or nurturant authorities who provide
affirmation to the woman in transition that she, too, can think and know
and become a woman. Observation and listening serve an important
function for these women. They are preoccupied with the choice between
care of self and of other and realize a need to act on behalf of self as
opposed to denying the self. Often making a break with their past and
former relationships these women "may enter a period in which there is
considerable flux in self-concept" (Belenky et. al. 1986, 81).

The fourth perspective to which some women move is the perspective
of procedural knowledge, a perspective with the voice of reason. This
is a more complex and objective knowledge than received or subjective.
Belenky et.al. describe two different orientations of procedural
knowledge--connected understanding and separate knowing-which they
compare to Gilligan's (1982) and her colleague Nona Lyon's (1983)
separate self with a morality based on justice, and connected self with
a morality based on care.

The heart of separate knowing is critical thinking with impersonal
procedures for establishing truth. The heart of connected understanding
is empathy with the self used as an instrument of understanding which
requires self-knowledge. Yet both of these orientations within
procedural knowing are oriented away from the self--the knower--and
toward the object the knower seeks to understand. They are encapsulated
within systems and the move to the next perspective requires breaking

out of the system--becoming "selfish," not to abandon reason but to come to an integration of reason and feeling.

The fifth perspective, constructed knowing, begins "as an effort to reclaim the self by attempting to integrate knowledge that they felt intuitively was personally important with knowledge they had learned from others" (Belenky et. al. 1986, 134). There is a similar search for truth in constructed knowers as Gilligan heard in those women who came to include both self and others in their care. "It is in the process of sorting out the pieces of the self and of searching for a unique and authentic voice that women come to the basic insights of constructivist thought: All knowledge is constructed, and the knower is an intimate part of the known" (Belenky et al. 1986, 137).

In this way constructed knowing is connected knowing, different from the subtype of procedural knowing called connected knowing. In constructed knowing, connected or passionate knowing, the self is used as an instrument of understanding to find points of connection "between what they are trying to understand and their own experience" (Belenky et. al. 1986, 141).

Connected knowing arises out of the experience of relationships and requires intimacy and equality between the self and the object. "It was in the relationships with mothers that these daughters found the most developed models of and opportunities for connected knowing" (Belenky et. al. 1986, 183). "It is in the relationship between mothers and daughters in which the possibility of common interests and a win/win game is most likely to become apparent" (Belenky et. al. 1986, 179). In the possibility of integration of reason and emotions found in connected

knowing, Belenky et.al. found that the tendency to allocate intellectual
capacities to fathers and emotional ones to mothers can be overcome.
The connections and way of knowing informed by feeling, empathic
potential, what Weil calls "attentive love" (1951) and Ruddick (1980)
identifies with "maternal thinking" is characteristic of constructivist
women. They "aspire to work that contributes to the empowerment and
improvement in the quality of life of others" (Belenky et. al. 1986,
152). The experience of mothering provided these women with a profound
experience of human connection, a complicated human achievement
requiring a high level of development.

Chodorow and Susan Contratto describe how finding a self in
connection must also apply to mothers since mothers are women and all
women are daughters of mothers. When we deny mothers their selfhood in
a web of relationship, we deny ourselves as mothers. "But insofar as
mothers are women, this involves a denial of all women as active
subjects and a denial and split in our self-identities as children--
daughters and people as well" (Chodorow 1989, 93).

The feminist perspective on differentiation from mother that
Chodorow and Contratto describe supports the model of finding self in
connection.

> Differentiation is not distinctness and separateness, but a
> particular way of being connected to others. This connection to
> others, based on early incorporations, in turn enables us to feel
> that empathy and confidence are basic to the recognition of the
> other as a self" (Chodorow 1989, 107).

When we can reclaim the strengths and connections of women we can
help women find a "firm sense of self and of her own value, whose care
is a freely chosen activity rather than a reflection of a conscious and

unconscious sense of inescapable connection to and responsibility for

[others]" (Chodorow 1989, 59). A new model of female development such

as described here can help give voice to women's self;

> . . .a model that recognizes collaboration and compromise as well
> as conflict, that stresses relational capacities and experiences
> instead of insatiable, insistent drives, in which separation is
> not equivalent to deprivation, and in which autonomy is different
> from abandonment, to begin to transform the relations of parenting
> and the relations of gender, to begin to transform women's lives"
> (Chodorow 1989,
> 96).

CHAPTER III

Introduction

In this chapter I will integrate what I've found in John Calvin's theology of the human person (doctrine of man) with the psychology of female development to portray a construct of finding and knowing a self. I will focus on two central images: (1) the circle-of-knowing (Diagram 1) with its metaphors of word and mirror found in Calvin's theology; (2) the web of connections/connected knowing (Diagram 2) from the psychology of female development.

I then will bring these two images together in an integrated model of defining and understanding self as the circle-of-knowing at the center of the web of connections, the circle-of-knowing providing the grounding and model for weaving the web (Diagram 3). I give further understanding of this image of self by defining it as a center of care and including a personal dream, with some of my own experience and interpretations.

Next I formulate some conclusions about freedom, power, and sin with a particular form of spirituality that I find in the model. In the end I apply the understanding of finding and knowing self in connection with God and others to the vision and practice of pastoral counseling. The view of self as described in this thesis strengthens my own person and identity as pastoral counselor and provides ways of understanding and working out the process of pastoral counseling.

Circle-of-Knowing

I wrote in the introduction and personal history at the beginning of the thesis about a process of moving from the house of fear into the house of love. As I've read and studied Calvin's theology, I believe this was his concern also. I again affirm that the basis and context of Calvin's description of the human person was the grace of God in Jesus Christ. His vision of the knowledge of God and of self was rooted in our complete dependence on the love and grace of God and his main concern was always how to communicate an understanding of this grace. Calvin maintained that it is in God that we find and know our life and very being. Our knowledge of God and knowledge of ourselves are reflexive of each other, are intimately and dynamically connected in a circle-of-knowing dependent on the Word of God. Within the circle-of-knowing we discover who we are to be when we know God, likewise we know God when we know ourself as we are meant to be, in the image of God.

We are continually being called by God's word into the circle-of-knowing and the Word of God maintains the motion therein. The movement begins with contemplating the face of God, hearing God's Word, and moves to seeing ourselves in our own truth. The movement corresponds to the direction and motion of grace which is the ground of our being. The movement of grace is from God around to the human person and from the person back around to God. (see Diagram 1)

Calvin "places the believer in the special eye of God who provides for and continues to so govern the world that the believer may have full confidence, assurance, and trust." (Louis Vos 1976, 103). God's grace holds a deep love for what creation and human persons can become, what
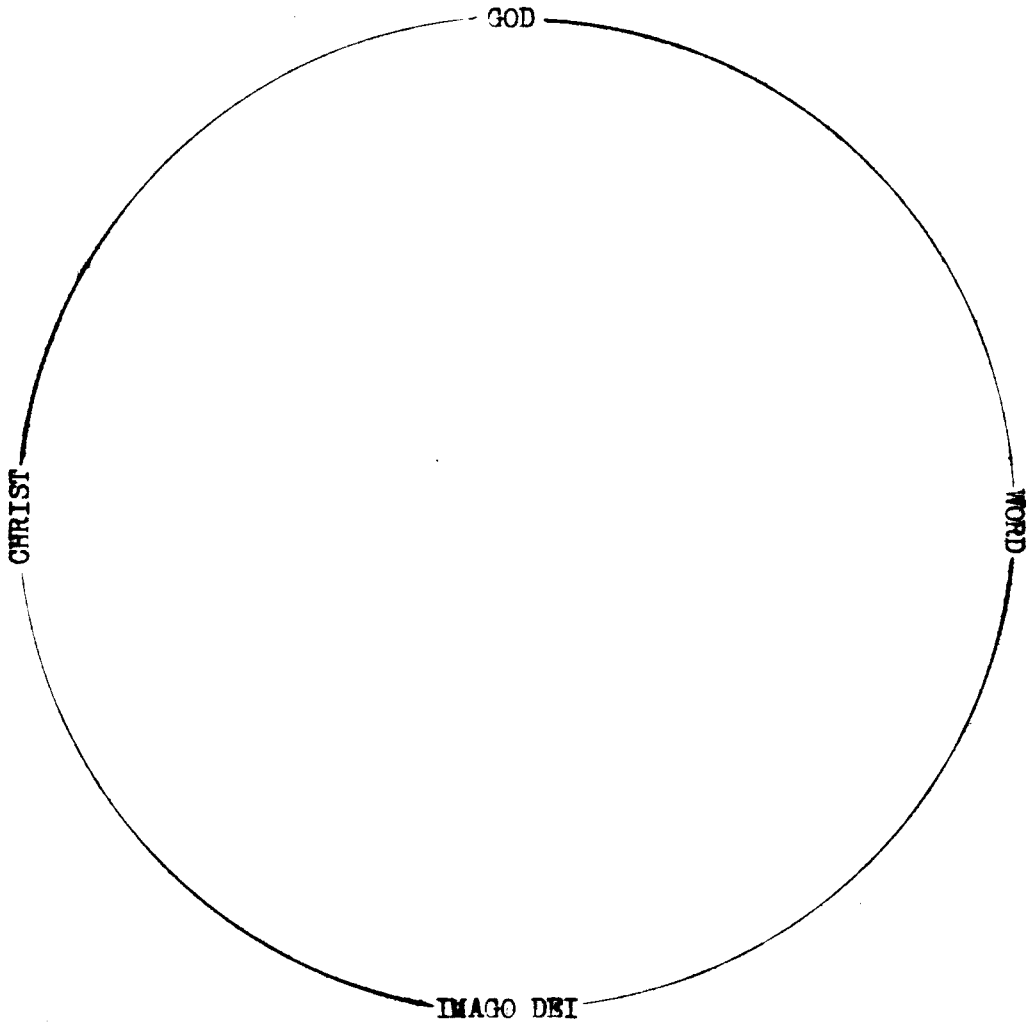
Fig. 1. Circle-of-Knowing

they were truly meant to be. In Douglass' study of Calvin's

understanding of the Biblical metaphors of God as mother she finds, as

in Calvin's use of the metaphor of God as enemy, that Calvin describes

the Biblical use of female imagery for God as a means of expressing the

fullness of God's love for us, so that "nothing may prevent us from

coming to him with the greatest freedom." The role of these metaphors in Calvin's theology is to "help God's people grasp with their finite minds the awesomeness of God's love revealed in Christ and to respond gratefully to God in obedient service" (Dempsey Douglass 1986, 139).

Based on this view of God and a corresponding knowledge of ourselves, Calvin places his understanding of sin. Sin and its ultimate end of death is a reversal of the dynamic order of the circle-of-knowing, going into the house of fear if you will. Realizing the beauty, goodness, order, and rectitude of being in right relationship with God in the circle-of-knowing, entering the house of love and grace with a work of restoring the imago dei in the human person, made the tragedy of being out of this relationship so apparent and driving for Calvin.

As we've already seen, original sin as understood by Calvin is the corruption of our original nobility, "the depravation of a nature previously good and pure" (Instit., 2. 1. 5). Our original nobility is found in a radical interconnection with God and sin is a break in this connection. We claim that who we are is all our own and do not see or hear God's Word. We conceal the signs of divinity within us, ". . .claiming for ourselves what has been given us from heaven, but in the earth that which enlightens our minds to see God clearly" (Instit., 1. 5. 4). Rather than a connected knowing of ourselves and of God we see only ourselves as god.

Our response to hearing God's Word and realizing our own sin could be one of despair but Calvin makes it clear that at this point we must be led back again to contemplating God's Word and grace in Jesus

Christ. According to Calvin, the Christian life derives its motivation
not from fear but from the positive perspective of the believer's
situation and status in Christ. (Vos 1976, 87). God holds us in
constant communion even in God's judgment of our fall from relation-
ship. God never lets go of His divine intention for us. "However much
we have brought death upon ourselves, yet he has created us unto life.
Thus he is moved by pure and freely given love of us to receive us into
grace" (Instit., 2. 16. 3). God's grace is made real for us in the life
of Jesus Christ. ". . .the beginning of our recovery of salvation is in
that restoration which we obtain through Christ. . . .the end of
regeneration is that Christ should reform us to God's image
(Instit., 1. 15. 4). What Calvin speaks of as our participation in
Christ (Instit., 3. 3. 9). is the radical alternative of relationship
that is needed to bring us back into communion with God. We participate
in the death and resurrection life of Christ through the power of the
Holy Spirit. It is a dynamic relational concept, in which the imago dei
is continually being restored and renewed. The work and power of the
Holy Spirit keeps the circle-of-knowing in motion.

We are to live boldly and with confidence with assurance in our
new life in Christ. "It is a token of the most miserable blindness to
charge with arrogance Christians who dare to glory in the presence of
the Holy Spirit, without which glorying Christianity itself does not
stand!" (Instit., 3. 2. 39). We are bound together with God in the
circle-of-knowing by the "sacred bonds of the imago dei" (Calvin,
Comm. on Ps. 8:5) and God will not let go of us. In our participation
with Christ our freedom and life-giving capacity is restored. We are

freed to work in relationship with God for a full expression of God's kingdom, bringing Christ's healing and restoration of relationships.

Web of Connections

The web of connections, a connected way of knowing, formed in female development provides the starting point and also the continued support for the woman's self-differentiation, a knowledge and experience of a unique sense of self. Relationship is, thus, both the context in which the self develops and the goal for which it strives. This self has fluid boundaries, allowing others in and out, to effect and take part in each other which "presupposes and creates differentiated selves in which to take part" (Keller in Andolsen, Gudorf, and Pellauer, eds. 1985, 262). (See Fig. 2. Web of Connections)

A woman's relationships of care which include herself, weave the relational complexity of a web of connections. The changes in activities of care that affect her sense of self bring about changes in the female's development. The web is not a trap but provides support for the woman to keep her from being trapped, either in self-protection and survival or in the trap of giving herself away in relationships.

The connections of the web provide the means out of which complex self-compositions are wrought. The net makes a space where the promise of the woman's self can survive. Through the support and security of the web the female, the subject in the web is able to see others as subjects also and is enabled to encourage others to find their self as subject. And, as the theorists who listen to the voice of women point out; when the mother is also enabled to be as subject within the web she can
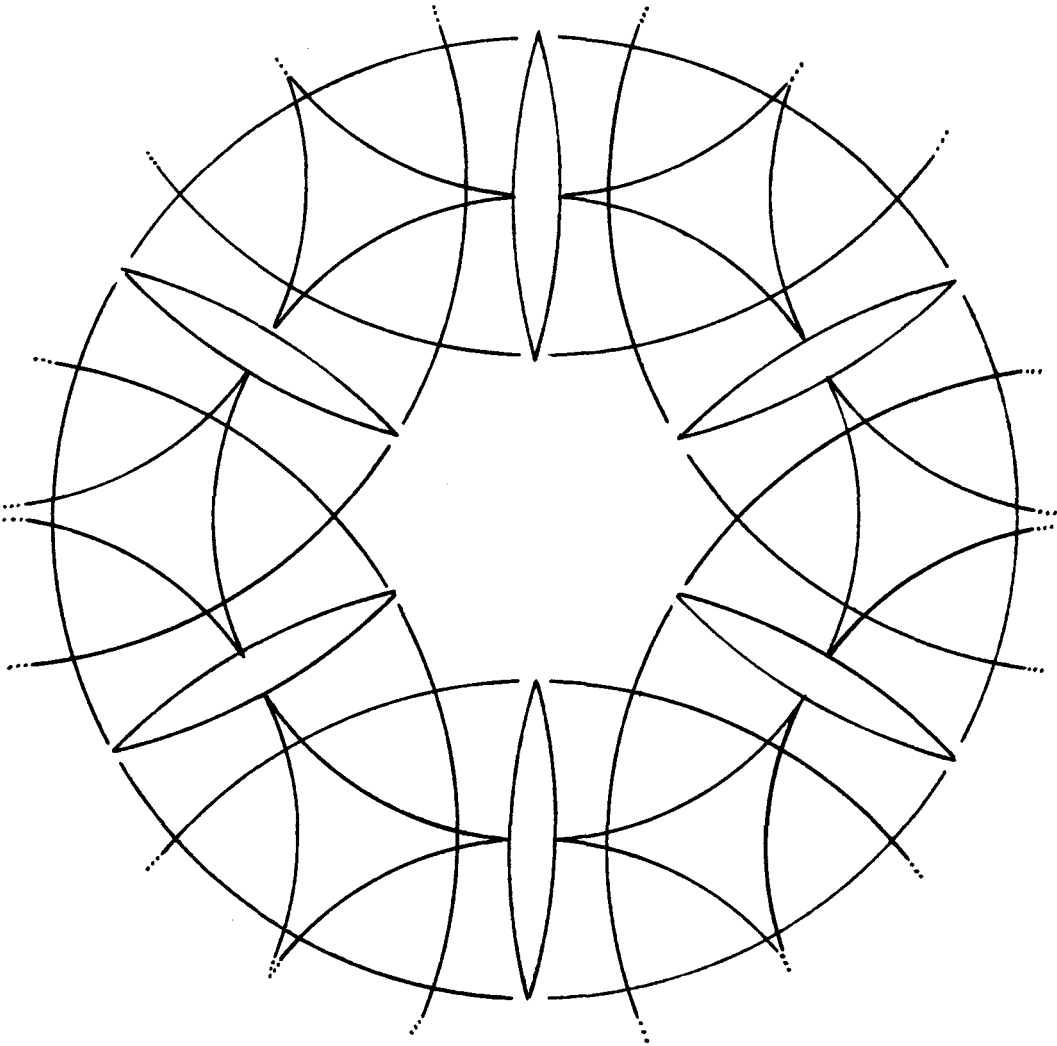
Fig. 2. Web of Connections

support the daughter's development of a differentiated self.

The self within the web can be cultivated into maturity as the
self is defined through the growth and change of attachments rather than
stifled or subjected to domination.

> The relationship between the self and the other is precisely one
> of connectedness of two (or more) distinctive entities, both (or
> all) of whom are constituted by the relationship,

but who do not merge or fuse, losing their distinctiveness. . . the relationship contributes to each entity's increased articulation and complexity" (Huff 1987, 192).

When the self is differentiated and strengthened, the relationships in the web come to be characterized by mutuality and empathy, "giving and taking in a way that affirms not only self and other individually, but also the larger relational unit that transcends them" (Westkott 1989). As we have seen from the studies of female experience, the connective self develops into a centering and self-affirming sense of relation.

Sara Ruddick in a book entitled Maternal Thinking, (a book that is informed by and informs the study of "Women's Ways of Knowing") describes the connected self as a "center of care":

> Individuals are not primarily centers of dominating and defensive activity trying to achieve stable autonomy in threatening hierarchies of strength, although this does describe some individuals and some moments in most lives. They are also and equally centers of care, actively desiring other selves to persist in their own lively being, judging their own well-being in terms of their capacity for a love that 'struggles toward definition'" (Ruddick, 182-183).

I believe that I have been involved in the struggle to define this love in the thesis: the love of God for her children which becomes ours when we bond with Christ; a love that is centered, strong, and includes self in its care; a love that is struggling towards maturity and wisdom as it forms, changes, and becomes defined in the web of relationships.

This image of self in the web as a center of care was powerfully imaged for me in a dream. In this dream, the co-pastor of my former church/community, had gone off on a horse with a group of followers (other church members) to the last stage of the battle (the concept of a battle arising out of the struggle going on at that time to keep the

church and its vision alive).

The pastor and his followers came back to me saying that they did not know how to win this battle, that it was very confusing to them. I then went on with another woman named Faith (the wife of the founder and former pastor of the church, a very strong, willful, mother of five) to the scene of the last battle which turns out to be a care center for handicapped children. We understand that to win this battle means to be healers to these children. I, together with Faith, have the power in us to heal them.

There are many meanings and interpretations I have made and continue to make with this dream, some of which I believe are strongly connected to the work of this thesis. The struggle within the church as well as within myself (if I consider the care center an image of my own self) is to heal, nurture, and empower the inner wounded and handicapped child. I cannot win this struggle from the perspective of the male authority figure on a powerful horse, although I believe I must befriend this part of myself and incorporate this strength and power within myself also.

Together with Faith--an image of a strong female nurturer--I find the battle to be in a care center. The scene of battle is made clear as a struggle to heal and care in relationships of faith and love. The power to heal and win the battle is found in the center of nurturing care, in the center of weakness and woundedness. The battle itself is redefined and the way to win the battle is made clear.

> Jean Baker Miller (1984) says that without faith (her word) in the interconnections suggested by self-in-relation theory,

> psychological separation inevitably leads to domination of others and nature, including one's own body, as if it were separate from one's self (Huff 1987, 97).

With faith in the center of attachments of care, the confines of separation leading to hurt and silence can be healed. The dichotomies between spirit and body, between humans and nature, between separation/autonomy and differentiation in relationship can be healed and made whole.

The web becomes an expanding network of affectionate, sturdy dependencies that helps the female move away from illusion and passivity toward active responsibility and engagement, from care only for self or only for others to including both self and others in her care, and from silence to a connected knowing. The net provides the means of connected knowing, a way of knowing and being which arises out of the experience of mutual relationships. It is an intersubjective way of knowing, where the knower is part of what is known.

An alternative to the type of power that dominates, controls, and violates others is released in the interconnections of the web. This is a power released in the freedom found in the continuum between interconnections and an autonomous, differentiated self. In my own experience, it has been in defining my self-boundaries, in differentiating myself, that I've experienced a sense of power that is made real in ministry. It is a power in love, the kind of power I knew myself and Faith to have in my dream. A power to let the other into myself, my care center, to effect and be effected by without losing my self-care. A power that is within me as I participate in the life of Jesus Christ. Christ's healing power becomes mine as I become one with him. It is a

healing and life-giving power that is being restored in me as my relationship with God is restored.

Circle-of-Knowing at the Center of the Web

What I have found in Calvin's theology of the intertwining of knowledge of self with knowledge of God in the circle-of-knowing provides the center for the self-in-connection, the self in the web. The circle-of-knowing becomes the ground and center for a secure, integrated, and enduring self-concept. The relationship with God that is restored in the circle-of-knowing through participation in Christ is empowering and growth-enhancing. In this image I find a strong self that is able to weave a healing and empowering web of relationships. (See Fig. 3. Circle-of-Knowing in the Web of Connections)

In the integration of the two images, a dynamic, a motion of growth in relationship is released. This dynamic leads to action in freedom, action that is chosen with integrity rather than imposed. "The participants in the relationship feel empowered to act within this particular relationship, and in other relationships" (Huff 1987, 128). We are freed and empowered to take up the responsibilities of love and care in the restoration of the imago dei in the circle-of-knowing and the support and empowerment of the web. The nurturing and empowering love of God that we experience in Christ becomes part of the restoration of our own self. Thus this kind of love is being worked out in the web. The self is strengthened within the circle, not in order to separate or cut oneself off, but in order to remain in relationships and expand the web, expand the kingdom of God. With a courage and boldness
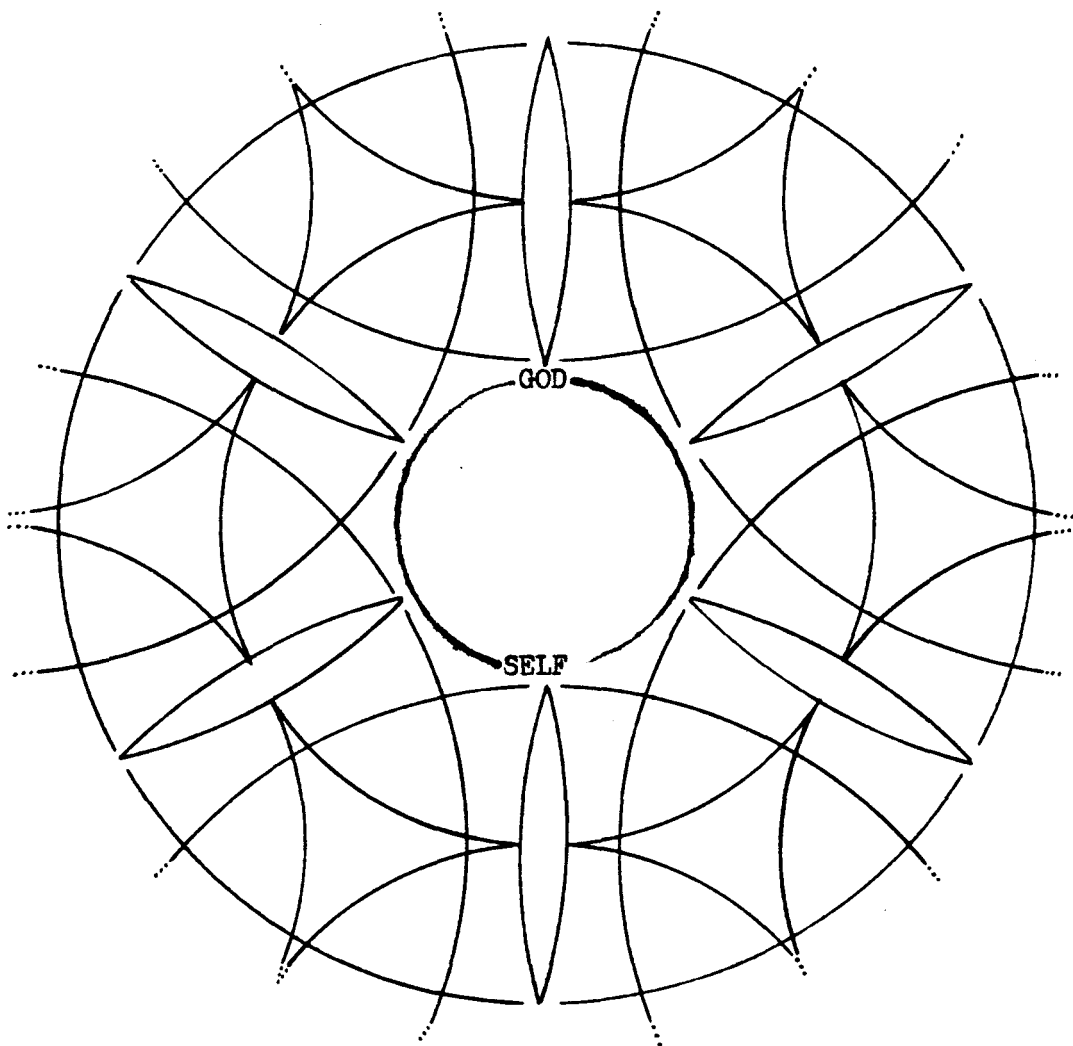
Fig. 3. Circle-of-Knowing in the Web of Connections

that comes out of a strong sense of self in relationship to God we are

freed to allow others to participate in our life with all of the

suffering, joy, and conflict that is a part of life in relationship.

True reason—what Calvin viewed as such an important aspect of the

human person—is also in process of restoration in the imago dei. I see

this as corresponding to the constructivist thinking that Mary Field

Belenky, et.al. describe in their study. This is a reason with feeling,
a connected way of knowing and reasoning, where the knower is part of
what is known. This kind of reason requires a deep self-knowledge and
an openness to attending to the other. It is a knowledge that refuses
to be separated from love, a right reason informed by our communion with
God and others.

In both the circle-of-knowing and the web of connections the sin,
the temptation, is to turn away from, to stifle or cut off
relationships. Rather than expanding the web of connections of knowing
and care based on a sure sense of self-worth in relationship, the woman
may care for others in a trap of a web without knowing self or may turn
away from relationships out of fear and a lack of knowing herself as
worthy in relationship. The temptation for the female is to enter into
indiscriminate relationships so that no real depth of feeling and
maturity can develop; and/or to overidentify with others with no sense
of self as subject and a corresponding failure to care for herself as
she cares for others. This parallels Calvin's understanding of sin as
turning away from relationship with God, reversing the direction of the
circle-of-knowing and stifling the restoration of the imago dei.

The kind of spirituality that is developed in the circle-of-
knowing within the web is an immanent, a fundamentally relational
spirituality. "A relational spirituality that grows out of the
interpersonal matrix of [our] lives" (Randour 1987, 56). A relational
spirituality nurtures and empowers the maturing of healthy,
interdependent relationships. The connected way of knowing God and self
found in the circle-of-knowing becomes a way of seeing, hearing, and

knowing God in the connections of mutuality within the web. "Understanding that there is something of the divine within each of us, we also understand that it is in the fullness of the encounter when we meet and touch the divine presence" (Randour 1987, 24).

Application to Pastoral Counseling

My participation in Christ, restoring communion with God and the imago dei in me provides a strong foundation for my identity and ministry as pastoral counselor. My ability to be life-giving, to bring healing to the wounded in the care center as in my dream, is being restored. As I am grounded in God's Word of love and grace, this same love is being renewed in me, enabling me to respect and steadily care for others. In constant communion with God and the support of the web of connections I am enabled to be open to the client, allowing her to enter and reach my center. Part of what Calvin saw as the imago dei is a restored emotional character. ". . .the person who experiences the work of the Holy Spirit through a mysterious internal process begins to display a true humanity" (Van Gelder 1982, 69). A true humanity as Jesus was truly human, allowing suffering to reach into the heart, with confidence, trust, and hope in God's care and grace.

The strong sense of self grounded in God's Word of grace in the circle-of-knowing has the ability for true empathy. Keller describes true empathy as a connection which can encourage the other's individualization rather than promote dependency. In this kind of empathy the image of God is made firm in my relationship with the

other. As I mirror the image of God, I am enabled to mirror this image

to my client, who is then enabled to begin to know her own self-worth as

she too reflects the image of God.

My own circle-of-knowing within the web where I meet the client

becomes the basis and model of connections for her. The therapeutic

relationship becomes a model of connection based not on dominance and

submission but a connection of encouraging the other into knowing

herself. It is a radical interconnection found in communion with a

loving God. This kind of love has the capacity to release and refine an

unlimited strength of interconnection.

As pastoral counselor I help the client disentangle her voice from

others, to differentiate.

> Differentiation from the environment is required in order to gain
> a perspective on an experience and on the relationship to another;
> integration then allows this enhanced perspective to be
> accommodated into a re-elaborated self-other relationship.
> (Randour 1987, 36).

I help the client define herself, helping her make realistic appraisals

of her capabilities and potentials. With my own knowledge, I recognize

the pull toward relationships in the client as a strength. We work with

and into the reality of interconnection to give her more self and more

power. Out of my own differentiation and grounding in the love of God,

I am enabled to see the other as subject and in this relationship she

too begins to know herself as subject. Her own self-development enables

her to develop mature, interdependent relationships. Helping her inter-

pret her relationships as she develops, we work together to build the

means and support for her to make choices in her care and responses to

others in relationship.

In counseling I am listening and hearing the client into knowing, affirming and confirming herself as knower. "We gain new knowledge about our old selves when we are heard (by ourselves and others) in our deepest being" (Orr 1987, 11). Listening with hope and the possibility for renewal, I hear her story, her experiences, and her silences. Hearing the places where she has been silenced and stuck in development of relationships we work together for transformation and restructuring of the nature of her relationships, helping her realize her own creative power in a web of connections. Experiences of transcendence may happen in our struggle together to find self in the circle-of-knowing within the web, a strong and sacred connection of the human and divine.

> Transcendence may be understood as the condition of human and divine wholeness in being, as the affirmative calling of people who struggle together toward the realization of their most authentic and creative selves. Experiences of transcendence have the power to transform not merely one value among many, or one aspect of life, but identity itself. (Orr 1987, 10-11).

Epilogue

In the process of writing the thesis I had a dream that speaks to my own identity integration process informed by the pastoral counseling program I'm completing with the work of this thesis. The dream is one of my own experiences of transcendence.

In the dream I am back at the home of my parents, the home where I grew up. There I'm playing with my dad. We're having fun together, playing outdoors. Dad is giving my a piggy-back ride when it begins to rain. I spot a book lying on the ground, a book with a red and grey

cover that I recognize as one of the books used for the thesis, titled

<u>Maternal</u> <u>Thinking</u>. I'm concerned that the book will be damaged by the

rain and ask Dad to go over to where it is lying so we can pick it up

and bring it inside. I also ask him if he can build a fire in the

fireplace to help dry the book out. We begin to get the wood for the

fire and the dream ends with my anticipation of sitting by the fire

ourselves, resting from our play and enjoying the warmth.

In making meaning of the dream, I recognize my father as

representing the church I grew up in, founded on the teachings and

theology of John Calvin. My relationship with my father has been

distant, somewhat difficult, and often emotionally heavy for me, as has

my relationship with the church. For me to be playing and having a good

time with my father is a very healing image. As he is carrying me

piggy-back, so the church and the theology of Calvin that I've

remembered and restored for myself in the thesis carries myself and my

vocation. It is in this restored relationship that I'm loved,

supported, and enabled to rescue the maternal/female voice and self

represented in the book <u>Maternal</u> <u>Thinking</u>. My father and I have the

power to rescue the book from being ruined, from being drowned in the

rain. We have the ability to bring it in, to care for it by setting it

next to the light and warmth of the fire. We too will enjoy the care

and warmth of the fire and the restored relationship between us.

The renewed life and support I've experienced in the theology of

John Calvin, together with the care to listen to the voice of women--

that of my own voice--in psychology is a transforming vision and

experience for me. A vision that helps move me from the "house of

fear," from a place of silence to the "house of love," a place of healing life. An experience that transforms me and enables me to live and be my authentic and creative self as woman, mother, and pastoral counselor.

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VITA

Sherrie Rubingh Lowly was born into the Rubingh family on August
4, 1955 in Grand Rapids, Michigan. She was the third of five children
in a family of Dutch and norther German Descent with strong roots and
identity in the Christian Reformed Church.

Sherrie obtained her elementary and secondary education in schools
of the Christian Reformed Church. In 1973 she entered Central Michigan
University and graduated magna cum laude in 1977 with a Bachelor of
Social Work. An integral part of her college years was her involvement
and leadership in Inter-Varsity Christian Fellowship including a summer
in Mexico City with Inter-Varsity's Student Training in Missions
Program.

In 1977 Sherrie entered a communal household of a Christian
Reformed community/church in Grand Rapids. She lived and ministered in
this community/church for eleven years. In 1981 she married Tim Grubbs
and they chose to take the family name Lowly. In 1983 Sherrie and Tim
traveled to Chonju, South Korea where Tim had grown up as the son of
missionaries. They spent a year in Korea teaching English conversation
and experiencing the country and culture.

The Lowlys returned to Grand Rapids in 1984 and in 1985 Temma Day
Lowly was born. Temma had a near-death experience two days after with
resulting severe brain damage. The family continued to experience
support and to minister in their church. Sherrie also found support in
and became part of the Vision Circle of Elizabeth House, a place of
prayer, retreat, and counseling/spiritual direction for women. In 1988
she began Western Theological Seminary's Master of Divinity program in

Holland, Michigan.   In 1989 Sherrie and her family moved to Chicago,
Illinois where Sherrie enrolled in the M.A. Pastoral Counseling program
of the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University.

APPROVAL SHEET

The thesis submitted by <u>Sherrie Rubingh Lowly</u> has been read and approved
by the following committee:

MARY KAYE CISEK, M.A., Director
Senior Lecturer, Pastoral Studies
Loyola University Chicago

ANN GRAFF, Ph.D.
Adjunct Professor, Pastoral Studies
Loyola University Chicago

The final copies have been examined by the director of the thesis and
the signature which appears below verifies the fact that any necessary
changes have been incorporated and that the thesis is now given final
approval by the Committee with reference to content and form.

The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the
requirement for the degree of <u>MASTER OF ARTS</u>.

_7/19/91_   _Mary Kaye Cisek, M.A._
Date   Director's Signature