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THE INTERSECTION OF RELIGION AND PARENTAL INFLUENCES IN SHAPING FEMALE IDENTITY

By

Linda S. Behrendt

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to Michigan State University
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
For the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Family and Child Ecology

2001

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ABSTRACT

THE INTERSECTION OF RELIGION AND PARENTAL INFLUENCES IN SHAPING FEMALE IDENTITY

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The purpose of this study was to explore the influences of church culture and family of origin on the development of female gender identity. This study posited that the specific components of female identity thought to be influenced by religion and parental influences were spiritual strengths and resources, self-concept, and gender ideology. The focus of data collection came from mainline Christian denominations—Baptist, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Methodist, and Presbyterian. Informants consisted of twenty late adolescent women, mainly Caucasian, between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two who were currently enrolled in college.

Two theoretical foundations guided the study: human ecology theory with a focus on human development as a joint function of the person and the environment as asserted by Bronfenbrenner, and the feminist theory of Deaux and Major. In this triangulated qualitative study, the informants participated in a semi-structured, open-ended interview with the researcher, and also created a spiritual ecomap.

Five key themes were evinced in the analysis of the data, as factors contributing to female identity development. Doctrinal stance, church activities, the relationship of spiritual leaders, relationship to God, and family expression of

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faith were consistent themes woven through the interview data. Data analysis supported that these five themes played a role in shaping the informants' spiritual strengths and resources, their self-concept, and their gender ideology, which, together, created their gender identity. While this study showed the awareness of parents regarding their influence of spiritual beliefs within their families, the messages conveyed through church culture and practice appeared to go unnoticed.

Analysis of data in this study has suggested several questions worthy of further research. This study examined only mainline Christian denominations, and participants were mainly Caucasian; therefore, the inclusion of denominations beyond the bounds of mainline Christianity would increase the likelihood of participants from a variety of ethnicities. Secondly, the inclusion of parents in the interview process would allow for the investigation of the relationship between church and family, specifically how the church influences the family's day-to-day life. Third, future research needs to be designed sot hat information regarding the conflicting messages from church and society could be gathered. Finally, a longitudinal study would provide information regarding the on-going influence of church and family on gender identity through early adulthood.

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LINDA S. BEHRENDT
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To my parents, Alexander and Marjorie Behrendt,

whose love and encouragement have

brought me to this point.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of a Ph.D. has been a life-long goal for me, and without my family and friends, I would not have accomplished my goal. They have offered words and gestures of encouragement, listened to me talk endlessly about my work, proofread my writing, offered feedback, and always challenged me to go farther. To my parents, Alexander and Marjorie Behrendt, thank you for teaching me the importance of determination, and for your love. To my friends Gayle, Ruth, Barbara, Judy, Sharon, Mary Beth, and Brenda, thank you for understanding the rhythm of the semester, and for your wisdom and support during the years I have been a graduate student. Your friendship and love will always be cherished.

This research project could not have been carried out without the willingness of twenty college women to participate in the interview process. Their openness to the questions, their interest in the subject, and the giving of their time was invaluable to me. I learned a great deal from the short time I spent with each of them.

I have had a very positive experience as a student at Michigan State University, and appreciate the interactions I had while a student in the College of Human Ecology. I grew intellectually and professionally as a result of my student tenure there, and my experience has had a great influence on my professional life. The faculty of the Department of Family and Child Ecology were especially influential. In particular, my committee members, Dr. Barbara Ames, Dr. Joyce

Ladenson and Dr. Francisco Villarruel, who guided my academic experience, and who were each so willing to meet with me. Dr. Ames introduced me to family studies as well as to key researchers, and encouraged me to be involved in the National Council on Family Relations. Dr. Ladenson nurtured my interest in women's studies and feminist theory; she expanded my perspectives through the introduction of what have become some of my favorite feminist writers. Dr. Villarruel consistently challenged my thinking, and encouraged me to step out beyond the boundaries of my own comfort intellectually and theoretically.

I valued my relationship with my advisor, Dr. Marsha Carolan. We were introduced in the fall of 1995, when we were both new to Michigan State University. Dr. Carolan was always available, helpful, understanding, and encouraging; she was thorough and consistent in offering feedback, through which I honed my writing skills. I experienced a rich learning environment in the independent study courses that Dr. Carolan willingly committed her time and energy to. I appreciated her support for the theoretical as well as the practical aspects of the learning process.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Significance of the Study

For an adult, finding one's place in a world entangled with contradictions, paradoxes, and misunderstandings is an arduous task; for adolescents, it sometimes seems impossible. Brown and Gilligan (1992) assert that for young women, adolescence is a crossroads in women's development, "a meeting between girl and woman, an intersection between psychological health and cultural regeneration, a watershed in women's psychology" (p.1). Brown and Gilligan (1992) further declare that women's voices can be different than men's; men speak autonomously, as if they are completely self-governed, while women often speak of themselves in relation to others. The implication of a woman's different voice is a sense of abandonment of self for the sake of becoming the good woman in a male-centered world. Most critical studies of adolescence over-emphasize the male experience, and position gender as secondary to other issues (Adams, 1994).

Undeniably, gender is the most notable feature of identity, and unconsciously, it is the first category used to define a person's identity. Labeling someone male or female serves a fundamental psychological need, and once a person has been defined as such, some assumptions are automatically made about how he or she should look and behave (Johnson, 1997). However, how one acquires gender characteristics is a highly contested theoretical issue. Defining identity as "a dynamic fitting together of parts of the personality with the realities of the

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social world so that a person has a sense of both internal coherence and meaningful relatedness to the real world" (Grotevant, 1992, p. 73), how does one know she is female? How does one define herself as female? What criteria are engaged to define what is female? The ramifications of such decisions determine to a large degree the substance of women's everyday lives, such as who will be the breadwinner, who will handle the finances, who will take off from work when a child is ill, who will mow the yard, and who will cook dinner.

Almost all children grow up in a family, and undoubtedly family influences self-identity. While all families share universal features (e.g. to relate with the external environment), many features of family life are specific to the culture in which the family lives, such as relationships with extended family, the power structure within the family, and behavioral expectations for members. Culture specific features of families effect the children, who live their daily lives and develop within numerous social settings, including family, peers, and school, (Rey, 1997). Cultural influences from the family of origin also include involvement in organized religion. Rey (1997) asserts that a family's participation in a religious community "often serves to emphasize the family-related values of the religion, helping to teach values to the children" (p.160). The importance of socialization experiences (e.g. church attendance) has been documented in its effect on child-perceived parental encouragement for gender behaviors (Eccles, Jacobs, & Harold, 1990). Morgan and Scanzoni (1987) found that conservative religious beliefs were related to traditional gender attitudes. Rey (1997) asserts that understanding the influence of religion on the family includes "awareness of

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different religious affiliations within the family, differential participation in ritual, and degrees of secularization of belief" (p. 161). In addition, Rey (1997) contends that families who actively participate in organized religion are often influenced by the religion's ideals of family life, including social control via prohibitions of behaviors thought to undermine the family.

Need for the Study

The role of churches in maintaining traditional gender perspectives has been documented in several studies (Daly, 1985; DiSalvo, 1984). Religions with a patriarchal outlook contribute to the distinguishing of rigid male and female behaviors, which in turn affects the characteristics associated with being a male or a female (Jenkins, 1991). Keysar and Kosmin (1995) found that conservative religious bodies' assertion of the inerrancy (literal truth) of the Bible includes the subordinate status of women and their roles as helpmate and mother (book of Genesis, Ephesians 5:22-24, 1 Timothy 2:12). Assuming that parents are in agreement with, and perhaps living according to, the doctrinal position and teachings on women's role in the church to which they belong, the potential effect on gender-identity development becomes apparent.

Research has shown that gender attitudes contribute to women's interpersonal development. Attitudes based on traditional gender characteristics have been linked to self-concept, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (Betz, Fitzgerald, & Farmer, 1988). The same study showed that women who embrace traditional gender characteristics often circumscribe their vocational opportunities, despite their potential for success in a wide range of careers. Ossana, Helms, and

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Leonard (1992) found that feelings of competence, self-esteem, and agency have been related to nontraditional gender roles among women. Many feminist psychologists and sociologists (e.g. Brown & Gilligan, 1992; Pipher, 1994) assert that at early adolescence girls find themselves at a junction in development because of their gender. The culture they enter does not encourage their autonomy nor value their abilities, and these messages affect female adolescents' views of who they are, as well as who and what they can become.

Gender as an issue is intertwined with the nature of authority within the church. Christian denominations have, historically, been rooted in patriarchy. Men have directed and formulated the doctrines and rituals of these faiths, and have governed the structures and practices in local congregations. In addition, within the Christian church, women have been relegated to a status that is inferior and subordinate to men. Doctrines of the Christian church have supported the dominance of men and the subordinate status of women, based on the biblical presentations of the androcentric symbolism for humanity and God (Graham, 1996).

As patriarchal institutions, the focus of attention within these church bodies is primarily on men. This patriarchal church culture uses the *male* experience to represent the *human* experience and its enduring life themes (Johnson, 1997). Thus, young women grow up in church culture where women's life experiences go unrecognized and invalidated. In the past twenty-five years, the advent of feminist theology has proven to be a significant movement within the Christian church (Young, 1990). Graham (1996) describes the development of feminist

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theology as "fuelled by the second wave of the modern women's movement, drawing upon the theoretical and critical stances of academic feminism, and inspired by Latin American Liberation Theology," (p. 2). One of the essential convictions of feminist theology is its validation of "women's experience" in the face of androcentric doctrines and traditions (Ruether, 1992).

Historically, theology has claimed to represent all human experience; feminist theology has countered that claim by identifying and articulating *women's experience*, thus presenting a more inclusive and truly universal representation of the human experience (Graham, 1996). In asserting the importance of feminist theology as a primary resource in theological studies, Ruether (1992) asserts, "The critical principle of feminist theology is the promotion of the full humanity of women. Whatever denies, diminishes, or distorts the full humanity of women is, therefore, appraised as not redemptive" (p. 18). The practice of feminist theology, as opposed to more androcentric dogmas, is fundamental when examining the influence of the Christian church on the formation of gender characteristics in adolescent females.

Studies exist that have examined the role of religion in the shaping of female identity (Jenkins, 1991; Brown, 1993; Keysar & Kosmin, 1995), as well as parental influence on identity formation (Grotevant, 1992; Bosma, 1992; Moshman, 1999; Cross & Madson, 1997). However, there is a paucity of research regarding the significance of both church culture and the family system as they affect young women's perception of their spiritual strengths and resources, and, in turn, their gender identity.

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It is beyond the scope and purpose of this study to look at all of the factors which contribute to identity formation in women; therefore the focus was limited to the influence of the culture of mainline Christian denominations and the family system in the development of female gender identity. Adolescence is typically defined as comprising the second decade of life, that is, ages ten through nineteen (Moshman, 1999). However, Moshman (1999) notes that "in modern Western cultures in which a prolonged adolescence is the norm, the beginning of adolescence is much more clear-cut than the end" (p.5). This study examined identity as it is manifested in late adolescence/early adulthood, defined as ages eighteen to twenty-two (Arnett, 2000).

The research focus on late adolescence/early adulthood provides great insight into the influence of parents and the church on gender identity. Late adolescent women have finished secondary school, frequently have left their parents' home, and have reached the legal age of adult status in several respects. In addition, over the past half century, young people in industrialized societies have increasingly put off marriage and parenthood until their mid-to-late twenties (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1997). This delay in taking on adult roles has created the opportunity to explore potential life directions for both college and working adolescents. Arnett (2000) has labeled this time period "emerging adulthood," asserting, "Having left the dependency of childhood and adolescence, and having not yet entered the enduring responsibilities that are normative in adulthood, emerging adults often explore a variety of possible life directions in love, work, and worldviews" (p. 469). Kroger (2000) supports Arnett's belief that

late adolescence is a time of continued searching and questioning in the identity formation process. In discussing influences in late adolescent development, Kroger (2000) states, "The majority of late adolescents have begun to search for comfortable expressions of their sexuality and gender roles" (p.89). For the first time in their young lives, late adolescents have choices before them—whether to go on to school or take a full-time job, where and what type of college/university to attend, what to major in, and how to structure their time. The focus of this study on late adolescence/early adulthood allows for responses from young women that includes the influence of their family system as well as the opportunities they have had to question and seek their own answers in the process of identity formation.

This research employed the interpretive science mode of inquiry, as it sought to understand the role of family of origin as well as church culture and practice on female adolescent gender identity. Using case studies, qualitative methodology was engaged in the exploration of the influence of church culture and the family ecosystem in shaping female identity formation. Informants were chosen from young women enrolled in a college or university. Pursuing a bachelor's degree implies, at least theoretically, preparation for a career in the workforce. Career falls outside of what some Christian churches propose as the "proper" role for women (Morgan & Scanzoni, 1987, Daly, 1985, Keysar & Kosmin, 1995). Therefore, female informants considering a career outside of the home informed the research regarding the influence of religious convictions on gender identity formation through recurrent themes, patterns, and behaviors.

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Research Questions

This qualitative research focuses on the influence of gender expectations as presented in Christian church culture and the family of origin in affecting the gender characteristics of the individual adolescent. Therefore, the following questions were used to guide the research:

1. How does the culture of the church influence female identity development?
2. How do the practices of the church influence female identity development?
3. How do parents' religious practices and beliefs influence female identity development?
4. How do spiritual strengths and resources contribute to female identity?
5. How does self-concept contribute to female identity?
6. How does gender ideology contribute to female identity?

Conceptual Definitions

The following defined concepts are found in the conceptual map:

Church doctrine: The position of a particular denomination that justifies their system of beliefs regarding Scripture and the practices of faith (Mead/Hill, 1995).

Church culture and practice: Influenced by church doctrine, culture and practice are the result of what is believed and valued, and is evinced in the day-to-day life of worship, education, and recreation of church members.

Mainline Christian churches: Churches which have a "historic consciousness" at least back to the Reformation (Mead/Hill, 1995).

Women's ordination: Official recognition by a denomination of the suitability of women to public pastoral ministry (Graham, 1995).

Church lay leadership: Church members who volunteer by serving as officers of the congregation, on boards and committees, and/or special committees/events (e.g. building committee).

Family ecosystem: "Mutally sustaining transactions that link people and environments, and the decisions that families make to creatively adapt and foster human development" (Paolucci, in Bubolz and Sontag, 1993, p. 423).

Female Adolescence: Period of development between puberty and maturity (Moshman, 1999).

Spiritual strengths and resources: The adolescent female's perceptions of the rituals that nurture spiritual life, relationship to God, involvement in faith community, relationship with pastor, and parents' religious beliefs (Hodge, 2000).

Self-concept: An individual's self-views, emotions, and motivations, as influenced by cultural values, ideals, structures, and practices. (Cross & Madson, 1997).

Gender norms: Multiply determined, highly flexible, and context dependent sex-differences evinced in social interactions (Deaux & Major, 1987).

Female identity: The fundamental, existential sense of one's femaleness, an acceptance of one's gender as a social-psychological construction that parallels acceptance of one's biological sex (Deaux & Major, 1990).

Overview of Subsequent Chapters

In this chapter, the significance and need for the study have been briefly explored, and the research questions were introduced. Chapter Two will explore

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both scholarly and theoretical literature that is related to the research questions. Chapter Three links the research questions and the supporting theories to the methods that were employed to conduct the qualitative research, explaining the rationale for each step of the research process. Using charts, graphs, and narrative, Chapter Four will display and discuss the research findings. Chapter Five will summarize the research endeavor, and make recommendations for further research regarding the influence of religion and parents in shaping female gender identity.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This qualitative research focuses on the influences of gender expectations as presented in the Christian church culture and the family of origin in affecting the gender characteristics of the individual. Sociological and psychological theorists, as well as theologians have informed cultural and religious attitudes regarding gender. In understanding the influences of the family of origin and religion on identity development, we must first examine the history of identity development theory, as well as the major theorists, whose ideas shaped the beliefs and expectations regarding gender identity. Secondly, the influence of the church as it is expressed in the doctrines of the Christian faith and feminist theology's response will be explored as it relates to identity development. The latter part of the chapter will present the theoretical and conceptual foundations of the research.

Historical Perspectives on Adolescent Identity Development

In most psychological, historical, and sociological accounts of adolescence, the stories of adolescent females have not occupied a preeminent place in the description of the adolescence experience. In the introduction of his book Coming of Age, John Springhall (1986) asserts that a possible criticism of his historical account of adolescents in England is in his "referring to the 'adolescent' purely as a male phenomenon" (10). This tendency in both psychology and history to posit the male experience as the adolescent experience is problematic

to the reading of adolescent female tales, as they are interpreted against a master narrative that has established the male experience as the standard or norm.

Although today adolescence is viewed as a culturally universal "fact" of human development, according to Steinberg (1999), adolescence initially began as a middle class phenomenon. Family demographics were such that, by the mid-1800's, the middle class began experiencing a drop in child mortality rates. Since children were no longer considered an economic asset, many middle class families began to limit family size to two children. Because there were fewer children, and these children were living for longer periods of time, parental attitudes began to change, and a new kind of parental care and concern for older children emerged. Since children in middle class homes no longer served an economic function within the family, their familial responsibility was to attend school, for schooling promised a way for middle class children to ascend financially and socially. For the middle class, adolescence was "invented" to justify this prolonged period of dependence both on parents and teachers (Steinberg, 1999).

G. Stanley Hall (1904) is attributed with the taking of this middle class notion of adolescence and extending it to all classes. Hall posited a theory of adolescence that was culturally universal and, so, an inescapable stage of human development--a stage of life that was unavoidably a time of "storm and stress" (xiii). Many years later, Erik Erikson (1950) upheld Hall's view of "storm and stress" as a part of his eight stage theory of psychosocial development across

the life cycle. In adolescence, the fifth of Erikson's stages, the task was to develop a sense of personal identity. Erikson (1982) saw the formation of a personal sense of identity as one of the cornerstones of ego development. Defined by Erikson (1950) as "the accrued confidence [in] the inner sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others," identity was considered to be of central concern during adolescence (p. 235). However, since the emergence of adolescence as a development stage, and throughout much of the twentieth century, the creation of identity was based on a male experience (Adams, 1994).

Reading historical accounts of adolescents' experiences, one soon realizes that there are significant limitations in these accounts. First, notable differences existed between what constituted mature behavior for boys and girls at the beginning of the twentieth century (Dyhouse, 1981). Since adolescence is viewed as the stage of life in which one acquires a mature self, then boys and girls experienced adolescence very differently. Dyhouse (1981) argues that males were judged to be mature if they were developing in appropriate ways towards the creation of an independent self--one who had economic as well as emotional independence. Conversely, maturity for girls was equated with economic dependence upon a husband. A "mature" girl, in preparation for her role as wife and mother, was taught to sacrifice her personal desires for the desires of others.

Secondly, while middle class adolescent males in the late nineteenth century were allowed considerable amounts of freedom and leisure time as well as the opportunities for a prolonged period of education, middle class adolescent

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females did not enjoy the luxury of leisure time away from the watchful eyes of adults. Middle class girls were less likely to attend school for a prolonged period, and when they were schooled, the emphasis was on developing skills that would make them better wives and mothers (Modell & Goodman, 1990).

Third, the psychological views of adolescent development popular at the turn of the century, especially G. Stanley Hall's, sought to naturalize the already existing laws of patriarchy. According to Dyhouse (1981), Hall argued that girls were emotionally unstable during adolescence, thus needing male protection from the harsh realities of the world, and, in fact, females never outgrew adolescence, which "constituted their charm, their eternal womanliness" (p. 12). Furthermore, Hall's theory suggested that girls were subject to special problems during puberty; thus they should be protected from undue stress, worry, exercise, or intellectual stimulation as these could seriously damage their reproductive organs.

Barbara Hudson (1984), like Dyhouse, argues that adolescence as typically constructed does not adequately reflect the experience of females. Since adolescence is a masculine construct built upon theories and images that maintain the male experience as the normative reality, Hudson asserts that "adolescence is subversive of femininity; young girls' attempts to be accepted as 'young women' are always liable to be undermined (subverted) by perceptions of them as childish, immature, or any other of the terms by which we define the status 'adolescent'" (pp. 31-32). Because society has separated femininity from

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the adolescent experience, teenage girls are confronted with conflicting expectations in trying to establish a sense of self.

Psychological Perspectives on Identity Development

The theories of Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson drove the study of identity development for much of the twentieth century. These theories provided the expectations for what was considered "normal" development of identity for both males and females.

First developed by Sigmund Freud in the early 1900's, the basic argument of psychoanalytic theory is that gender identity can be traced back to the psychosocial development of children prior to age six or seven (Hyde, 1996). At about age four or five, the little boy begins to notice that he is different from his mother, and he develops sexual feelings for her, known as the Oedipal conflict. He views the father as a rival while simultaneously identifying with him because he has the same genitalia. Ultimately, the boy gives up his fight for his mother, and the Oedipal conflict is resolved by the boy developing strong identification with the father, imitating him in action, beliefs, and values. The resolution of the Oedipal conflict leads to the development of normal masculinity.

Unlike boys, girls have no incentive to shift identification from their mothers, for girls and mothers are the same. However, according to psychoanalytic theory, when a girl discovers that she lacks the same genitals as her father and brother, she is envious of the very visible penis. The girl then breaks with the mother to identify with the father who does have a penis. According to Freud,

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penis envy is central to the development of normative femininity as eventually the girl child abandons her desire for the penis and desires a child instead.

Erik Erikson saw the formation of a personal sense of identity (versus identity diffusion) as one of the cornerstones of ego development (Erikson, 1982). Defined as "the accrued confidence [in] the inner sameness and continuity of one's meaning for others" (Erikson, 1950, p. 235), identity is considered to be of central concern during late adolescence. In Erikson's definition, three elements emerge as necessary for a sense of identity. First, the person must experience inner sameness, or integrity, so that actions and decisions are not random. Defined values, principles, and expectations order one's behavior, and a deviation is perceived as "not me." Second, the sense of inner sameness is continuous over time. Actions in the past and hopes for the future are experienced as related to the self of today. Third, identity is experienced within a community of important others. Relationships and roles serve, ideally, to support and validate an integrated, continuous identity.

This sense of inner continuity and purpose is grounded on the resolution of the previous developmental stages, each dominated by a central, organizing theme. In infancy, the central issue is trust versus mistrust, with its corresponding ego strength of hope. Between basic trust and identity, the child passes through stages of development in which the ego strengths of will, purpose, and competence emerge from the struggles of autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, and industry versus inferiority (Erikson, 1982). According to Erikson, the stages progress in a definite order that is linked to

social expectations and bodily maturation. The psychosocial crisis, or central issue of each stage, rests upon and may modify the outcome of all preceding stages. At the same time, each crisis incorporates the forerunners of issues and stages to come. Erikson (1968) places the task of intimacy versus isolation after that of identity, indicating that the sense of continuity and fidelity to one's values at a personal level is a prerequisite to true intimacy.

According to Erikson, the life stage of adolescence provides young people with the optimal situation for defining a sense of identity. Not yet firmly tied by adult commitments, the adolescent may try out a variety of possible commitments in occupation and ideology, eventually adopting a more or less permanent sense of who he or she is.

From its inception, Erikson's construct of identity was arguably descriptive of male development. Its generalization to women has never been straightforward. Erikson first addressed women's identity in his controversial article "Women and the Inner Space" (1968). In an apparent response to feminist criticism, Erikson returned to the topic in the early 1970's with a rebuttal and an attempt to state more clearly his original principles regarding the development of girls and women (Erikson, 1975).

Although Erikson saw identity as developing within the context of anatomy, history, and personality, he appeared ambivalent about whether to distance himself from Freud's concept of anatomy and destiny. Rather than deny penis envy as an anatomical fact (as opposed to a social experience), Erikson referred to the "inner space," or womb, as the basis for a positive (anatomically based)

potential for the girl's identity. Erikson's insistence on defining women's identity in anatomical terms remained troubling to feminists. Erikson's argument seemed to imply that women were anatomically destined to be nurturant and accommodating, and thus uniquely suited to service roles. In addition, Erikson believed that interpersonal issues formed the core of women's identity, and vocational and ideological issues were of peripheral importance (Erikson, 1968). Erikson assumed that a woman's resolution of identity was left partially open and flexible in adolescence, in order to accommodate the man she would marry and the children she would nurture. The girl's first, temporary resolution of identity in adolescence consisted of a sense of her own attractiveness, an image of the mate she would seek, and a decision about the use she would make (or not make) of her body and its reproductive capacity (Erikson, 1968). Her identity was to be completed in marriage and motherhood. Unlike males, whose issues of identity, intimacy, and generativity were postulated by Erikson to be resolved in a clearly sequential manner, women's development appears (according to this theory) to be less stage specific. Issues of identity, intimacy, and generativity can be resolved almost concurrently for women.

Interestingly, Erikson conceptualized women's identity as the individual's construction of the experience of womanhood, of living in a woman's body and of living with the gender-based role prescriptions and proscriptions of her culture (Patterson, Sochting, & Marcia, 1992). This conceptualization was sympathetic to women's struggles to define and control their reproductive power within a patriarchal culture. Patterson, Sochting, and Marcia (1992) suggest that Erikson

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appears far-seeing in his insistence that if feminists ignore the reproductive power of women's bodies, they are in danger of contributing to the further devaluation of women and of the values of care and nurturance in Western culture.

Feminist Perspectives on Identity Development

During the latter half of the twentieth century feminist researchers increasingly criticized the theories of Freud and Erikson. These theories, feminists argued, were not providing the full picture of identity development, because they were premised on *male* development (Hyde, 1996). One criticism of Freud's theory points to the similarities between his theory and some age-old myths and images of women as sinful and the source of evil (Hyde, 1996). The work of Nancy Chodorow, Jean Baker Miller, Carol Gilligan, and Judith Lorber provide needed insight into the development of identity for females.

Certainly Freud's phalogcentrism is an excellent example of the male-as-normative (androcentric) model of development. Nancy Chodorow (1974) seeks to rewrite the master narrative of psychoanalytic theory by reconceptualizing traditional understandings of the Oedipal complex by emphasizing the role of the mother, not the penis, in the construction of a gendered identity.

Chodorow (1978) asserts that it is not the possession of or the lack of a penis that is significant in the development of a feminine or masculine identity, but the preoedipal relationship between mother and child that is largely responsible for the creation of distinctly different gendered identities. Infants start life in a state of total dependency, and women are usually their primary caretakers; hence the

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dependency needs of young children are met almost exclusively by the mother. Chodorow believes that this relationship between mother and son/daughter is the significant factor in determining the differences in personality between boys and girls (Chodorow, 1993). Because mothers are more likely to view their daughters as an extension of themselves, they do not encourage their daughters to separate from them to form a distinct identity. Conversely, mothers relate to their sons as being separate and distinct from themselves. Therefore, boys develop "a self that denies relatedness" and girls develop "a self in relation" (Chodorow, 1978, p. 15). Hence, adolescent and adult males have a strong need to deny their attachment and dependence on women in general, to devalue femininity, and to use a variety of means to position women as the powerless other.

Chodorow offers a prescription for social change, which, she asserts, would eliminate confusion for women. In order for change to occur, Chodorow believes that men must begin to participate equally in child care; until men do this, women will continue to be devalued (Hyde, 1996). Chodorow (1978) concludes, "Any strategy for change whose goal includes liberation from the constraints of an unequal social organization of gender must take account of the need for a fundamental reorganization of parenting, so that primary parenting is shared between men and women" (p. 215). Reorganization of parenting would help to ensure that children of both sexes (e.g. adolescent girls) would develop a sufficiently individuated and strong sense of self.

Jean Baker Miller (1991), in response to Erikson's theory of identity development, asks "Do only men, and not women, have a self?" (p. 11).

According to Erikson's theory, development of the self is attained through a series of painful crises by which the individual accomplishes a sequence of ostensibly essential separations from others, thereby achieving an inner sense of separated individuation. Miller (Unger & Crawford, 1996) asserts that few men ever attain such self-sufficiency without the support of mistresses, mothers, daughter, secretaries, and other women (who just happen to be lower then men in social hierarchy). So, Miller wonders, does Erikson's model accurately reflect even men's lives?

Miller (1991) further critiques Erikson's theory of development in the seven stages which follow "basic trust versus mistrust" (stage one), because the stages each reflect some form of increased separation or self-development. However, when the individual reaches the sixth stage (intimacy versus isolation), he/she is supposed to be able to be intimate with another person, having spent all of his/her prior development striving for separation. Miller (Unger & Crawford, 1996) contends that psychological theories of personality (Erikson and others, including Freud), in their androcentric perspective of viewing autonomy as the end point of development, have failed women by devaluing their strengths. The ideal adult is seen as one whose sense of self is entirely separate from others, and who is independent and self-reliant. Close relationships are perceived negatively, the individual involved in such a relationship is seen as dependent and lacking a differentiated self. Conversely, Miller (1991) and other feminists (e.g. Gilligan, 1982, Jordan, Kaplan, Miller, Stiver, & Surrey, 1991) predicate

personality development within relationships, the self defined in terms of caring and responsibility.

At adolescence, the girl searching for her identity is seeking fulfillment of two very important needs, Miller (1991) posits: to use all of her capacities (including sexual capacity), but to do so within a context that will fulfill her great desire to be a "being-in-relationship" (p. 21). Unlike other theories (e.g. Freud, Erikson) which suppose independence and self-reliance through the stages of development, Miller (Unger & Crawford, 1996) holds that the female adolescent has had the wish to be in relationship throughout her development. Miller (1991) believes that boys have the same relationship needs as well; however, culture has sent the message that in order to be "himself" he must have a sense of independent identity. So girls are not seeking the same kind of identity that has been prescribed for boys, but a different kind, in which one is a "being-in-relation." Miller (Unger & Crawford, 1996) analyzes that this "being-in-relation" identity has developed for girls and women because of societal power differences. Because women are a subordinate group in society, they have developed personality characteristics that reflect their subordination, and enable them to cope with it.

Carol Gilligan (1982) asserts that the theories of psychological development upon which most associations about normative adolescent development are based are, in fact, theories of male adolescence. Gilligan (1982), quoting David McClelland, states:

> Sex role turns out to be one of the most important determinants of human behavior; psychologists have found sex differences in their studies from the moment they started doing empirical research. But since it is difficult to say "different" without saying "better" or "worse," since there is a tendency to construct a single scale measurement, and since that scale has generally been derived from and standardized on the basis of men's interpretations of research data drawn predominantly or exclusively from studies of males, psychologists have tended to regard male behavior as the "norm" and female behavior as some kind of deviation from the norm (p. 14).

In studying how individuals think about moral conflicts and moral decisions, Gilligan found that women's identities are often constructed in relational terms; thus, they make moral decisions which give primacy to issues of responsibility and maintaining connections to others. However, this ability to view morality in interpersonal terms and to equate goodness with helping others marks women morally deficient according to Kohlberg's six stage theory of moral development. Paradoxically, the same characteristics that make a woman a "good" woman or a girl a "good" girl--nurturance, sensitivity, and attunement to the needs of others--marks them as morally deficient. What Gilligan argues for is a theory of moral development which validates women's relational ways of identifying themselves and others.

Brown and Gilligan (1992) focus specifically on younger females in Meeting at the Crossroads, which was a five year study of one hundred girls. In describing the effect of early adolescence on the construction of a feminine identity, the phrase "crossroads" emerges to summarize the time in which girl-self and women-self meet. It is a critical time in the lives of girls, who prior to adolescence viewed themselves as living in connection with themselves and with

other girls. However, adolescence signals disjuncture for many girls, a time when they must separate from themselves and from other girls. Perhaps most ironically, many girls view adolescence as a time when they must take up male expectations in order to become the "good" woman who puts her interests and needs as secondary to the needs of others, especially males. In fact, Brown and Gilligan (1992) note, adolescent girls' relationships with males often come at the expense of silencing their own voices and severing their connections to other females.

By studying a cohort of girls over a five-year period, Brown and Gilligan (1992) identify a developmental narrative in the struggle of moving from childhood to adolescence, a struggle which they assert is "most visible and audible at the edge of adolescence" (p. 16). By making explicit the androcentric bias in theories of adolescence, Brown and Gilligan (1992) seek to validate the female experience:

> By listening to women and to girls and bringing their voices into the center of psychological theory and research, we are changing the voice, the body, and also the story about relationships (including the point of view on the canonical story), shifting the societal location, and, by the work itself, attempting to change the cultural framework (p. 22).

Although the dominant discourse of adolescence has largely ignored the experiences of girls, what clearly emerges from the study of Brown and Gilligan is the importance of contextualizing discussions of normative adolescence. The reality is that girls experience adolescence differently than boys. Furthermore, girls are forced to read their lives against both the cultural scripts for normative adolescence and normative femininity. For some girls, the scripts do not fit, in

which case they feel as though they never quite "get it right" (female adolescence and adulthood), and/or never really fit in.

Judith Lorber (1994) posits gender as a social institution that creates distinguishable social statuses for the assignment of rights and responsibilities. As a part of a stratification system in which statuses are ranked unequally, Lorber views gender as a major building block in the social structures built on the unequal statuses. Lorber (1991) asserts that boys and girls, men and women are more alike then they are different, and "Together with race, ethnicity, and social class, gender categories are institutionalized cultural and social statuses" (p. 8). Gender identity and genderized behavior is, she contends, socially constructed. Children learn through example, direct teaching, the rewards and admonishments of parents and other significant adults that there are two genders, which gender they belong to, and the expected behavior of their gender.

Gender becomes a structure that divides work in the home, in the public sector, legitimates those in authority, and organizes sexuality and emotional life. Lorber (1994) asserts that the pervasiveness of gender as a way of structuring life demands that gender statuses be clearly differentiated, for "In the social construction of gender, it does not matter what men and women actually do; it does not even matter if they do exactly the same thing. The social institution of gender insists only that what they do is perceived as different" (p. 26).

Feminist Theology

As the study of identity development has, historically, been premised on male development, so too the culture of the church and theology. Feminist theologians, drawing on the broader research of feminist theory, have sought to recover the lost roles and images of women in the history of Christian tradition. Documentation of women's histories has, in turn, been employed by feminist theologians to revise doctrines to prevent the continued oppression of women (Young, 1990).

The certainty of the influence of culture on gender identity development has been established (Coltrane, 1998; Johnson, 1997; Kroger, 2000). The ecological underpinnings of the present research require an understanding of the influence of church culture, in particular, in the quest to understand how identity is formed. Included in the definition of culture are perspectives on life, the structure of behavior, and the beliefs regarding the "essential nature of the human condition" (Rey, 1997, p. 159). Gender and religious culture are interrelated, as "perceptions of ourselves are shaped by and deeply rooted in our culturally shared religious and philosophical heritage" (King, 1995, p. 2). Feminist theologians assert that a circular pattern exits in which religious beliefs, practices, and traditions are influenced by gender perspectives, and in turn, beliefs, practices, and traditions influence gender expectations for the believer (King, 1995, Graham, 1996). Briggs (1997) opines that in patriarchal denominations where women are most absent from leadership, the effects of gender are most intense.

Classical theology, rooted in patriarchy, presumes maleness as the "norm of full humanity" (Graham, 1996, p. 52). In patriarchal denominations, sex (physiological-male/female) is often confused with gender (social/cultural conditioning) (Bergant, 1991). Using the order of creation (Genesis 2--Adam was created before Eve), as well as the "suitable partner" (Eve for Adam) account in the same chapter, patriarchal theology justifies a view of women as the "weaker sex," and embraces their subordination to men (Rosenblatt, 1991). Historically, patriarchy gave power and position in the world via property ownership, which was passed to male relatives via inheritance. Women, who were not allowed to own property, were left powerless. In the post-modern world of the twenty-first century, it is not patriarchy but paternalism that has become the obstacle to women taking responsibility for their own well-being (Barta, 1991). Barta (1991) defines paternalism as "the claim or attempt to supply the needs or to regulate the life of a nation or community in the same way as a father does those of his children" (p. 28). No where is this more prominent than in conservative mainline Christian denominations, where the pastor, who can only be male, is viewed as the "shepherd" of the flock (congregation), the caregiver and ultimate authority for members of the congregation. The enticing promise of paternalism is that one need not care for oneself, because someone else will do that for you. A paternalistic perspective presumes to know what is best for those who are being cared for (girls/women), particularly when decisions are made for those under its care. Paternalism offers a false sense of security, but at length it "robs people of their personhood by limiting or foreclosing their experiences of life, or by

interpreting for them what their experiences mean..." (Barta, 1991, p. 29). Paternalistic denominations socialize men to supply leadership within the church, while women are socialized to be dependent helpers who are male-identified rather than self-identified (Barta, 1991). Conversely, feminist theology has grown from the belief that women claim a right to full humanity for themselves (Graham, 1996). Feminist theology emanated from sensitivity to and criticism of the androcentric manner in which many religions have developed, as well as the fact that religion has typically been studied from an androcentric perspective (O'Connor, 1995). Feminist theologian Rosemary Ruether (1992) asserts that "the critical principle of feminist theology is the promotion of the full humanity of women" (p.18).

Feminist theology has drawn on feminist research and theory, raising questions regarding the way religious traditions and assumptions about the spiritual-self-in-relation-to-God has historically been viewed. Traditionally, theology has been done by, developed for, and focused on men; women are usually caricatured, or ignored (Young, 1995). Feminist theology has taken exception to traditional androcentric doctrinal models, by challenging metaphors and concepts that had been embraced for centuries (Young, 1990). In so doing, feminist theology has created new metaphors and concepts that reflected women's "voice" (O'Connor, 1995). One of the major questions addressed by Christian feminist theologians is how to bring together the past, which includes a patriarchal history, and patriarchal biblical documents, and connect them to the present (Young, 1995).

Feminist theological scholarship has been traced to Valerie Saiving's 1960 article, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," in which she asserts that traditional theological definitions do not apply to women as they do to men, since women experience the world in a different way (Young, 1995). While the first generation of feminist scholars were self-taught, today's feminist theologians are products of feminist teachers and mentors. Much like traditional theology, there are a variety of schools of thought within feminist theology. Some feminists, such as Mary Daly and Daphne Hampson have, in their search for women's place in Christian doctrine, pronounced that place impossible, and rejected Christianity (Daly, 1973; Hampson, 1990). Schussler Fiorenza (1985) argues for using Scripture as a prototype—an unfinished, changing document; thus, Scripture is not just a revelation to the past, but a guide for present revelation as well. Fiorenza does not advocate disregarding Biblical texts, since they can be used to reject oppression. Conversely, Fiorenza urges feminists not to use Scripture as the norm, since the Bible has also been used against women to foster oppression (Fiorenza, 1983).

Rosemary Radford Ruether (1983) bases her feminist theology on multiple sources, including Scripture, Christian traditions, non-Christian philosophies and religions, and post-Christian world views (e.g. liberalism, romanticism). For Ruether (1983),

> The Church is where the good news of liberation from sexism is preached, where the Spirit is present to empower us to renounce patriarchy, where community committed to the new life of mutuality is gathered together and nurtured, and where the community is spreading this vision and struggle to others (p.213).

Ruether advocates a women-church, where patriarchy is rejected as "God's will," and women are able to realize their rightful claim to equal status.

Letty Russell (1974) articulates a feminist Christian theology that uses one's mind, "in the perspective of God, as God is known in and through the Word in the world" (p. 52). Russell (1985) argues that women's experience has a direct bearing on Christian theology. True Christian theology must be informed by a diversity of experiences, including the biological and cultural experiences of being a woman (Russell, 1987).

Marie-Eloise Rosenblatt (1991) asserts four prominent issues which are present in historical biblical documents, and in so doing succinctly summarizes the foundation of Christian feminist theology. First, ecclesial documents tend to select scriptural images of women which reinforce her as passive (Rosenblatt, 1991). Adjectives such as meek, mild, and gentle are far more prominent descriptors of women than words such as excited, heroic, or forceful. Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the male disciples are attributed with ability to initiate ministry, and to be powerful. Women are portrayed as responders to Jesus' ministry, grateful to be included. This representation of women fails to recognize women's capacity to be initiators in the same manner that men are, for women to be subjects of their own lives, authors of their own destiny.

Centuries of interpretation of the biblical narrative of the creation and fall into sin of Adam and Eve, as well as several passages from the Pauline epistles in the New Testament comprise Rosenblatt's (1991) second issue for review by feminist theologians. An androcentric reading of the first three chapters of

Genesis strengthens the lesser nature of women, their greater culpability for sin, and the superiority of the nature of men (Bergant, 1991; Rosenblatt, 1991). Select writings from Paul, as recorded in the New Testament, have been used to uphold women's status as lesser than men's. 1 Timothy 2:12, perhaps the most oft quoted verse in support of patriarchal theological perspectives, reads "I permit no woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she is to keep silent." Offered as additional support is the preceding verse, 1 Timothy 2:11, "Let a woman learn in silence with full submission." Overlooked are other passages biblical scholars have attributed to Paul, which can be read in context as endorsement of women's equality with men, and acknowledgement of their dignity and God-given gifts. Galatians 3:28 states, "There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus." 1 Corinthians 12:4-7 reads, "Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

The third problem of ecclesial documents from the feminist perspective is the way in which Scripture has been used to create a very narrow theological depiction of who women are (Rosenblatt, 1991). Eve as the mother of all humanity, Mary as the mother of faith, and the personification of the church as the bride of Christ place severe limitations on women's spiritual nature, their destiny, and their options for vocation, asserts Rosenblatt (1991). These three

models are too restrictive in their definition of women's being and nature, limiting women to spousal and maternal roles. This theological domestication of women places them in a world in which men "choose them, wed them, and father their children" (Rosenblatt, 1991, p. 44). These three models of women's roles focus on the sexual appeal and generativity of younger women, as well as placing an age-bias on womanhood itself, limiting it to the marrying/child-bearing years. Also excluded from the models are women who are single, divorced, or widowed. Ultimately, these models leave fully half of women's lives unaccounted.

Rosenblatt's (1991) last point is perhaps the most thought provoking, as she points out that the Bible has very little to say about the actual roles of either women or men. Rosenblatt (1991) points out that,

> With some exceptions, women who follow Jesus, or who come to him for healing, appear in the gospels unaccompanied by husbands. Men, too, appear without wives in view. It is rare that there is a forgiveness or a healing story, a parable, or a saying of Jesus that features a conventional family unit of husband, wife, and children (pp. 47-48).

Overall, throughout the gospels Jesus does not make frequent use of marital imagery. Jesus praises women not for their passive spiritual stance, but for their action as believers. Rosenblatt (1991) provides an exciting alternative to the passive models of women which she outlined in her third point, describing New Testament women as people who,

> acted on their faith, verbalized it, and expressed it in concrete situations that had visible after-effects. They were agents in the reversal of suffering. Their identity as believers was legitimated in various proofs of their vitality and power (p. 49).

The lack of women's voice in Scripture, doctrine, and worship liturgy is a key area of research for feminist theologians, and provides a foundation for each of Rosenblatt's four aforementioned points. Women have been made invisible, supposedly represented in male terms that have been labeled generic for "all people." Beginning in Genesis, with the revelation of God as a male, "the metaphors we use are powerful God-talk, for they determine the way we think about God and about ourselves as men and women, created in God's image" (Russell, 1987, p. 53). Young (1990) asserts that despite the generic "man," women were never the intended audience for theological writings. Women throughout time have been left to infer themselves into a variety of religious settings, for the language of worship, Scripture readings, Bible studies, and even Godly images have been distinctly male (McMillan, 1991). Language is not just a tool, it wields a great deal of power, and when women are excluded from the language, a not-so-subtle message is sent regarding worth and importance (Russell, 1987; Graham, 1995). Russell (1987) argues that in recognizing women's spirituality, there is need for a "usable language" that will reflect women more prominently in the human experience. The fear of some, however, is that inclusive language will send the wrong message regarding "appropriate activities and ambitions" for men and women (Graham, 1996, p. 39).

The argument regarding the language of Scripture and the gender of God goes deeper, embracing the male gender of Jesus as the most fundamental aspect of the incarnation (Graham, 1996). The conclusion reached by those who hold this view of God's incarnation as a male, is that women's gender identity is

then subsumed by the male human. The image of God as "Father" is seen not simply as an expression for time, but as something real and unchanging regarding the nature of God (Graham, 1996). The practical application of this assumption is the withholding of ordination as pastor/priest from women. Brian Wren (in Graham, 1996) posits that,

> resistance to inclusive language is a refusal to see language as part of a system of difference and power; to identify collusion with patterns of sexism and exclusion; to silence unfamiliar experiences or imagery, because they might challenge fixed identity and the certainty of the *status quo* (p. 40).

A feminist view of the Christian church would find the practice of a hierarchy that is exclusionary not credible. Young (1990) contends that no church is credible if it "limits women, calls them inferior, and keeps them as a group from assuming certain roles by speaking of women's roles as 'different but equal'" (p. 106). If hierarchy is employed, it must be based on the exercise of particular gifts and skills in service to the church, not in the creation of two (or more) classes of believers. Graham (1996) asserts the importance of conducting ethnographic and anthropological studies in faith communities, in an effort to measure the gendered nature of the elements of believers' faith traditions. The identification of fundamental values, attitudes, and visions of faith communities would assist in creating a cultural environment that is truly inclusive of all people.

Whether rooted in psychology or theology, gender theories are ultimately representations of human culture. What it means to become a gendered person depends on the culture and the time in which one lives. Bronfenbrenner's (1989) ecological perspective supports this idea, as he asserts, "The characteristics of

the person at a given time in his or her life are a joint function of the characteristics of the person and of the environment over the course of that person's life up to that time" (p. 190). The proposed research will focus on just two aspects of an individual's environment, religion and parents, in one period of time, late adolescence. The following section will provide the theoretical basis for the intersection of religion and family in the development of female gender identity.

Theoretical Perspectives

The discipline of human ecology, where the influence of environment plays an important role in human development, has much to offer in the study of gender identity. The human organism is a system that is in continuous interaction with its total environment. The environment of the church affects parents' attitudes and perspectives on gender and ideology (specifically the church's stance on women); children (especially girls) are influenced as well. Human ecology theory converges at three distinct points, "family ecosystem, the mutually sustaining transactions that link people and environments, and on decisions that families make to creatively adapt and foster human development" (Bublolz & Sontag, in Boss, Doherty, et. al., 1993, p. 423). The interdependence of the family with its environment is particularly helpful in understanding identity formation. The environment of the family provides the necessary resources to provide life-support to its members. The sociological, psychological, and behavioral environments of the family shape the development of attitudes, values,

expectations, and patterns of decision-making for its members (Andrews, Bubolz, & Paolucci, 1980).

An integral part of the family ecosystem is the organization that evolves from patterns of transactions between the family and its environment. Societal attitudes and expectations for women and girls, implicitly and explicitly part of the culture in which we live, shape family ecosystem organization. Central to family ecosystem socialization is decision-making and implementation, as families transform information from the environment. The transactions between family and environment are guided by two sets of rules: the laws of nature and human-derived rules (Andrews, Bubolz, & Paolucci, 1980). The human derived rules are at the center of identity development, and in particular, rules about gender expectations.

Insel and Moos (1974) suggest three broad dimensions of family ecosystems that inform family interactions, which are important to the understanding of identity development. First, Insel and Moos (1974) assert that relationship dimensions are useful to assess the degree to which individuals are involved in the environment, and the extent to which they support each other. A particular church denomination's beliefs regarding appropriate male and female roles, and a family's degree of involvement in their church are posited in the present research to influence attitudes and expectations about gender identity. Secondly, Insel and Moos (1974) state that the dimension of personal development and self-esteem must take environmental factors into consideration. The church and the family's attitudes regarding self-concept and gender identity

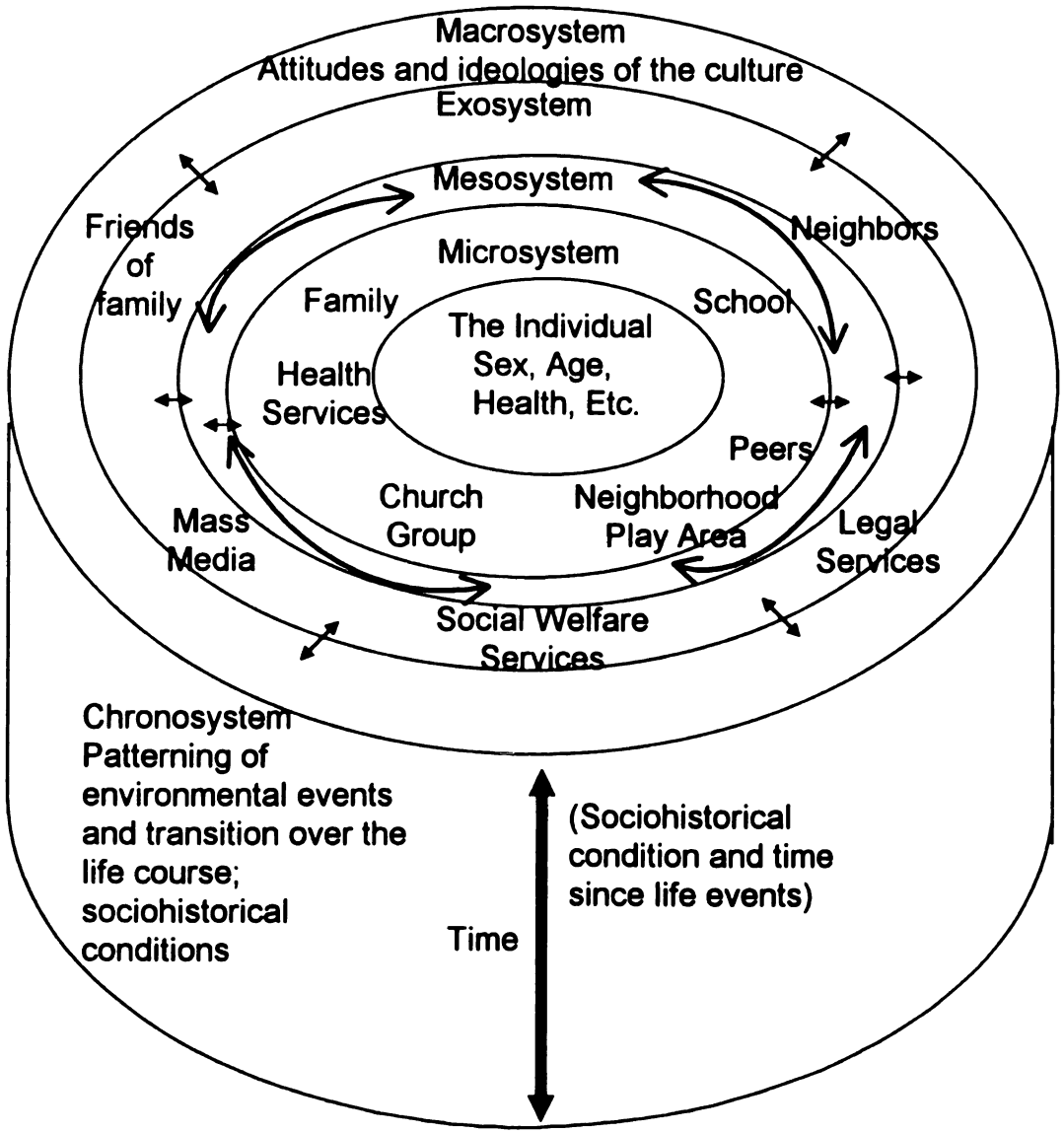
have the potential to enhance or limit that development in its members. Lastly, systems maintenance and system change dimensions assess the extent that the environment is orderly and clear in its expectations, maintains control, and is responsive to change. Expectations regarding identity for adolescent females are not always clear from systems like church and family; in some denominations, expectations are used to maintain control (e.g. male order). Systems such as mainline Christian churches have not always been responsive to changing gender expectations and behaviors.

Human ecology theorist Urie Bronfenbrenner's model provides a framework for examining how individual family processes are influenced by cultural ideations and expectations. Bronfenbrenner views the "systematic understanding of the processes and outcomes of human development as a joint function of the person and the environment" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 188). The joint function of person in environment is particularly clear within Bronfenbrenner's concept of the macrosystem, which consists of the attitudes and ideologies of the culture in which the family ecosystem lives.

Theoretical Model-Ecological Systems Theory.

The principle aim of ecological systems theory is the "systematic understanding of the processes and outcomes of human development as a joint function of the *person* and the *environment*" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 188). The effects of environment play an important role in human development, as the human organism interacts with its total surroundings (Figure 2.1). In asserting the influence of extrafamilial conditions on the intrafamilial processes,

Figure 2.1: Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Theory of Development



Taken from: Santrock, J. W. (1997). Children. Madison, WI: Brwon and Benchmark.

Bronfenbrenner acknowledges that developmental process occurs in many settings, including the church that a family chooses to attend, as well as the family environment. The cornerstone of Bronfenbrenner's theory is stated within what he has labeled "Definition 1":

> "The ecology of human development is the scientific study of the progressive, mutual accommodation, throughout the life course, between an active, growing human being, and the changing properties of the immediate settings in which the developing person lives, as this process is affected by the relations between these settings, and by the larger contexts in which the settings are embedded." (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 188)

The concept of the *exosystem* specifically addresses the effect of different environmental systems (e.g. church culture) on the family. It encompasses the links and processes that take place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the focal persons in the *microsystem*. However, the events that occur in the *exosystem* influence the processes that occur in the *microsystem*, the activities, roles, and relationships that a person directly experiences. Therefore, as the church (a *microsystem*) interfaces with the family (another *microsystem*), it creates an exosystemic relationship.

> Although the family is the principle context in which human development takes place, it is but one of several settings in which developmental process can and does occur. Moreover, the processes operating in different settings are not independent of each other (Bronfenbrenner, 1986, p. 723).

Through the concept of the *chronosystem*, Bronfenbrenner acknowledges that over time the various systems may change and the effects vary. From Bronfenbrenner's perspective, this proposed study seeks to discover the effect of

the exosystem on the the microsystem, in which female children/adolescents develop gender identity. The overall outcome will be noted in the characteristics of gender identity.

The influence of the society in which we live is acknowledged in the macrosystem, which is defined by the "structure and content of constituent systems, with particular reference to the developmentally instigative belief systems,....patterns of social exchange opportunity structures, and life course options..." (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 237).

Deaux's Interactive Model.

The process of establishing an identity has been the focus of many prominent researchers, including Sigmund Freud and Erik Erikson. Their studies, however, were based on the development of male identity. The proposed research focuses on adolescent females; therefore, while acknowledging the foundational work of Freud, and Erikson, the research will employ the work of feminist theorist Kay Deaux as the primary theory. Deaux's work has included collaboration with several colleagues, including Brenda Major (1987), M. Kite (1989), and Laurie Lewis (1984).

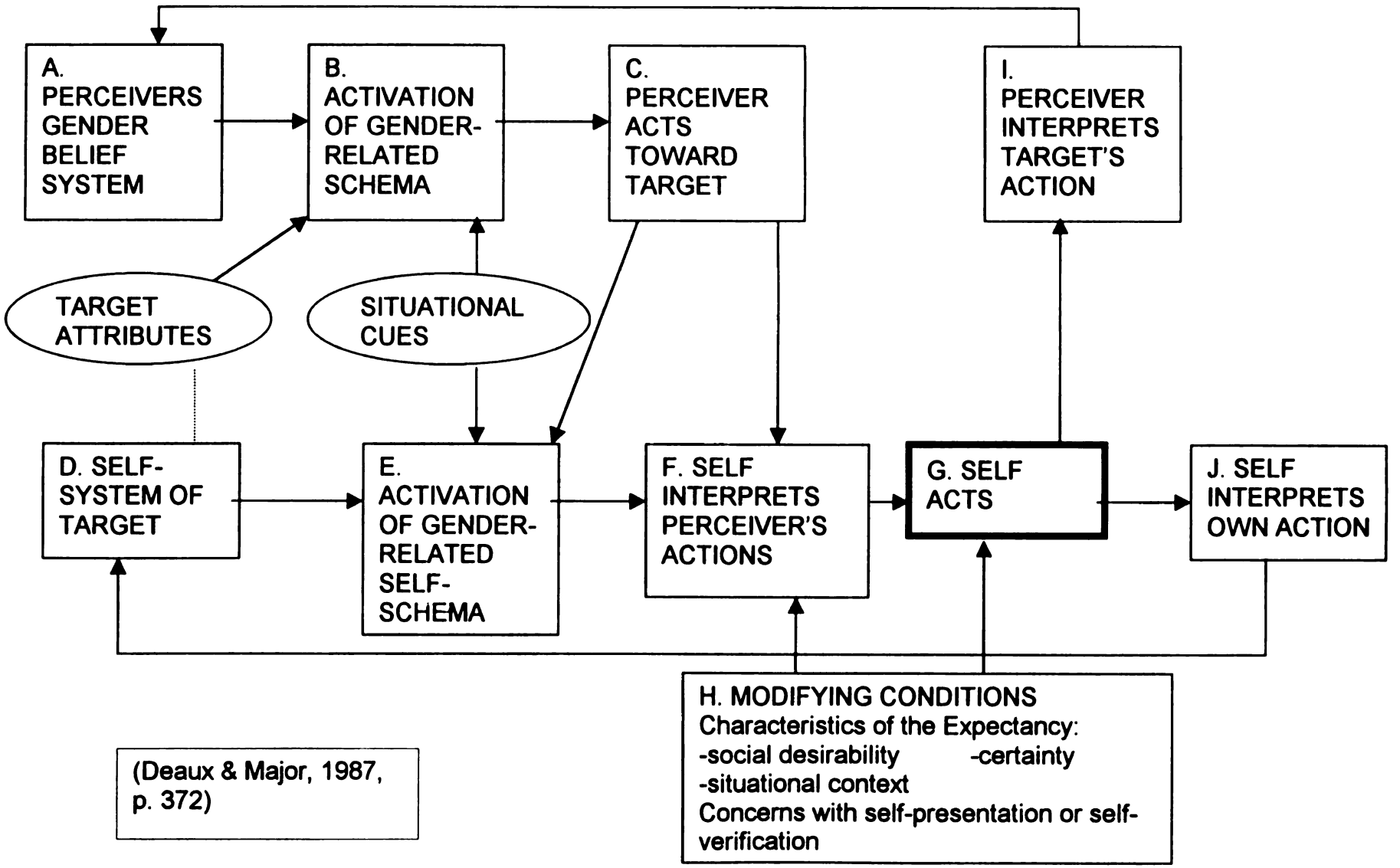
Deaux's interaction-based model meshes with Bronfenbrenner's theory on the influence of social systems. Deaux takes into account the context of the social situation (Deaux & Major, 1987), just as Bronfenbrenner accounts for the influences of the social situation on many levels (e.g. microsystem, mesosystem). Deaux's model focuses on the outward display of gender-linked behavior, and theorizes that a number of influences such as expectancies

conveyed by others, gender-related self-schemas, and the power of the situation, influence the gender behavior displayed by the individual (Deaux & Lewis, 1984, Deaux and Major, 1987). Deaux and Major (1987) assert that the presentation of gender–related behaviors take place primarily within the context of social interaction, either explicitly or implicitly. Social interaction is defined as, "a process of identity negotiation whereby perceivers and selves (targets) attempt to attain their interaction goals" (Deaux & Major, 1987, p. 370). Deaux has built her theory based on two human social behavioral perspectives, cognitive and behavioral confirmation. Cognitive confirmation depicts the processes by which perceivers' cognitive dispositions operate to maintain their original expectancies for a target. Behavioral confirmation, perhaps more recognizable by the term "self-fulfilling prophecy," refers to the processes by which a perceiver's expectancy for a target, communicated through his/her action, actually changes the target's behavior in such a way that the resulting behavior objectively confirms the perceiver's initial expectancy. With regard to identity formation, a number of researchers (Myers, 1998; Steinberg, 1999; Hart, Fegley, & Brengelman, 1993; Caspi & Moffitt, 1991) support that a person's self-conceptions have a significant effect on their cognitive processing of and emotional responses to information gained through social interaction. Investigation of adolescent identity (Markstrom-Adams, 1989; Gjerde, 1995; Kroger & Green, 1996) upholds that individuals actively seek to shape and construct others' perceptions of them through their behavior in social encounters.

Deaux's gender-related behavior theory, therefore, accounts for variability in behavior, so that it (the behavior) meets the demands of the particular situation. While this theory posits that people assume different identities depending on the circumstance, Deaux and Major (1987) note that people do need to display stability in their behavior. Therefore, as they encounter a social situation, individuals may feel tension between the need to routinize their behavior and cognition in accord with preestablished conceptualizations and behavior patterns, and the need to contextualize their behvavior and cognition to fit with the immediate situational demands and interaction goals.

A visualization of Deaux and Major's (1987) model (Figure 2.2) illustrates that the perceiver approaches a situation with a set of beliefs about the target. These beliefs are based on either categorical assumptions, or from past experience with the particular individual (box A). The beliefs, which compose only one of a number of possible beliefs that would be appropriate for that situation, are activated by a number of factors (box B). Affected by their beliefs as well as the hoped for outcome of the interaction, the perceiver acts toward the target (box C). The target (box D) enters the situation with a set of beliefs about themself (e.g. self-concepts, self-schemata), some of which will be activated by factors similar to those that affect the perceiver (box E). After interpreting the actions of the perceiver (box F), the target then ponders the possible alternatives and acts in accordance with his/her interaction goals—action that may either confirm or disconfirm the beliefs of the perceiver (box G). The sequence of interaction varies as it is influenced by modifying conditions (box H). Completing

FIGURE 2.2: A MODEL OF SOCIAL INTERACTION FOR GENDER-RELATED BEHAVIOR
Deaux and Major, 1987



(Deaux & Major, 1987, p. 372)

the cycle, Deaux and Major's (1987) model takes into account the perceiver's interpretation of the target's action (box I), and the target's interpretations of his/her own actions (box J).

Blended Theory.

This research investigated the influence of the social context of the Christian church on parents and on adolescent females with regard to the construction of gender identity. The research also explored the indirect influence of the church on young adult females through the church's influence on their parents. The research process was guided by the human ecological theory of Bronfenbrenner and the feminist theory of Deaux. Both theorists emphasize the significance of context in shaping behavior and perspective.

Deaux acknowledges that individuals have a set of beliefs about men and women which she terms the "gender belief system" (Deaux & Kite, 1989). The gender belief system consists of both descriptive and prescriptive elements believed to be true about men and women, and it is from this belief system that gender stereotypes become apparent. The gender belief, as described by Deaux and Kite (1989) fits Bronfenbrenner's microsystem, "a pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations" encountered by the individual in a particular setting (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

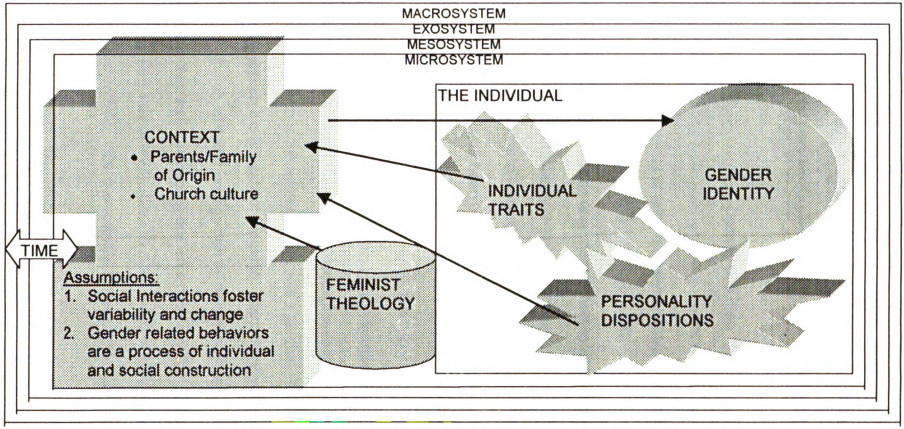
The influence of the social situation is fundamental to Deuax's model, along with the assumption that women and men make choices in their actions; gender-related behaviors are a process of internal self-identity and social construction (Deaux & Major, 1987). The outcome of the interaction is molded by the context

(mesosystem) in which the interaction takes place, along with the character (microsystem) of the individual. Deaux's consideration of the context at many levels, from cultural norms to societal structures, corresponds to Bronfenbrenner's definition of the macrosystem (culture, broader social context), as well as to the immediate circumstances of the interaction, composed of Bronfenbrenner's exo- and meso-systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

The theoretical map (Figure 2.3) illustrates the blending of these two theories as they depict the proposed research. Bronfenbrenner and Deaux assert that the context in which the situation occurs affects the behavior that is elicited. All denominations of the Christian church share a distinct culture (e.g. Sunday worship, Bible studies, pastoral staff), with variations within each denomination (e.g. who participates in worship, who may function as congregational lay leaders, who may take communion). The culture of the church is a microsystem, and as it interacts with the microsystem of the adolescent female and her family, it creates a mesosystem. The effects of these two microsystems, and the mesosystem that they create are further mitigated by the individual traits and personality dispositions of the adolescent female.

The theoretical map includes both the individual and the context as a part of the microsystem. The arrows show the causal concepts of individual traits and personality dispositions as they "meet up with" the context, which, for the purposes of this research, are church culture and parents in the family of origin. The context rests on the foundational assumptions that social interactions foster variabilty and change (behavior is effected by context), and the assertion that

FIGURE 2.3: THEORETICAL MAP----BRONFENBRENNER and DEAUX*



*Bronfenbrenner, 1989; Deaux & Major, 1987, 1990

LEGEND:
=Internal characteristics, genetically inherent
=Assumptions supporting influence of context
=inclusion of women in theological issues
=situational influences
=fundamental sense of one's female gender identity

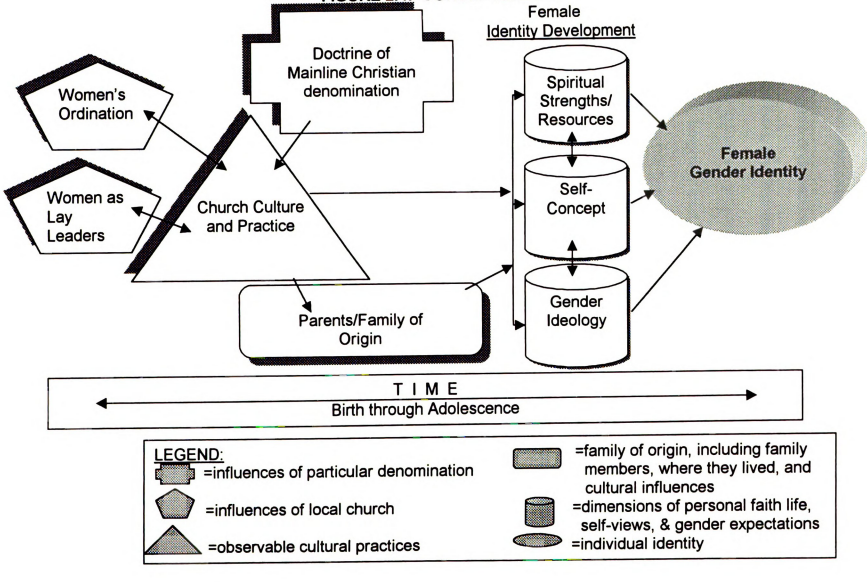
gender-related behaviors are a process of both individual and social construction (Deaux & Major, 1990). Gender identity emerges from the interaction of individual traits and personality dispositions as they have been shaped by the context.

Conceptual Map

Traditionally, it has been men who have controlled and formulated church doctrines, texts, and rituals of faith; and women have been relegated to a subordinate status (Graham, 1996). Though some church bodies have accepted women in leadership positions (e.g. clergy, theologians), the prominence of the male as the norm in Christianity remains prominent in many denominations today. In denominations in which there are female leaders and pastors, it is posited that women have been accepted as equals to men, and that the churches have acknowledged the validity of the female experience. Conversely, in churches where women are kept from certain roles, it is thought that women are not seen as equal in the eyes of the church leadership.

The conceptual map (Figure 2.4) outlines the flow of causes that contribute to the outcome, which is the adolescent female's gender identity. The flow of causes begins on the left side of the page, where the practice and culture of a particular church, dictated in large part by denominational doctrine, provides insight into their belief regarding women's roles in areas such as ordination and leadership (left side of map). Church culture and practice have a direct effect on the individual female. With the potential to have a decisive role in shaping overall

FIGURE 2.4: CONCEPTUAL MAP



gender characteristics the adolescent deems valuable, an arrow leads from the church to those characteristics.

Church culture and practice also influences the family system in which the young woman lives, and is noted on the conceptual map by the arrow from church culture to the family system. The family system also includes parents, siblings, school, neighborhood, and the over-arching attitudes and ideologies of the culture in which the family lives. The family system directly affects the young woman's perceived spiritual strengths and resources, and is noted on the conceptual map by the arrows from family system to the adolescent female. Church culture and practice and the family system together influence the adolescent female's perceived spiritual strengths and resources, her self-concept, and her gender ideology. Insights into the adolescent female's gender identity were gained from each of the self-reports of these three concepts, and a direct arrow illustrates this on the conceptual map.

Lastly, it must be noted that the influence of each of the aforementioned concepts (e.g. church culture, family system) occur over time, beginning at birth and continuing through adolescence, where identity formation coalesces. Thus identity is based not only on the individual's experiences of adolescence, but encompasses all of life's encounters up to that point.

Theoretical Definitions

The following concepts are found in the operational map and the theoretical framework.

Parental religious beliefs: The traditions and beliefs that parents ascribe to, and how it was expressed in the family ecosystem (Hodge, 2000).

Macrosystem: "Consists of the overarching pattern of micro-meso-, and exosystems characteristic of a given culture, subculture, or other broader social context, with particular reference to the developmentally-instigative belief systems, resources, hazards, life styles, opportunity structures, life course options, and patterns of social interchange that are embedded in each of these systems. May be thought of as a societal blueprint for a particular culture, subculture, or other broader social context" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

Exosystem: "Encompasses the linkage and processes taking place between two or more settings, at least one of which does not ordinarily contain the developing person, but in which events occur that influence processes within the immediate setting that does contain that person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989)

Mesosystem: "Comprises the linkages and processes taking place between two or more settings containing the developing person" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989). A mesosystem is a system of microsystems.

Microsystem: "A pattern of activities, roles, and interpersonal relations experienced by the developing person in a given face-to-face setting with particular physical and material features" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989)

Time: "Changes and continuities over time that influence a person's development" (Bronfenbrenner, 1986)

Individual traits: A range of possibilities from which an individual can self-choose different responses, depending on context. (Deaux & Major, 1990).

Personality dispositions: Concerns with self-verification or self-presentation, affected by the context in which a behavioral response occurs (Deaux & Major, 1987).

Context: The transitory factors (e.g. other people involved, societal norms) which influence the choices made regarding gender identity (Deaux & Major, 1990).

Summation

Chapter Two has investigated the pertinent literature regarding identity development, from both a psychological and a theological perspective. Both psychology and theology have premised identity development on the male experience. Feminist theories in both disciplines have amplified our knowledge of female identity development. The focus of the research is to understand the influences of both religion and family of origin on female gender identity; therefore, the theoretical and conceptual theories that were presented acknowledge the influence of both the androcentric and the feminist positions, which are evident in many church and family cultures. Chapter Three will describe the specific methodologies that will be used to study these influences on female gender identity.

Chapter 3

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative research was to explore the influences of church culture and the family of origin on the development of female gender identity. Sally Archer (1992) offers support for using qualitative methods when researching gender identity. Archer (1992) suggests listening to life stories to get an array of "senses" of identity, as people share not only their own ways of constructing their self-definitions but also their struggles, or ease in explaining, what identity is to them.

Therefore, qualitative methodology was employed in the causal research. Data collection was conducted via case studies; the sample consisted of twenty late adolescent women between the ages of 18 and 22, currently enrolled in college. The typology of sampling was stratified purposeful, in order to illustrate possible subgroups in the population for influence of denominations and family of origin differences. Stratified purposeful typology also facilitated comparisons among subgroups. Each case study included a semi-structured, open-ended interview between the informant and the researcher as well as the creation of a spiritual ecomap by the informant.

Procedures

Case study participants were drawn from among campus ministry participants at public and private colleges and universities around the state of Michigan. College women participating in campus ministry demonstrate an ongoing

commitment to spiritual growth and involvement in organized religion, which was a key component in the research. In addition, case study participants had to be living apart from their family of origin, either in campus housing, or in an apartment. Living apart from one's family removes some of the parental expectation for church attendance and involvement, as well as an opportunity to explore church and family teachings away from the individuals (i.e. spiritual leaders and parents) who were part of the microsystem of earlier development.

College women were key to the study, since enrollment in an undergraduate institution and working toward a bachelor's degree gives the implication of preparation for a career outside of the home. Some of the church denominations from which informants were drawn promote home and family as the "proper" career for a Christian woman. Age also was a factor in the study, and young women between 18 and 22, have, according to Arnett (2000) had the opportunity to reflect on their upbringing, as well as acquire experiences away from their family of origin. Arnett (2000) asserts that between the ages of 18 and 22 identity is not fully formed, and that a period of identity exploration exists for young people. Case studies of women from this age group evinced influences from family of origin and church culture and practice in the formation of identity.

Sample

Informants were solicited through a variety of means, including contacting campus pastors of mainline Christian church campus ministries, posting announcements through campus organizations, and word of mouth from informants themselves. The informants who participated in the case studies

were Caucasian with the exception of two informants, one of whom was African American, and the other was Asian. There were several reasons why there was a predominance of Caucasian women. First, in an effort to find a rationale to support which church denominations to include in the study, an objective source was sought. Mead and Hill's (1995) Handbook of Denominations provided information that ultimately constricted the denominations to those identified as "mainline Christian." These denominations trace their origins back to the Reformation, which occurred in Germany in 1517. The denominations, then, have western-European roots, and this is evident in the predominance of Caucasian members. Secondly, having affirmed the influence of culture (mesosystem) in the review of literature in Chapter 2, it must be noted that the expectations for women vary from culture to culture. Due to the small number of women who were studied (twenty), informants with similar cultural backgrounds enhanced the variables that exist between denominations as well as in the family of origin. The researcher acknowledges the importance of studying females from all cultures. However, the predominance of Caucasian informants in the present research helped to clarify the influences of denominational and family factors, and will enhance the opportunities to include other ethnicities as research on identity continues beyond the present study. A demographic summary of informants is provided in Tables 3.1A and B.

TABLE 3.1A: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NAME	AGE	RELIGIOUS TRADITION	GREW UP IN	LIVED IN HOUSEHOLD	PARENTS' ED. LEVEL
Joann	19	Baptist	Monroe, MI	Mom, Dad, brother, sister	Mom=BD Dad=DDS
Donna	18	Baptist	Milan, MI	Mom, Dad, sister	Mom=Mstr's Dad=BD
Jacque	18	Baptist	Detroit, MI	Mom (Dad)	Mom=Mstr's Dad=Mstr's
Libby	20	Baptist	Novi, MI	Mom, Dad, 3 brothers	Mom=HS Dad=BD
Ellen	22	Episcopal	Ypsilanti, MI	Mom, Dad, sister, relatives	Mom=Mstr's Dad=BD
Jane	20	Episcopal	Ypsilanti, MI	Mom, sister, bother, (Dad)	Mom=BD Dad=Mstr's
Nicole	19	Lutheran (ELCA)	Cadillac, MI	Mom, Dad, sister, brother	Mom=BD Dad=BD
Erin	21	Lutheran (ELCA)	Portage, MI	Mom, Dad, brother	Mom=SC Dad=BD
Margaret	20	Lutheran (LCMS)	Saginaw, MI	Mom, Dad, sister	Mom=BD Dad=M.Div.
Lucy	19	Lutheran (LCMS)	Ann Arbor, MI	Mom, Dad, sister, brother	Mom=Mstr's Dad=Mstr's
Emma	18	Lutheran (LCMS)	Saginaw & White Lake, MI	Mom, Dad, sister	Mom=Mstr's Dad=BD
Renee	20	Lutheran (LCMS)	Silver Spring, MD, Whitmore Lake, MI	Mom, Dad, 2 sisters, 1 brother	Mom=Mstr's Dad=Ph.D./ M.D.

LEGEND:
HS = high school diploma
SC = some college, no degree
M.Div. = Master of Divinity
Mstr's = Master's degree

ELCA=Evangelical Lutheran Church in America
LCMS=Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod

RN = Nursing school
BD = Bachelor's degree
DDS = Doctor of Dentistry
(Dad) = Divorce, Dad lived in separate home

TABLE 3.1B: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

NAME	AGE	RELIGIOUS TRADITION	GREW UP IN	LIVED IN HOUSEHOLD	PARENTS' ED. LEVEL
Lana	20	Methodist	Conneaut, OH	Mom, Dad, sister, brother	Mom=RN Dad=HS
Bonnie	22	Methodist	Plymouth, MI	Mom, Dad, brother	Mom=BD Dad=Mstr's
Molly	19	Methodist	Grand Rapids, MI	Mom & Dad	Mom=Mstr's Dad=BD
Carrie	19	Methodist	Ann Arbor, MI	Mom and brother; (Dad)	Mom=Mstr's Dad=un-known
Leah	20	Presbyterian	Cedarburg, WI & Brighton, MI	Mom, Dad, sister, brother	Mom=BD Dad=Mstr's
LeeAnn	19	Presbyterian	Livonia, MI	Mom, Dad, sister, half-sister	Mom=BD Dad=Mstr's
Kara	19	Presbyterian	Brighton, MI	Mom, Dad, sister	Mom=SC Dad=BD
Joy	19	Presbyterian	Brighton, MI	Mom, Dad, half-brother	Mom=BD Dad=BD

LEGEND:

HS = high school diploma
SC = some college, no degree
M.Div. = Master of Divinity
Mstr's = Master's degree
RN = Nursing school
BD = Bachelor's degree
DDS = Doctor of Dentistry
(Dad) = Divorce, Dad lived in separate home

Methods

The methodology of the case study consisted of two parts, the first of which was an interview between the informant and the researcher. The interview questions (Appendix A) allowed the researcher to gain more in-depth information from the informant regarding the spiritual practices and influences of the family of origin and her church. The second piece of the case study was the creation of a spiritual ecomap by the informant (Appendix B). Based on the research of David Hodge (2000), the spiritual ecomap visually depicts the informant's relationships with influential components of her microsystem, which, Hodge asserts, contribute to identity formation. The ecomap displays the woman's spiritual strengths and what she views as her spiritual resources. Together, the interview and the ecomap yielded insight into three concepts believed to shape gender identity: spiritual strengths and resources, self-concept, and perceived gender role expectations.

To assure validity of the methodology, two pilot tests were conducted prior to beginning the case studies. The pilot tests assisted the researcher in knowing how much time the process took, which was helpful information to offer when soliciting informants. In addition, the pilot tests allowed the researcher to make certain that the interview questions were clearly comprehensible to the informant. Interview question ten ("How did your family express its spiritual beliefs?") proved awkward during both pilot tests; neither of the informants quite grasped the concept. This difficulty was addressed by adding the phrase "at home" at the end of the question. During the pilot tests, the researcher discovered the

importance of stepping out of the room while the informant filled out the ecomap, allowing each woman the opportunity to think and create the map in private. The informants were quite willing to share the finished product, both visually and verbally, but appeared uncomfortable with my presence during the creation process. It also became apparent that it was necessary to assure the informants that questions eight and twenty one were not "trick" questions ("Tell me your definition of what it means to be religious;" and "Describe your relationship to God."). Facial and body language indicated that informants thought these questions might be testing their theological knowledge and/or some other researcher agenda. Therefore, when posing these questions in subsequent interviews, they were always prefaced with the statement, "This is not a theological question, I'm interested in your definition/description." Lastly, the order of the interview changed from the first to the second pilot test, and that order was used for the remainder of the interviews. Initially, the intent had been to have informants complete the ecomap first, and then proceed with the interview questions. It was decided to change the format of the interview for two reasons; first, asking basic demographic questions at the outset facilitated the informants' overall level of trust and ease. Secondly, it was found that informants' ability to complete the ecomap was assisted by some introduction to the content of the interview.

The interview questions were created from the research questions, which provided overall guidance to the research project. The relationship between the research questions and the interview questions is illustrated in Table 3.2 A and

B. Due to the inter-relationship of concepts among the research questions, some of the interview questions brought insight to more than one of the research questions. The ecomap (Appendix B) allowed informants to create a visual picture of their spiritual strengths and weakness (research question 4). The circles on the map representing spiritual influences in the participants' lives included some prompts (i.e. circles already labeled), as well as blank circles for individual assignment.

Operational Map

The operational map (Figure 3.1) illustrates the research process, built on the foundations of church culture and parents and family of origin. The contexts of church and family of origin, part of Brenfenbrenner's (1987) micro-and meso-systems, were shown to play a key role in gender identity development. Grotevant (1992), a theorist and researcher of adolescent identity, upholds the importance of context in the development of identity, asserting that identity is continually updated as new experiences are encountered. James Cote (1996) also supports the influence of contextual forces, stating that "identity is not the exclusive property of the individual but rather is something that is realized strategically and circumstantially" (p. 132). One must acknowledge, Cote maintains, that the individual constructs identity in relation to external circumstances such as day-to-day interactions, cultural institutions (e.g. church) and social structures (e.g. family).

The content of the interview questions is depicted in the foundational concepts, which rest upon the dual foundations of church and family. Deaux and

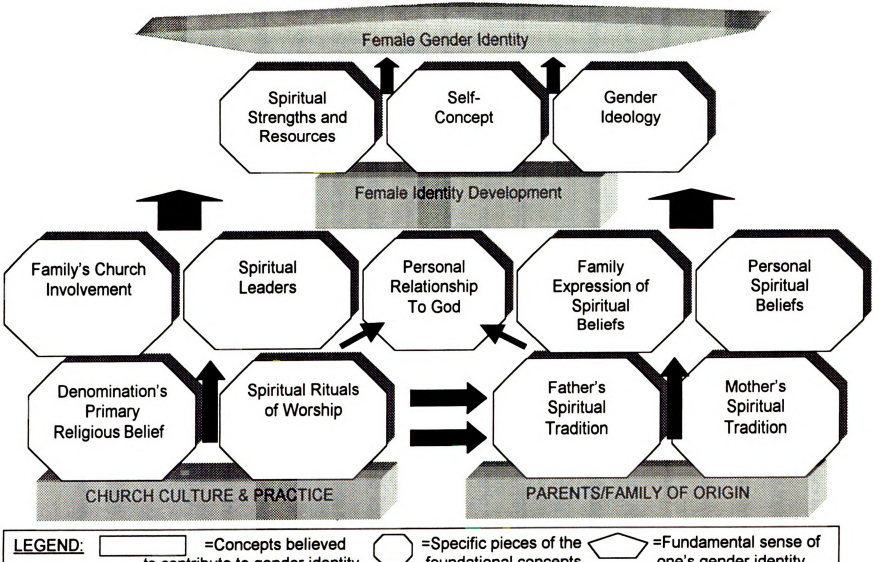
TABLE 3.2A: The Relationship Between Research Questions and Interview Questions

Research Question	Interview Questions
1. How does the culture of the church influence female identity development?	6. What was the religious tradition you grew up in? 7. What are the primary beliefs of your religious community? 17. Describe your relationship with those you consider to hold a position of spiritual leadership in your life. 21. Describe your relationship to God. 22. What facilitates the sense of closeness(distance) with God?
2. How do the practices of the church influence female identity development?	18. What do you believe is women's role in your church? 20. Do you feel that your church is open and supportive to you as a woman in the goals that you have set for yourself?
3. How do parent's religious practices and beliefs influence female identity development?	9. What was your level of involvement in your faith community as you were growing up? 10. How did your family express its spiritual beliefs at home? 11. What sort of religious experiences stand out during your years at home? 12. What particular rituals or practices nurture your family's spiritual tradition? 13. How much autonomy did you experience within your family's spiritual tradition? 14. What were the similarities/differences between your parents' expressions of faith? 15. How did those differences in beliefs/practices affect you and your relationship with either parent? 16. How would you describe your current relationship to your family's religious traditions?

TABLE 3.2B: The Relationship Between Research Questions and Interview Questions

4. How do spiritual strengths and resources contribute to female identity?	9. What was your level of involvement in your faith community as you were growing up? 11. What sort of religious experiences stand out during your years at home? 17. Describe your relationship with those you consider to hold a position of spiritual leadership in your life.
5. How does self-concept contribute to female identity?	13. How much autonomy did you experience within your family's spiritual tradition? 19. How does your spirituality relate to your plans for your life? Your expectations for career and family? 21. Describe your relationship to God. 22. What facilitates the sense of closeness (distance) with God?
6. How does gender ideology contribute to female identity?	13. How much autonomy did you experience within your family's spiritual tradition? 18. What do you believe is women's role in your church? 19. How does your spirituality relate to your plans for your life? Your expectations for career and family? 20. Do you feel that your church is open and supportive to you as a woman in the goals that you have set for yourself?

FIGURE 3.1: OPERATIONAL MAP



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Major (1990) posit that the degree to which gender associations are referred to either consciously or unconsciously in a particular context has a direct effect on the influence of gender identity. For this reason, the conceptual map includes parental faith traditions, naming of key spiritual leaders within the church, and description of the faith community. Similarities and differences between parents' expression of faith were asked in the interview portion of the case study.

The arrows flowing sideways portray the influence of church culture and practice on the informant, her parents, and her family of origin. The foundational concepts on the right side of the map focus on the expression of spiritual beliefs within the family itself. The informant's personal relationship to God is placed between the two foundational concepts, to illustrate that the relationship to God bridges both foundational influences of church culture and practice as well as family of origin. The arrows flowing upwards indicate the assertion that all components of the foundational concepts directly contribute to female adolescent identity development. While there are many components that contribute to development of identity, the proposed research focuses specifically on spiritual strengths and resources, self-concept, and gender ideology.

Flax (1990) affirms the importance of gender identity to the overall concept of self, declaring that gender is a category of thought which affects society. Supporting Bronfenbrenner's and Deaux's assertions regarding the importance of context, Flax describes gender as a social relationship, shaped by social relations. Certainly the contexts of church and family, central to those who

practice the Christian faith, offer powerful contexts in which to explore gender identity.

Operational Definitions

The concepts that follow are taken from the operational map, and define how the terms will be used in the proposed research.

- *Culture:* The way of life followed by members of the informant's denomination,
  including their world view, structures of behavior, and perspectives on life.

- *Mainline ChristianDenominations:* Methodists, Lutherans, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Baptists

- *Church Culture and Practice:* Influenced by denominational doctrine, culture and practice are the result of what is believed and valued, and is evinced in the day-to-day life of worship, education, and fellowship gatherings of church members.

- *Spiritual Leaders:* Professional ministry staff of a church—Senior Pastor, Youth Pastor, Youth Leader, Minister of Music, Director Of Christian Education, and the like.

- *Spiritual Rituals of Worship:* Informant's description of who is involved in corporate worship, and what activities constitute worship.

- *Relationship to God:* Informant's self-reported sense of closeness to God, and how that relates to her day-to-day life.

- *Denominations Primary Religious Beliefs:* Informant's summation of the primary tenets of her church's doctrine.

- *Family Church Involvement:* How often informant's family attended church, and in what groups and/or activities family members participated.

- *Parents:* Biological, adoptive, and/or step-parents that informant lived with while growing up.

- *Family of Origin:* Parents, step-parents, siblings, step/half-siblings and any extended family that lived in the house with the informant while she was growing up.

- *Father's Spiritual Tradition:* Father's expression (verbal and actions) of his beliefs about God and organized religion.

- *Mother's Spiritual Tradition:* Mother's expression (verbal and actions) of her beliefs about God and organized religion.

- *Personal Spiritual Beliefs:* Informant's primary beliefs about God and organized religion.

- *Family Expression of Spiritual Beliefs:* Specific spiritual rituals done as a family in the home.

- *Spiritual Strengths and Resources:* The informant's self-described strengths and resources, as depicted in the spiritual ecomap.

- *Self-Concept:* The informant's self-values, self-beliefs, self-feelings, and self-assessments.

- *Gender Ideology:* The informant's self-description of gender appropriate behaviors.

- *Identity Development:* The result of ongoing interactions which include personal expectancies, and context as sampled in church culture and family of origin (Deaux & Major, 1987).

- *Female Gender Identity:* "The fundamental, existential sense of one's femaleness, an acceptance of one's gender as a social psychological construction that parallels acceptance of one's biological sex" (Deaux & Major, 1990).
  "To have commitments in those domains that you yourself see as central to personhood, and to have an overriding sense of self that coordinates these commitments" (Moshman, 1999, p. 86).

Researcher as Instrument.

I have a long history with the focus of the proposed research; given the qualitative nature of the methodology, my personal biases must be acknowledged. Growing up, my family attended church on a regular basis; my siblings and I attended Sunday School and mid-week school, and family members were involved in service and fellowship organizations. The denomination to which my family belonged has a long history of down-playing the

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importance of women's gifts and abilities, and maintains a very narrow doctrinal stance on what women can contribute to the church's ministry. The denomination does not ordain women, nor are women found in leadership in the full-time paid positions at the national, state, or local level. In some congregations female members are not allowed to vote in matters pertaining to the governance of that parish.

Since adolescence, I have been aware that my behaviors and aspirations do not fit the mold of what is considered acceptable in my denomination. In high school I wanted to be youth group president, which was considered a male role. I attended a university owned and operated by the denomination in which I had been raised; I challenged my internship placement because it was based on gender expectations I didn't feel I could fulfill. Over the course of my twenty-one year career within the churches, schools, and universities of the denomination, I have continued to challenge expectations and boundaries based on gender. I am proud of the tag given by one of my colleagues—"the divine irritant."

Over time, I have noted that within the church, many of my female peers as well as students in my classes do not share my perspectives on the gender inequities within our denomination. I have observed that female students who come from very conservative religious homes hold very rigid views on acceptable attitudes and behaviors for their gender.

I grew up in the same church; how did I end up with such different views? Enter the variable of family of origin. Throughout my childhood and adolescence my mother worked full-time outside of the home; as a young girl my father told

me I could do anything I set my mind to, and gave me opportunities to do so. All of these experiences and perspectives come with me as I embark on this research.

Data Collection

Data were collected during an individual meeting between informant and researcher during the months of March through July of 2001. The majority of interviews took place in campus churches, or in student resident halls. The interviews took, on average, one hour. After introductions, the researcher went over the consent form with the informant, for her signature. Included in the explanation of the consent form was the request for permission to tape the interview. The interview began with the collection of demographic data (e.g. name, age), which allowed the informant a few moments to become comfortable with the interview process. The interview questions proceeded as numbered, through the completion of number sixteen. At this point in the interview, informants were provided with the blank ecomap, a box of colored pencils, and basic instructions on how to create the map. Informants were then left alone in the room until they had completed the process, which was anywhere from six to ten minutes. When the researcher re-entered the room, the informant was then asked to explain her ecomap, and the remainder of the interview questions were posed.

An undergraduate student assistant, who was paid by the researcher, transcribed taped data from each interview. Interview tapes were transcribed

verbatim. Tapes were labeled with a letter or number, to protect the informant and keep interview responses confidential.

Data Analysis

Decisions regarding coding, whether to pre-code, and how to coordinate the data from the ecomap with the interview data was key information gleaned from the pilot studies. Data gathered from the two pilot-studies were examined for decisions regarding the case studies that comprised the research. The two pilot interviews were very different, despite similarities in the informants' present situations. Therefore, it was the decision of the researcher not to precode, allowing for further information from the interviews to inform the coding process. The researcher did take field notes during the interview process, particularly to memo things that the tape would not pick up (e.g. facial expressions, body language). A contact summary form (Appendix C) was completed after each interview. This form incorporated field notes as well as impressions and reflections from the researcher.

After the interviews were completed, the researcher began to create codes based on concepts taken from the conceptual framework and research questions. After this step, several other codes were added which reflected key variables that had become evident over the course of the interview process. A listing of codes used for data analysis is provided in Table 3.3.

Data analysis included examination of each informant's ecomap, which was completed during the interview process. The pilot ecomaps provided visual credibility to the data gathered through interview questions regarding informant

TABLE 3.3: CODING SCHEMES

Demographics:

AGE	- age of participant
CITY	- city and state grew up in

Church culture and practice codes:

CC	- church culture
RT	- religious tradition
WRC	- women's role in church
GOSUP	- church supports personal goals

Family of origin codes:

PAM	- parents' marital status
EDU	- parents' educational status
SIB	- siblings
PDIFF	- parental differences
RITS	- family spiritual rituals/practices

Spiritual strengths and resources codes:

SPR	- spiritual resources
SS	- spiritual strengths
SL	- spiritual leaders
GOD	- relationship with God
EXP	- standout religious experiences

Self-concept codes:

COLEX	- college classes/experiences
CONNECT	- connection to religious tradition
AUTO	- autonomy w/in family's religious tradition
LIFP	- life plans

Gender ideology codes:

CAFAM	- expectations for career and family

spiritual strengths and resources. Confirmation of the information from each of the informants was achieved via the triangulation of data between their interview question responses and their ecomaps. The ecomap readings were integrated into the analysis of the interview questions in the discussion of findings with regard to research questions one, three, and four.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Overview

This study explored the influence of church culture and the family system in shaping female identity formation. From my interviews of twenty college women between ages nineteen and twenty-two, I gained insight into the effects of their experiences growing up in Christian churches as well as the influences from their family of origin on the development of their gender identity. Listening to their responses to the interview questions and examining their ecomaps provided an understanding of their gender identity. Dialoging with informants evinced support for how influential church practices, parental spiritual beliefs, and family spiritual activities have been on the development of gender identity. Joann, a nineteen year old raised in the Baptist church, states:

> "Yeah, I, uh, well, I..I tend to have like...how do I word this? I tend to express my views quite a bit...when sometimes, like, as long as it's not going against what like, what my husband believes.....so basically, I'm gonna have to learn how to be submissive. That could probably take a long time."

Renee, a twenty year old who identified herself as a Lutheran, was raised in a family that embraced both her father's Lutheran tradition and her mother's Mennonite background.

> "Acapella singing is–it's integral to my family, but also to my mom's spiritual tradition. And even the hair, to some extent, because they believe that hair is a glory and a covering for women.....My mom actually wouldn't let us cut it until we got to be, um, old enough.....I've always had long hair....it's sort of who I am."

These quotes illustrate just how great the influences of church doctrine and practice as well as the expression of spirituality within the family were in the development of gender identity of the informants. First-hand information gained via the interviews also revealed how self-concept influenced female adolescent identity through self-beliefs, self-feelings, and self-assessments. In addition, the ecomaps created by the informants provided visual information that supported the verbal data. The analysis of the data gathered is presented in six sections, each section devoted to addressing one of the research questions.

Summary of Results

Research Question One: The Culture of the Church as an Influence on Female Adolescent Identity Development.

The first research question focused on the influence of the church in which the informant attended, and included denominational factors such as doctrinal stance, the influence of spiritual leaders, and the informant's personal perspective on her relationship to God.

Primary religious beliefs.

Feminist theologians assert that the beliefs and practices of religious denominations shape self-perception (see discussion in Chapter 2). King (1995) asserts that, "perceptions of ourselves are shaped by and deeply rooted in our culturally shared religious and philosophical heritage" (p.2). Denominational ties were clearly visible in the verbal responses to the interview question, " What are the primary beliefs of your religious community?" Similarity among responses fell

into categories according to the denomination to which the women were affiliated.

Baptist respondents emphasized the centrality of Jesus' death on the cross to their overall belief system. Joann mentioned the Baptist belief in predestination as central:

> "Well, we believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross, um, to save our sins....well, some Baptists believe in double predestination, so like, it's basically a Baptist thing..."

Donna, also a Baptist, echoed the belief in Jesus, but included the role of baptism:

> "...that you believe in Jesus Christ and that he died, um, and rose again to be saved, um , that you should be baptized as a symbol of your faith, and that's what I'm going to say is the major ones."

Both women's statements of faith included beliefs/practices that are key doctrinal issues associated with the Baptist church.

Methodists noted the importance of social action and liberalism, along with faith in Christ and the role of human free will. Lana, who is planning on becoming a Methodist minister, also mentioned the founder of the denomination:

> "Um, well, it's founded by John Wesley. And, um, a lot of it's on the free will, and that's the idea."

Bonnie, a life-long Methodist, was frustrated by the question, and ultimately offered:

> "It seems from what I've observed that it's a little more liberal in it's social ideas, I think."

Molly, who began attending the Methodist church in middle school, repeated the liberal theme:

> "Like, it's more of a liberal church. I feel like it's your belief, your relationship with God is very personal. It's not, there's not so many strict, like, it's kind of more open.... I see it as, and just that message to love one another."

Presbyterians, like Baptists, frequently mentioned the importance of Jesus, however their emphasis was on Jesus as the "only way." Joy's response to the question regarding beliefs, was typical of the Presbyterian women.

> "Jesus is the only way to God, and that he is, you know, I mean, he was a living sacrifice and that he lived a perfect life, and...made the ultimate sacrifice for us..."

Lee Ann's reply included a doctrinal statement associated with the Presbyterian church:

> "The essential is unity, the nonessential's liberty. So, like, unity, our essentials would be like, um, believing in Jesus to go to heaven, and, um, ...different things like that. The nonessentials would be like sacraments, that like, you can take your own view on it, because they don't think that's like going to impact how you go to heaven."

Lutheran women frequently mentioned the concept of the trinity (Father, Son, Holy Spirit), and the importance of grace, not good works.

> "Jesus died on the cross to save our sins...and we're saved through grace and not by works."
>
> Nicole

> "Well, I would have to say that it's pretty much built on grace through Jesus coming and saving the world through grace, through dying on the cross, through rising again."
>
> Emma

It was evident that the perspective of each respondent regarding the beliefs of their denomination were influenced by their own personal needs and/or

experiences. Renee, who has attended many different denominations, and whose mother is a Mennonite, found her understanding of Lutheranism through the religious practices of the college she was currently attending.

> "Since I don't have a constant church community, (college) has sort of become that.....Um, when I came here, I, um, I was not quite so much in agreement with Lutheran doctrine as I am now."

Erin, who identified herself as a lesbian, described the church's position on gays and lesbians, and knew that there was a difference between the local congregation and the larger church body.

> "The church as in this congregation? Or this church as in the denomination? The ELCA is not...as...big on ...um, welcoming gays and lesbians...I would say the average one (church) they would welcome them as members...most of the time...but the church itself it...uh...in terms of leadership, is very anti-gay."

The responses from the two Episcopalian informants covered the importance of diversity, acceptance, and encouragement to seek out truth; however, neither woman directly mentioned the role of faith in God or Jesus.

> "Well, the way I usually describe it is being really Catholic without all the rules."
>
> Ellen

> "....recognizing diversity...accepting people, because they have common beliefs...another really big thing is charity, as far as outreach, and community, and giving back."
>
> Jane

The themes evident among the denominations illustrate the influence of church doctrine on shaping perception of self, as the informants readily provided their perspective on the beliefs of their church.

Spiritual leaders.

Related to the assessment of church culture as an influence on identity development was the perception of who has provided spiritual leadership. Those recognized as spiritual leaders provided a role model to the informants, regarding expected female behavior as a Christian in that church body. Deaux's (1987) theory acknowledges the importance of the social situation in which the informants have interacted with their spiritual leaders, as those situations assist in creating expectancies regarding gender behavior. Several women named family members, which will be discussed later in the chapter; for the purpose of focusing on the influence of church culture, only the responses which named church staff, that is, clergy as well as youth directors, music directors, and the like, were examined. When asked to name spiritual leaders in their lives, there was no clear division along denominational lines. All Lutheran and Methodist respondents named at least one clergy or other church staff member. Among the other denominations, at least one respondent in each denomination named someone on their church staff as a spiritual leader.

Donna, a Baptist with a troubled home life, described a very close relationship with her youth pastor and his wife. Donna's response illustrates the influence church staff have not only in spiritual matters, but in day-to-day situations, including family dynamics.

> "Well, I would say, like the first people that really ever, really helped me and guide me, and I really got to know them, were my youth pastor and his wife back in (city). Um, I mean, he taught Sunday school, and his wife was there every weekend...you could go to her or him, depending on like what you wanted to talk about... and so they really helped me, like, I was having a hard time at home, or I just, they would help me put it back in perspective, like you know, your parent's really don't need, it's just that they have a hard time showing...it's not all your fault, what's going on at home...so they really helped me and got me, and just encouraged me to like, stay strong and not give up."

Jane, an Episcopalian, also describes a close relationship with her pastor, which has spanned much of her lifetime.

> "....our minister and our assistant minister at our church, I think, are, you know, a big part of that... the head minister has known me since I was 5 years old...."

Twelve respondents named spiritual leaders who were church staff whose specific title and responsibilities focused on middle and high school youth. The influence of these staff members on informants' adolescent years left a lasting impression for these women.

> "First it was Jake Nottingham, and we were really close with him. And Mrs. Dupere, I'm close with her. So it's like I've been close to the youth leaders..."
>
> Lucy, a Lutheran

Joy had a very positive experience as member of a small group Bible study in high school, comprised of females who were in the same grade. Joy's response illustrates the tremendous influence youth workers have on identity development.

> "....our small group leader Susan has been, she's just, she's definitely an awesome woman of God, who, uh, you know, she was there every week, and you know, had us over to her house, and all that kind of thing, you know, definitely, she was a friend and also, just like someone to look up to, you know, like an example of a good wife and mom, and servant..."

Not all informants, however, have felt comfortable with church staff members. Molly, a nineteen year old Methodist, states:

> "I'm taking things in from them, but I just, I'm never, they intimidate me for some reason, and I just never had a personal relationship with them....Like, I'm religious, but I don't tell them my problems...I'd like too, but I just haven't yet..."

In order to participate in the interview process, one of the requirements was that the informant be involved in campus ministry. As I began to conduct the interviews, I realized that I had expected that there would be some reference to the influence of the informant's involvement in campus ministry. Only four students named campus staff as spiritual leaders, and the role of campus ministry in facilitating a closeness to God was mentioned twice. Perhaps the primary focus of the interview questions on family and growing up years had the respondents thinking more about their lives up to that point. However, the questions about spiritual leadership and their relationship with God were worded in the present tense. Another influence may be the age of the respondents, the majority of whom were eighteen or nineteen, first or second year college students. They simply have not had enough interaction and experiences with their respective campus ministries to feel the influence of the connection.

Relationship to God.

When asked to describe their relationship to God, and the closeness or distance of that relationship, the responses varied widely. Jane, at twenty, does not feel as close to God as she hopes to be.

> "Not being secure in my faith, as much as I hopefully will be when I'm older, when things are a little more solid in my life, as far as relationships and just being done with school, and being set in a career path...."

Ellen's response to the query reflected her recent successful treatment for a malignant melanoma.

> "I'm very thankful, I think that would be the description. And I feel very fortunate. I feel that I have a very fortunate life. And God being part of that, you know, and having the spirituality that I have, I'm very thankful..."

Several of the women described their relationship to God as one of dependence, and that they could always trust God to meet their needs.

> "I pray to God all the time, for lots of things, I try to talk to him a lot...for help with dealing with things..."
>
> Nicole, age 19

> "I mean, he's like my best friend. Like I can talk to him about everything, whenever I need help."
>
> Libby, age 20

> "...and just that I can always, like, turn to God... and, like, I might not get the answer right away, but yet, like, I know that he will provide it for me."
>
> Joann, age 19

> "...it's an ongoing relationship, and even when I'm not doing my part, I totally believe that God is there and God's taking care of me...."
>
> Emma, age 18

At the time of the interview, Erin was just days away from her college graduation, and was uncertain whether she would pursue a graduate degree in sociology or attend seminary. Her description of her relationship with God, however, was quite certain.

> "I work for God, I work with God....But mostly it's the working for, I really think. And I'm supported by God, and I look for answers, but for the most part how I really see myself, in terms of a relationship with God, is that I work for God..."

Since Erin belongs to a Lutheran denomination that ordains women, it is possible that the models of women in leadership had influenced her perspective on God. While models of women in leadership may, indeed, have played a part, there must be other factors that came into play, given Bonnie's response.

> "I think that my, uh, image of the God in my life is kind of as a father figure, a parent figure, it's kind of looking out for me. Helping me along the way, when I need it, making sure that I don't fall into any....big pits (laugh). it's kind of like that, more than like friend relationship, I would say it's more like a mentor-parent type figure."

Bonnie belongs to the Methodist church, which also ordains women; she was a student at the same large university as Erin, and was also just days away from graduation. Bonnie's response raises questions about the possibility of variation of self- identity under differing circumstances. She was poised to graduate with a degree in mechanical engineering from a highly competitive program in which, Bonnie noted, women comprise only "about 20 percent" of the students. Her response regarding her relationship to God was the most patriarchal and

theologically traditional, yet she grew up in a church that is one of the more liberal denominations among mainline religions.

The theme of reliance was also present in the responses to the question posed regarding closeness or distance to God. Lee Ann, age nineteen, stated that not relying on God pushes her away from him.

> "...not relying on him when I have decisions. Um, even the little things, I'm like, 'Oh, I can take care of that,' and then like by doing that, slowly and slowly other things, I'm like, 'Oh, I can handle that, too,' and it just draws me; the more I rely on myself, the further I get from God."

Joy's response includes the importance of reading the Bible in keeping her close to God.

> "...when I'm, when I'm in the Word, or you know, if I haven't, if I haven't been reading, and it's hard because sometimes it's like I can go, you know, a few days without reading it, and I find it sometimes, like the next day I'm like, 'Who is God again? I forget.'"

Renee reiterates the importance of reading the Bible, but does so from a much more pragmatic perspective.

> "Well, always for me—it's sort of a measure of how close I feel to God is how regularly I'm willing to take time out of my day to read the Bible and pray. Um, and I can tell you that it might even be going to church on Sunday can be a gauge of that. And there have been times the last two or three years where I have gone four or five months without cracking my Bible open."

The most frequent response noted with regard to closeness to God was the importance of prayer. Molly states the role of prayer very succinctly:

"Um...so like, sometimes like when I pray, and when I, sometimes...I don't know, I can't even, you feel some type of connection and you know someone's listening to you and...and...I think you know that he's affecting your life and leading you, like that's, that's when I feel close."

With regard to their relationship with God, other significant responses included the role of Christian friends and church as facilitators in maintaining a close relationship with God.

"It definitely helps me when I'm in an environment where other people have the same beliefs as me and are pretty much on the same level."
Emma, age 18

"I think, well, how I feel close to God is hanging out with my friends who are religious. Like going to the campus ministry stuff always helps."
Lucy, age 19

"Um..like being around other Christians, and, you know, practicing worship, like when I go to a Christian camp over the summer and when I get back from camp, I'm just like on a spiritual high.....So I guess it depends on who you're around, that helps influence that."
Libby, age 20

"I think going to church, and I think having the friends that I do, who, who support that and make sure that I'm, they're there for me, and if I need anything, I think that is a direct extension of God, that they're the angels in my life..."
Jane, age 20

Ecomaps.

Each informant completed a spiritual ecomap, a visual display of their connections and relationships regarding their spiritual beliefs (Appendix B). Information regarding church culture was gleaned by examining their connection

to the circle labeled "faith community." The thickness of the line connecting the informant to the faith community circle indicated the strength of the relationship. Arrows were used to show flow of energy; that is, if the woman felt encouraged and uplifted by her faith community, the arrow went from the faith community circle to the informant circle. If the woman also felt that she gave back to the faith community, the arrow went both directions between the informant circle and the faith community circle. Twelve women indicated that the flow of energy was bi-directional between the faith community and themselves. Five women used uni-directional arrows, illustrating the flow of energy coming from the faith community to them. Several of the informants mentioned feeling less connected to their faith community since they had gone off to college. Donna used the designated notation (d-d-d) to indicate that she felt distant from her faith community. In the interview, she offered this explanation:

> "I definitely feel less connected just because, um, of situations happening in my church, and that I'm not there, um, and that our pastor is leaving in June, so....I just don't care to be there right now."

Carrie used a dashed line to illustrate her conflictual feelings regarding her relationship with the congregation in which she grew up, recounting some negative social interactions.

> "....Um, it was definitely, like for the girls, it was a contest to see who had like the best dress or what ever. And for the guys, they guys were just, you know, all hormone crazed. And that's just what I felt like, like it was a match-making thing. And I didn't really like it."

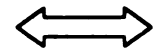
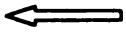
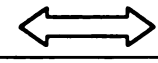
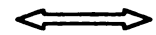
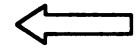
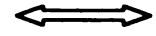
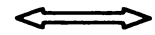
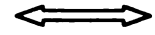
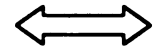
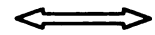
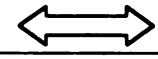
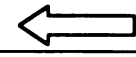
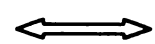
A summary of the variables applicable to the first research question regarding the influence of church culture on identity development is presented as a cross case display in Table 4.1. Responses to the pertinent interview questions are presented, along with the informants' ecomap symbols showing their relationship to their faith community. Women who did not name any church staff members as spiritual leaders were given a zero in that category. The width of the arrow in the ecomap category indicates the strength of the relationship as indicated by the informant.

Research Question Two: The Practices of the Church as an Influence on Female Adolescent Identity Development.

The second research question focused on the practices of the church culture as influences in female identity development. The first research question examined the unseen influences of church culture, that is doctrinal stance and perceptions regarding one's relationship with God. The second question took into account the ways in which doctrinal stance is put into practice. From a practical perspective, it is who does what in the day-to-day operations of the church, and includes actions and statements that can be seen or heard.

Human ecology theory, which provided the foundation upon which this research was designed, recognized the influence of the environment in human development (Bubolz & Sontag, in Boss, Doherty, et. al, 1993). The principle aim of ecological systems theory is the "systematic understanding of the processes and outcomes of human development as a joint function of the *person*

TABLE 4.1: INFLUENCE OF CHURCH CULTURE

NAME	CHURCH DOCTRINE	SPIRITUAL LEADER	RELATE TO GOD	CLOSE TO GOD	ECOMAP
Joann Baptist	Jesus died for sins	1 church staff	Can always turn for answers	Through prayer	
Donna Baptist	Jesus died and rose	1 church staff, 1 campus staff	Growing	Devotions and prayer	d-d-d-d-d
Jacque Baptist	One God, Trinity	0	Could be stronger	Relying on God	
Libby Baptist	Trusting Jesus	0	Best friend	Christian friends	
Ellen Episcopalian	Accepting, open	0	Thankful	Is always close	
Jane Episcopalian	Recognize diversity	2 church staff	Wants to be closer	Attend church	
Nicole Lutheran	Jesus died for sins	2 campus staff	Talk w/& ask advice	Feel God's presence	
Erin Lutheran	Welcoming outreach	4 campus staff	Work w/& for God	Campus church	
Margaret Lutheran	Jesus as sacrifice	1 church staff	Ambivalent	Attending church, song	
Lucy Lutheran	Believe in God	3 church staff	Always more to learn	Friends, campus ministry	
Emma Lutheran	Grace via Jesus	1 church staff	Source of strength	Christian friends	
Renee Lutheran	College practices	0	Growing	Taking time for God	
Lana Methodist	Free will	2 church staff, 1 campus staff	Distant when busy	Actions, mood	
Bonnie Methodist	Liberal social ideas	1 church staff	Father, parent figure	Distant when busy	
Molly Methodist	Personal to God	2 church staff	Question & trust	Prayer	
Carrie Methodist	Accepting Christ	3 church staff	Purpose in life	Prayer, church	
Leah Presbyterian	Jesus only way	Bible study leader	Serious, grown up	Too much on feelings	
Lee Ann Presbyterian	Essentials/ Nonessential	0	Trust and follow	Rely for decisions	
Kara Presbyterian	Jesus as sacrifice	0	Time w/ God	Obedience	
Joy Presbyterian	Jesus only way	4 church staff	Provider, strength	Bible study, prayer	

Legend: __=relationship d-d=distant relationship  =energy flows from church to informant
----=conflicted relationship  =energy flows to/from church and informant

and the *environment*" (Bronfenbrenner, 1989, p. 188). Bronfenbrenner (1989) further asserts that the individual is influenced by cultural ideations and expectations. These ideations and expectations are certainly present in church culture. Feminist theologians also have acknowledged the influence of the environment in creating narrow depictions of who women are (Rosenblatt, 1991).

Women's role in the church.

The influence of the practical aspects of church culture on identity development were clearly visible in the informants' responses to the question, "What do you believe is women's role in your church?" Respondents frequently named specific tasks and duties that they have observed women filling in their congregation.

> "Women have a big role. They can be elders, youth ministers, and teachers."
>
> Leah, a Presbyterian

> "I definitely think that there are many positions for women that need to be filled. Like here we have lots of committees, and I'm on one of them."
>
> Emma, a Lutheran

> "Well, I know in my church like women have, they have this thing called...umm...hearth keepers, or heart keepers, something like that. But they, they pretty much put on all the banquets or gather, like social gatherings...."
>
> Libby, a Baptist

The practical implementation of each denomination's doctrinal position on women in leadership was completely evident. Once again, respondents' perspectives on women's role in the church fell clearly along denominational

lines. Three out of four Baptists did not believe that women should be pastors, and that fact was shared before offering acceptable women's roles.

> "A woman could not be a pastor in our church. Her role is just to be submissive. (pause) But I feel that they could, they could do, um, Sunday school as long as the, as long as the boy was not like a man... you know what I mean? Like after seventh grade, that's when they, that's when the male would be taking over the class...."
>
> Joann

Donna, also a Baptist, had a similar response; however, she emphasized her perception of the proper roles for men and women.

> "I don't believe that they (women) should be pastors in churches, because it's like, the Pastor is supposed to be the father of the church, and it's like, I think it would be just very awkward to have a lady pastor, because, you know, they're supposed to be at home taking care of the their family, but yet, if they were pastoring, they'd have to take care of their big church family , and I think that's more of a role that men should fill. but I think that ladies can play a very important part in church, just like helping organize events for ladies Bible studies, um, organizing dinners and suppers..."
>
> Donna

Jacque's response gives evidence of other cultural influences. Jacque is an African American who grew up attending a Baptist church in Detroit.

> "Well, probably take care of food...probably the women, I don't really see them as any different from the men's role, which is just to be, um, deaconesses,....actually we have several female ministers...."

Barta (1991) contends that paternalistic denominations socialize men to supply leadership, while women are socialized to be dependent helpers. Support

for Barta's perspective can be found in comparing Lutherans and Presbyterians, where within each denomination there is variation on the practice of women's ordination. Two of the three major branches of Lutheranism in the United States were represented among the interviewees. One branch ordains women, one does not, and the respondents echoed their denominational affiliations.

> "Um, women's role in our church... I don't know... I've always seen it that they're more in the background, I guess... because it's like the pastors have always been male. I don't actually know any female pastors."
>
> Lucy

> "I think that pretty much anything but pastoring is ok—I'm really not for women pastors."
>
> Emma

Renee, who is a member of a Lutheran church that does not ordain women, spoke of her personal struggle with women in leadership roles.

> "I do think there are definite distinct roles, that women are not equal—they have different strengths and abilities. But my problem growing up was that seeing even myself in this sort of strong leadership tendency and sort of this high capacity for leadership roles, and wondering how do I fit this together?"
>
> Renee

When asked whether she had resolved the dilemma, Renee's response evinced a struggle between her abilities and her perception of her God-given role.

> "And so I think perhaps, I mean I do see the Biblical evidence for this sort of structure, um and the way Paul set up his congregations. Um, but it seems to me that if women are allowed to do — women tend to go for the top leader roles—and men tend to like to sit in the back and watch football. And maybe God is calling us all to greater things that aren't necessarily natural, our natural human tendencies. That, um, perhaps for me in my....battle to step down and seek other ways to serve....but the idea—I had to come to realize that there is usefulness and glory in things that aren't necessarily so up-front."

The two women from the branch of Lutherans who ordain women presented a decidedly different role for women, and the influence of their spiritual environment was apparent.

> "Women's role? Um, I think women are, can serve in any capacity, pretty much they can do anything....Whatever they feel called to do, they're entitled to do what they want to do."
>
> Nora

Erin's perspective included an added responsibility for women to be educators and supporters of women's role in the church.

> "In this congregation I see that women's roles are, um, equal to men in terms of mechanics of the church, and getting things done, and how things need to be, and making decisions. But I also feel that women have almost a stronger responsibility...and that's because of, and I mean this is feminist of me, but it's coming out and saying women have stronger responsibilities in a church then men do...to sort of raise some of these sexist ideas and to stand up against that, and to encourage education and support...everything about, everything that concerns women, and that's, you know, women's health and women's lives and children and family and work...and all those things are really important to women that just sort of get swept away..."

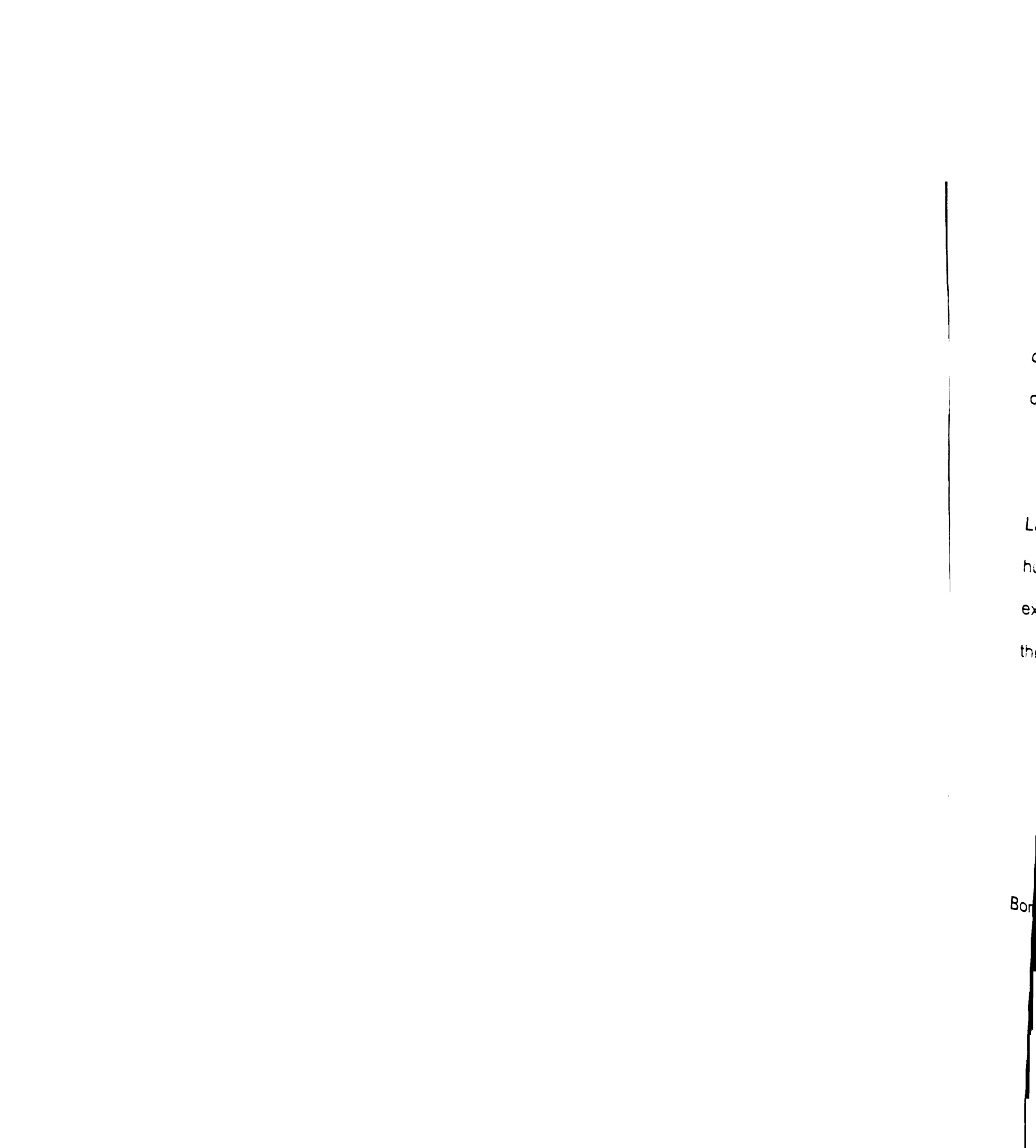
There are several branches within the Presbyterian denomination, some that do ordain women. It appears as though all of the women who identified themselves as Presbyterian in the interview process were members of a branch that does not support ordination of women. Based on the responses, it seems that the particular branch of the Presbyterian church encourages women to be active in leadership. The informants were supportive of women doing everything and anything in the church short of being the pastor. Joy's response supports women speaking in the church service.

> "Uh, quite a big one. I don't know...I think, um, just about everything but pastor. And they get up there sometimes and talk too. So, um...and I'm, in a way they are, because Pastor Smith's wife, you know she does a lot of the same things that he does, and she gave the sermon last Mother's Day. Women are elders, and they're leaders, you know, I mean, they teach classes, I don't know...everything."

Kara says she's not certain what her church believes, but her reply supports the doctrinal position offered by the other Presbyterians.

> "I believe women's role in my church is, to like, not be like the head of the church. But definitely have a say in things and um...um.. yeah, I'm not totally for sure where my church stands at it, but like, I don't think that women should really, my personal belief is that women shouldn't be pastors, but I definitely think that they do have a big role in the church and that they can get involved in a lot of other ways."

Among those identified as Presbyterian, Lee Ann offered the least inclusive roles for women in the church.



> "Um, in our church, I know we have women deacons, um, and elders, but we really aren't allowed to have official teaching roles, I don't think. Like we don't have female pastors. We have female Sunday school teachers and stuff like that, because we get the women down there sometimes to teach too, but um, well... I think sometimes men can do a better job with, with pastoral work, and stuff, and I think females sometimes get a little emotional...."

All Methodist informants described very inclusive roles for women in the church. Three of the four used terms such as "equality," or "no distinction" when discussing women's roles.

> "I don't really see two different roles... I don't see a distinction."
>
> Molly

Lana and Bonnie provided descriptions of women's roles that directly support the human ecological perspective regarding the influence of the environment. Lana experienced a male/female pastoral team at her home church, and notes not only the equality of the team, but the complimentary nature as well.

> "Well, obviously in my church, I have a woman who is a minister, and I know in the Methodist church, um, women in ministry is fine....I see a lot of important things coming out of women, just as like men, I don't think women are higher then men, or men higher then women. I think we're all from God... I see like, with my minister, when he's at my church, you'll get a different total message then when she is..."

Bonnie links her view on women's role directly to her experience growing up.

> "I think women definitely have an important role. I don't know that it's really different from men's roles; I would say, um, most of the time that I've been....most of the time I was growing up, there was one male pastor and one female, so as far as leadership... it was a nice model."

Carrie's response brings a note of reality regarding what her church says about women's roles, and how that is actually carried out.

> "Ideally, I think it would be the same as a man's. But I think in reality, life keeps on making it hard for women....like a majority of the Sunday school teachers are women, the lady who is working as the secretary is a woman. I kinda tend to disagree with that. I think we're a little bit past that."

Both Episcopalian informants provided very inclusive descriptions of women's role in the church; however both women noted that there are duties that have remained primarily identified with women.

> "I think it's very important. I mean, because we have a male and female minister, I think that that's a big deal for a lot of people...I think that there's a lot more equality, as far as people view how far a woman can go in the church....Um, there are not, there are a lot more female Sunday school people then there are male...and there are only women on the altar guild, as far as I know...And so, I guess, I guess there's pretty much, there may even be more roles for women at our church, now that I think of it...."
>
> Jane

Ellen named very traditional roles for women in the church, and did not include the role of minister until directly asked.

> "We take care of lots of stuff. We plan stuff a lot. Different little group, fun things to do. Actually, our director of education, the church school director is a male right now. But traditionally they've been females, for a real long time. But we do nice stuff, like set up dinners, and coffee hours, and stuff like that....altar guilds and taking care of stuff, and like, cleaning stuff up."

It is interesting to note that while many informants named women as spiritual leaders in their lives, those who came from denominational ties that did not ordain women stuck with the denominational viewpoint. It would appear that women can fill the role of spiritual leader unofficially, but not in a publicly acknowledged capacity.

Church support for goals.

The second interview question associated with the influence of church culture concerned the perceived support from the church for the goals they as women had set for themselves. With one exception, the response from the informants was overwhelmingly positive. The wording of the question made the depth of perceived support difficult to measure, and most responses were short and to the point. Joy noted the important role she felt the church's support had played in her life:

> "Yeah, I mean, I don't know how much I've been seeking that, like the support or whatever, but I definitely think that, it's there, like, in an indirect way...they've made me, you know, the church and all the stuff that I've done here, you know, has made me a strong person and they've done that for me, been there and helped me to grow, so I think, you know, whether they said, 'Yeah, go get that science business degree'....but you know, they help me to be the person who can make that type of decision."

Ellen noted that she received input on choosing a career from members in her congregation.

"Yes, yes. I always at coffee hour have someone coming up to me, 'How's school going, how are you doing'....and when I was trying to decide what I wanted to do, I'd gone to (state university), and I'd come home, ...and I had no idea what I wanted to do, and I had people sit down and talk to me, 'Well, you could do this, you could do this... I do this and this is great, interesting...you could talk to someone about this.'...But I never felt discouraged, I've always felt encouraged, and people are always very interested in what I am doing, and where I'm going with things, and very, very nice."

Some of the women specifically noted whether the support they have felt came from their congregation at home or their campus congregation.

"This church, yeah, this one is very supportive. I don't know if the one at home is....there's a lot more older people there..."

Nicole

"My church community at home has always been very supportive of me. Very supportive of youth in the church in general....but I always felt like the church community was very supportive of the youth, guys and girls..."

Bonnie

Lee Ann, who stated a very definite view about women not being pastors, reiterated the point when discussing her feelings of support from the church. Having made such a strong case regarding male and female roles with regard to pastoral ministry, Lee Ann feels the church is more egalitarian regarding marital roles.

> "Yeah, I think so. Because they always encourage... they look at women as just the same as men. Except for like, um...no, not the pastor thing. But they encourage women to get ahead in life. And, um... that raising your family, don't always, they don't have standard roles, like the guy must work, the woman stays at home. They're like, it doesn't have to be like that."

Carrie began attending the Methodist church in middle school, and admitted that she never quite felt that she fit in there. She did, however, speak positively about the transition during her freshman year of college to the campus ministry, which operated separately but was housed in the same facility. Carrie was the one informant who said she did not feel supported by her church.

> "I don't think that the church really...that the church specifically, for me, is open. Like for the campus ministry, treats me as they would treat a guy. So I know as far as like answering that question specifically, I don't think the church has really had that much influence."

A summary of the variables associated with the influence of the practices of church culture on female adolescent identity development is presented in Table 4.2 . A short explanation regarding each informant's perspective on women's role in the church is provided in the first column. The second column lists whether the informant supports women's ordination. The last column states the informants' perceptions of support from their church for the goals they are pursuing through their undergraduate education.

TABLE 4.2: PRACTICES OF CHURCH CULTURE

NAME	WOMEN'S ROLE	WOMEN'S ORDINATION	FEELS SUPPORT FROM CHURCH
Joann Baptist	Be submissive, teach-under 7th gr.	No	Yes
Donna Baptist	Important role organizing events	No	Yes
Jacque Baptist	Take care of food, deaconess, pastor	Yes	Yes
Libby Baptist	Social events, nursery, office work	No	Yes
Ellen Episcopalian	Take care of things, plan things, altar guild	Yes	Yes
Jane Episcopalian	Equality w/men, more roles for women than men	Yes	Yes
Nicole Lutheran	Women serve in any capacity	Yes	Yes (campus church)
Erin Lutheran	Equal to men, responsible to erase sexist ideas	Yes	Yes (campus church)
Margaret Lutheran	Not sure, searching, Servant role	No	Yes
Lucy Lutheran	Support roles, in background	No	Yes
Emma Lutheran	Any role except pastor	No	Yes
Renee Lutheran	Distinct m/f roles, not equal	No	Yes
Lana Methodist	All gifts are from God, are equal	Yes	Yes
Bonnie Methodist	Important, not necessarily different	Yes	Yes (home church)
Molly Methodist	No distinction between m/f	Yes	Yes
Carrie Methodist	Ideally m/f same, not reality	Yes	No
Leah Presbyterian	Can be elder, youth leader, teacher	No	Yes
Lee Ann Presbyterian	Deacons, elders, teach children	No	Yes
Kara Presbyterian	Have a say, but not be the head	No	Yes
Joy Presbyterian	Big role, leader, elder, teacher	No	Yes

Research Question Three: The Influence of Parents' Religious Practices and Beliefs on Female Adolescent Gender Identity.

The third research question emphasized the family environment, specifically the role that parents have in creating expectations for religious belief and practice by both their own behavior and the rituals and practices set forth in day-to-day family life. Bronfenbrenner (1986) acknowledges that while the family is the principle context in which human development takes place, development also occurs in other settings as well, for contexts are interdependent. Based on Bronfenbrenner's theoretical perspective, several questions were posed to informants regarding the expression of spiritual beliefs within their home, acknowledging the importance of the family as well as its interaction with the church. Informants described the rituals and traditions that were a part of their family's expression of their spiritual beliefs, and discussed the similarities and differences in their parents' expressions of faith. This information was gathered verbally as well as visually through the completion of the ecomap.

Family demographics.

When looking at the make-up the informants' families, it must be noted that seventeen of the twenty women came from intact families, which is far above the national average. Since the focus of the research was on the informant, there is only speculation about the influence of religion on marital stability.

Jacque's parents divorced when she was four, and her father moved out of state. Jacque has never lived or even stayed with her father since the divorce.

> "I'm actually an only child. So while I was growing up, throughout my entire life, it was basically me and my mother."

Carrie's parents divorced when she was in sixth grade, and her father has continued to live nearby, "So it's like a five minute drive, it's not very far at all." Carrie has stayed with her father a few times over the years. Carrie spoke at length twice during the interview regarding her feelings of not belonging in the church because she came from a divorced family.

> "It's hard to describe even, she (Mom) would talk to Pastor Mack a lot, but it just seemed like we were always kind of on the outside. And the other thing was, dad wasn't coming with us, and everyone else here has the intact family, and we didn't. And it was really hard, and I, I was kind of angry....my mom, like coming here and needing support more than any of these women, and not getting it. And that just put even more pressure on her..."

Carrie is attending a state university in the city where she grew up, and the Methodist campus ministry is housed in the same facility as the church where she grew up. Since Carrie did not feel supported by the church as a high school student, it is not surprising that she was the lone informant who stated that she did not feel supported by her church.

Jane's parents divorced when she was fourteen, and, like the others, has never lived with her father. Jane theorizes that her mother's spiritual faith and involvement in church activities was part of what caused her parents' marriage to dissolve.

> "I really don't consider my father to be a man of faith, I don't really think that, I don't think that he really believes in anything religious....he never put down the fact that we went to church, I think, I think that sometimes it bothered him how involved my mom was in the church, and I think that she's a very giving person of, not only of gifts, but of herself as well, and of her time, and I think that sometimes it bothered him, how much time she spent, either with people from the church or at church in general....the more involved my mom got in the church, the more it bothered him, I think, because he felt that it was more important to her than he was..."

Two informants had step-siblings from a parent's previous marriage; however, in both cases the step-sibling lived with the informant's family for only a short time.

Having acknowledged the theoretical underpinnings of this research, which include the family as primary context in which development occurs, it must be noted that parents and children together shape the family environment. In the course of conducting these interviews the researcher came across two women who grew up in households where neither parent had any spiritual tradition, and two other women who, in the course of their childhood, brought their parents into a spiritual tradition. Erin's experience illustrates the influence of the extended family (Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem), as she attended church only when spending time with her grandmother.

> "My parents were not religious when I was growing up....my grandmother was Finnish Lutheran, and I used to spend parts of my summer with her...so I went to church all the time, every time I was up north...I went to Lutheran Bible school in the summer, from the time I was like three or four, until I was seven or eight....I was actually as active as a small child could be at my grandmother's church, when I was there."

Erin is considering attending seminary in a few years, and notes that her grandmother, who has since passed away, would be proud if she knew.

Donna's parents did not attend church, but she and her twin sister were invited by a friend to attend a children's program at a Baptist church, which led to her involvement there.

> "Well, my parents didn't take me to church, but one of my friends invited me to an AWANA program at the Baptist church in my town. So, then like I got to a certain section in the AWANA program and I had to go to church three times to pass it; and so, like, this lady and her husband that lived, that it was on their way to pick us up to church, they picked us up like every Sunday from when we were in third grade, until when I could drive when I was a junior in high school."

Bronfenbrenner's concept of the influence of the mesosystem on the individual is also clearly evident in Donna's story.

Joy and Carrie's parents did not have spiritual traditions either, but their stories differ from Donna and Erin in that they found a faith tradition, and brought their parents into the church. When asked about the religious tradition that she grew up in, Joy replied,

> "Actually, not really. We just started going to church when I was in eighth grade. Um, I came, at, I, one of my best friends from, since fourth grade, I came with her to youth group, and I liked it a lot, and then I ended up bringing my mom and dad to church, so we just started coming."

Joy also talked about the irony of her role as a young adolescent in shaping the lives of her parents.

> "And my mom has, my mom says, like, I can't believe, you know, that our daughter, you know, we were so lost and didn't understand, and...then our daughter is like thirteen and you know, brings us to church and all that. So it was a pretty cool thing."

Since Carrie's parents did not have a religious tradition, she went back to the traditions of her grandparents, providing background information for how she ultimately became a Methodist.

> "Um, my dad's parents were really, really, really Anglican. Very strict; like his mom was a Sunday school teacher. And my mom's parents were both Methodist, and I think that's, like my Mom is definitely not very religious at all. And neither was my dad, he was kind of...pushed away from the idea because he just never had a good relationship with his parents or his family....My aunt, my mom's sister, is Baptist, Southern Baptist, and is really religious. So whenever I went over there, you know, she'd give my mom the guilt trip about not going to church. And I, I felt, I started to feel really guilty, like I had this obligation to go, you know?

Carrie's experience illustrates the indirect influence of the environment; her aunt's "guilt" was laid on her mother, however it was Carrie who felt compelled to act on it.

Molly brought her family from a nominal religious tradition into enthusiastic Methodists. Molly's family had attended a Congregationalist church when she was young, but she and her mother were not very interested.

> "I hated getting dressed up and having to wake up early, and then my dad, he, he always went to church, he like, well, he always went to church, it was very important to him, but he didn't like enforce it on me, or my mom."

Later, they attended a non-denominational church, which Molly said was large and impersonal, and she attended even more sporadically than the previous church. Displaying the influence of church culture, Molly tells of finding a place where "I started loving to go to church."

> "...in 10th grade, one of my friends, she brought me to her youth group, and we went bowling, and the pastor was there, and he was so friendly to me, and was talking to me. And he said, 'Come and join our church,' and it was a lot closer, so I brought my parents to the church...."

While they did not yield any specific trends, two other family dynamics must be noted. First, most all parents of the informants were college educated; only two informants had a parent who had only a high school diploma, and seventeen of the forty parents had graduate degrees. Secondly, twelve of the informants came from families in which they were either the only child, or had only one sibling.

Involvement in faith community.

Nineteen of the respondents stated that they were involved in their faith community while they were growing up. Each of the woman named two or more activities in which they participated during their childhood and adolescent years. The most frequent activities listed were going to Sunday school, attending church, acolyting, involvement in youth group, and attending vacation Bible school (VBS).

"I was basically as involved as I could be, I suppose. I went to church and Sunday school on Sundays. I sang in the choir since I was like four years old. An, when I was old enough, in middle school, I went to youth group."

Bonnie

"I went to church every Sunday, went to Sunday school every Sunday. I was an acolyte, served cookies and Kool Aid after church sometimes. Worked in the nursery, went on youth group outing when we had them."

Nicole

Four other informants besides Nicole mentioned involvement as a volunteer in the nursery. Care of small children has been viewed as a traditional female role, however it must be noted that the informants who included being a nursery volunteer in their church involvement spanned both conservative and liberal denominations.

Lana and Donna specifically noted opportunities for leadership as part of their involvement in their faith communities.

"I was involved in the youth group pretty much, and then I was involved in the youth council, and I was like, I was secretary one year and treasurer one year, and president one year."

Donna

"And as I got into junior high, I was very active in the youth group. In high school, things started to change; I not only was active in the youth group, I was on committees and boards, and I decided, then when I discerned God's call in my life, I really got, really, really active in my church, and in lay leadership and giving communion..."

Lana

One denominational trend that appeared with this interview question was the inclusion of attendance at a parochial school as involvement in faith community.

Three Lutheran women included their years spent in Lutheran grade school and/or high school. In each instance, the women had a parent who was a professional church worker—a teacher/principal, a family life director, and a pastor—in a Lutheran congregation. The choice of parochial education for one's children certainly illustrates the influence of parental beliefs in shaping identity.

Spiritual expression in the home.

Four themes emerged when informants were asked about expression of spiritual beliefs within the home. The most frequent manifestation of spiritual expression provided by respondents was prayers offered before mealtime. Eight respondents cited the practice mealtime prayer, although Nicole noted that they prayed only before holiday meals, such as Thanksgiving and Christmas. Jacque notes,

> "We always, in family gatherings, and even if it's just like me and her (mother), we always pray before every meal.."

As Jacque continued, she voiced the second prayer practice that ran through the responses about family spiritual expression in the home:

> "..She's (mother), uh, she had me pray every, I remember when I was a little girl, she had me pray every night before I went to sleep at night.."

Three other respondents noted the importance of bedtime prayers; Renee elaborated on the practice:

> "Um, my mother—when she would come tuck us in, which she did... I don't know when she stopped doing that, but it was not long... she would always come and pray with each of us before bed."

The second theme noted in family rituals of spiritual expression were activities associated with Advent, the name for the season of preparation before the celebration of Christmas. Several of the women mentioned the use of Advent calendars, which are designed to help children mark the days approaching Christmas.

> "During Christmas, with the advent wreaths and Advent calendars. We never had candy, my mom was always like, 'That's stupid, candy,' so we always had the Advent calendars with the Bible verses in them."
>
> Ellen

> "And, like, before Christmas we would always do Advent together. My mom had this book, and she would read that to our family."
>
> Kara

> "...and at the special seasons of, Christian seasons of the year, we would sometimes do special activities, like during Advent. Light the Advent candle, read the material that we got at church..."
>
> Bonnie

It appears that what stood out for these women about the season of Advent was that they were doing something with their family that they did not do the rest of the year. It was obvious to them that their parent(s) had made some sort of extra effort, to do devotions, provide an Advent calendar and/or wreath, and this sent a message to the women.

The third theme noted among family spiritual rituals was going to church on Sundays as a family.

> "....we go to church as a family."
>
> Lucy

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"And the biggest thing with the way my mom celebrates, or um, and shows being an Episcopalian is, um, it was so important to my grandmother, that church was a big part of who you were, and what made you a good person, so I think that's part of the reason that my mom is so strong in her traditions, is, you know, that, you know, everyone should go to church as a family...."

Ellen

"...mmm, just going to church together..."

Kara

The uniformity of the response centers on a set time and activity in which each family member participated.

The last theme that emerged in family spiritual rituals was not as tightly focused as the first three, but can be tied together under religious practices that occurred in the home on some sort of regular basis. Each informant's experience took a different format—family devotions, singing, reading Bible stories, and the like.

"Well, devotions. Definitely, family devotions. We did those, I would say, fairly regularly."

Margaret

"We've always sang hymns and songs—spiritual songs. Um, Dad every once in a while—it's not regular, but I think he'd like it to be regular—he holds Bible studies sometimes after meals."

Renee

"Once my mom became a Christian, she just like...books everywhere. She had the Bible, she, she's you know, in the Word like daily. And um, she got involved in Bible study and stuff, so, I mean, it's just around our house. I don't know, and she started writing verses up on the refrigerator and stuff like that, so, I don't know, it just became kind of, you could see stuff around the house, books and, you know...."

Joy

Family rituals.

The responses provided by the informants regarding the spiritual rituals that they felt nurtured their families spiritual tradition were echoed in the themes that ran through the responses given to another interview question regarding how families expressed their spiritual beliefs. Half of the respondents cited church attendance as a nurturing family ritual.

> "Definitely Sunday worship, that's something, like especially when we're all home together, which is rare now, holidays and special things, we go to church altogether. You know,...so that's the big thing."
>
> Lana

A second theme that came through as a family ritual was eating dinner together.

> "We go to church, and we eat dinner together all the time..."
>
> Kara

Praying before meals and family devotions also were listed as nurturing spiritual family rituals. Lucy shared her family's traditions, which showed an interesting blend of the common responses regarding spiritual traditions.

> "Well, usually it's at the end of the year, like around New Year's, we like make our new year's resolutions....we usually sit around and talk about it and then we'll have a prayer and like, just talk about things. That's one thing we've always done. Um...whenever we have family get-togethers, like with my Dad's side of the family, like on holidays, we usually have some type of message. Somebody usually does some type of message or prayer around dinner, that's like tradition—I love that. And we go to church as a family."

Standout religious experiences.

When asked about religious experiences that stand out during their years at home, only two respondents named experiences that were actually connected to their families. Emma's stand-out religious experience occurred not in her own home, but at the home of her grandparents. It appears that Emma's immediate family did not usually pray together, which is what made the experience memorable.

> "...I lived with my grandparents for most of my eighth grade year. And so, for about six months. And I remember I was really upset about—I'd gotten in a stupid fight with some of my friends or something...and my grandparents were like, 'Let's pray about it.' And that was always what they'd—that was always a solution. It always made me cry harder, but it made me feel better inside. But that helped mold my attitude about problem solving and stuff."

Erin grew up in a family that did not practice any spiritual traditions. Her memorable spiritual experience is centered around the absence of spiritual beliefs.

> "I came to my sophomore year here, actually was the first time I realized that I really talked to my parents about religion at all. And so that was kinda odd, to realize that we hadn't ever said anything about it...Um, on a few occasions, growing up, I actually asked my parents why we didn't go to church.... their response was always that you don't need to go to church to be a good person. And that was pretty much it..."

The remainder of the informants responses were connected to events, usually church sponsored, which had left a lasting memory for them. Half of the women

named a camp or retreat experience as a spiritual high point in their growing up years. For Donna, it was more than just the spiritual experience at camp, but the opportunity to be away from her home environment, which was very stressful.

> "Going to camp... I just remember every year going there, and loving it, it's beautiful up there. My counselors were always really nice. And my sister and I would to together and camp together... And we just had so much fun. And speakers were really good too... they just taught so much....it was a safe place to me, and I could go away, and just be away from everything.

A few respondents talked about attending worship services as being memorable, or even participating in the worship service. Lana's response is typical of those offered.

> "Actually, my senior year I got to help distribute communion at an Ash Wednesday service, that really stood out."
>
> Lana

Others talked about spiritual experiences such as the moment when they knew they were saved, and publicly witnessed events such as baptism and confirmation.

> "When I was saved, it was unbelievable, it was actually eighth grade, when I first started coming (to church).....God totally opened my eyes and opened my heart and ears all at the same time, and I was like, 'WOW! Cool!' You know, that was an amazing thing!"
>
> Joy

Both Jacque and Carrie took trips out of the country with groups through their respective public high schools. While not of a religious nature, each woman found her experience to be profoundly spiritual.

"A really good religious experience that I had was when I went to Africa in 10th grade, um, with my school choir....And we were sitting in the church, and we, uh, we had learned some African songs, and we sang one of them....And we were singing one of the songs, and they were so, the looks on the congregation's faces, it was just, it was so nice. It was just indescribable, they were so happy that we knew, that we knew that song and they were singing with us, and you could just tell how much spirit they had...."

Jacque

"The summer between my junior and senior year of high school, I got a full ride scholarship to go to Poland, so I went...It was pretty incredible, because there are not Jewish people in Poland. Except maybe in Krakow, a couple thousand. But, we went to Auschwitz, and I walked around the whole thing, But, um, I realized a lot of things that I hadn't, because I knew that, it was primarily a Jewish concentration Camp....and so we went to their cultural center, and There was a woman talking about it, and she was Saying that Auschwitz ..that the camp was actually Reserved for Catholic priests and a, and Russian Soldiers, Russian prisoners of war...there were a Lot of monuments to Catholic priests who were Killed in Auschwitz and became saints. So that was, I guess, a keen realization that I had."

Carrie

Autonomy.

Interviewees were asked to describe how much autonomy they felt they had been given within their family's spiritual tradition, and the responses were almost entirely positive. While the responses were positive, it must be noted, however, that there was wide variation on the interpretation of the term "autonomy." The definition was personal for each woman. Emma's response indicates that she felt that she had been given choices.

> "Well, we always, when we were older, chose to go to church. But, um, I don't think it was really a choice... like I just knew—that's what you do—you go to church... I guess it was my choice to participate in youth group stuff and things like that. But, um, let's see, K through eight they chose the school. But when we moved, they were considering public schools, but both my sister and I wanted to go to a Lutheran school. So that was a choice."

Ellen also responded positively to the autonomy query, but immediately qualified her answer.

> "Tons! The only rule was you had to go to church on Sunday, until you were an adult. But other than that, yeah, I mean, I went through a stint where I really thought that I needed a rosary, and to be able to do the rosary, and that was totally accepted by my parents."

Lucy, whose father is a full-time church staff member, felt that the choices were there if she had wanted them.

> "It's like I probably could have had those choices if I'd not wanted to go to church, or you, not be confirmed, you know, it's like I could have probably fought it and been like, 'No, I don't want to do this.' But just because of the way I was raised, I always wanted to have religion, I wanted to be a Lutheran, I wanted to stay."

Two respondents stated that they had limited freedom, in that there were particular religions that they knew their parents would not accept.

> "I think it, I guess that my family never really discussed, like our beliefs, I was just, I was expected to believe, and I guess I had the choice of whether I wanted to go to church or not... I think that, my parents, with Catholocism, they don't like the Pope thing and they don't like all of the tradition."
>
> Molly

> "Like I could ask...oh, I still ask so many questions to this day. Just even being here (college), I already have so many questions... So, um, yeah, they would never let us go to a Roman Catholic or a Mormon church, just because they feel that it's completely, just that they're straying away from God... They would never let us attend those. But we could ask whatever questions that came to mind."
>
> Joann

Donna's definition of autonomy was much broader, perhaps because she attended church without the support of her parents.

> "I would say I experience a lot (of autonomy) because was allowed to go to church, and go to camp....My mom, her dad is a pastor for, I want to say a Lutheran church, but so they, he was kind of like, when he comes and visits, he's like, 'Why didn't you go to a Lutheran church?' and 'Why did you pick a Baptist church?' and stuff. I don't know, I was in third grade. I didn't know."

Similarly, Carrie felt that she had experienced autonomy, in that she was the one who persuaded her mother to go to church.

> "It was a matter of convincing my mom to take me, because I obviously couldn't get away from the house by myself. My dad doesn't really care, and my mom, she's one of these people who's politically correct, and so she'd pretty much be learning about it with me."

Libby and Lee Ann were two respondents who evinced very clear understandings of how much autonomy they each had to make decisions regarding their spiritual lives.

> "Well, I mean, it wasn't up to us to go to church. Like, I mean, our family, we had to go, but like our Parents made us go but it didn't feel like that to me, That they were making me go, because I wanted to Go. But it wasn't an option, if I were to not want to go."
>
> Libby

> "I think my mom, well, my mom was raised Catholic, and, um, when she was little, um, well when she started going to the Baptist church, her mom stopped talking to her for a long time. And my mom didn't want me to ever have to worry about that, so they, if I wanted to go to my friends' churches, they never had a problem with that. And, um, my mom's always wanted me to make my own decisions, um, in religion. And she knows that I don't always, um, agree with the church, and she doesn't always agree with the church, and that, she knows that as long as I follow what I think Jesus wants me to follow, then I'm doing what she wants me to do." Lee Ann

Lee Ann makes no mention of her father's influence or input regarding autonomy.

Parents' expression of faith.

The last set of interview questions dealing with parental religious practices and influence had to do with expression of faith. Women were asked whether there were differences in the way their parents expressed their faith, and if those differences affected their relationship with their parents. There were four women who had at least one parent with no faith. Both Carrie and Jane characterized their fathers as having no spiritual tradition; neither of Erin's nor Donna's parents claim any spiritual tradition.

> "Well, I mean, my dad is atheist, he doesn't even go to church on Christmas... So I don't think he feels any obligation towards it."
> Carrie

> "I really don't consider my father to be a man of faith. I don't, I don't really think that, I don't think that he Really believes in anything religious. Um, I wouldn't Say that he's anti-faith, I think, I mean he was never... He never put down the fact that we went to church..."
> Jane

"Um, neither of my parents are...my mom has mentioned being spiritual on some levels, but nothing really, nothing stands out at all. Either of them, either of my parents."

Erin

"They really didn't express any faith."

Donna

Molly noted that her mom was really just beginning to develop a spiritual tradition.

"And then my mom, um, she...she was at, a very like just recently she's become more, uh, religious. Um, just last year she started with a group of a few of her friends, her teacher friends, they started this devotional thing...She just started doing it, she's just starting....getting stronger."

Molly

Of the remaining informants, six women believed that their mom was more verbal about faith than their dad was. Many of these women also commented about how quiet their dad was in general, not just on the subject of faith.

"I think my mom does more so than my father.... I mean my dad's really active at my church...But for spiritual conversations, it's normally with my mother."

Lana

"My mom expresses it verbally, and my dad, you can just tell by his actions, more or less. Like my mother shared her testimony, like I've heard that so many times. But my dad, he's not really, like if you ask him his testimony he would tell you, but like he's not really the verbal type...my mother is the talker, and my dad the silent one."

Joann

Yeah, they're very different. My dad is very reserved, And he has a hard time like, you know, my mom is, She'll throw her hands up in the air and she's like, 'JESUS!' She gets all excited....And so, he, I mean, you can see it, and you can see it in his face, and he definitely, you kind of have to pull it out of him to get him to...it's just a different thing.

Joy

"My mother is very outgoing...and is very friendly and very talkative. And my father's more quietly involved, because he's a very quiet person anyways..."

Ellen

"Well, my mom will talk about it whenever I want to talk about it; she'll bring it up sometimes....and my dad doesn't really talk about it much...he'll just kind of go along with everything, and he'll just kind of nod. He doesn't really have much input, I guess...."

Kara

"Yeah, well my mom's always been very open, well, she like to talk about everything....And my dad just, doesn't really want to talk at all..."

Lee Ann

Four women had parents who were the opposite combination, a more verbal father, and a mother who was quiet.

"My dad is more verbal, he gets excited about things, and is very straightforward. I guess you could say he processes things externally. My mom doesn't talk as much; she thinks about things, and then speaks."

Leah

"My dad is much more like...I can't think of the word. He expresses his faith much more....more expressively (laughter)! I can't say it right. My mom is more like, reserved, and keeps to herself about her faith pretty much."

Libby

> "Yeah, um, my mom doesn't express much, and my dad does. Well, he's not, uh, he's really liberal in his beliefs, but yeah. My dad's more religious than my mom."
>
> Nicole

Emma's mother is a principal and teacher in a parochial elementary school, and her dad works in a secular job. Emma's description of her interactions with her mother appears to be quite different from the mother's public persona of her faith.

> "Well, my mom, um, let's see... I'm not really sure about her. Like lately, I'm wondering. Like my dad, I know how he feels....He's kind of a sentimental gushy guy. He always talks about it, and um, he's very open about it, and he, uh, he likes to write music—write songs—and so he's recorded some of them. And then he was always open about—he's into prison ministry... But my mom, it's kind of strange with her... she became a Christian when she was in college. In all honesty, we haven't really talked about it all that much. I hear her say stuff, but it's—it's more like that's part of her job."

Fourteen of the women interviewed agreed that the differences in their parents' expressions of faith had made a difference in their relationships with their parents. Nine women stated that they believe that because of the differences in how their parents expressed their faith, that they were closer to their mother.

> "My mom, I think maybe it made her feel like we had something in common, and it's something we can do together..."
>
> Carrie

> "Yeah, my dad, I have a hard time relating to him about things, you know, just talking, I guess, um, and with my mom, I think I can talk to her about anything, she'll understand. And if she doesn't, she'll just keep listening."
>
> Kara

"I've always had a stronger tie with my mother than my father...so I...I don't know...it's just because I think that my mother expresses her feelings and my father...it's kinda hard to tell, like, know what he's liken, what he feels about things...because unless you come out, right out and ask him, you really don't know."

Joann

There were five women who expressed a closer relationship to their father as a result of the differences in religious expression between their parents.

"Well, I'm more like my dad to begin with...I don't always want to talk about it, like with my mom...she's just overwhelming sometimes to talk to...and so I think talking to him...we can tell when the other one doesn't want to keep on talking and stuff..."

Lee Ann

"Um, like, I suppose that I'm closer to my dad, and, and I suppose, I...I'm not really, he's more, my dad's more open, talking about, that type of thing, and I feel open to asking him questions and things...."

Molly

Four women stated that there was no difference in their relationship with either of their parents. These were women who did not note differences in their parents' expressions of faith. Neither of Erin's parents had professed a faith; Jacque hadn't lived with her father since she was four, which made it difficult to note specific differences in faith expression. Lucy and Bonnie felt that their parents were on equal footing regarding expression of faith, and therefore did not see how this could create any differences in their relationships with either parent.

"I think that they had very similar ways, but I mean, I can't really think of anything where they were different in their beliefs and how they went about doing it."

Lucy

> "Um, not really, although it was slightly different because my dad, my dad grew up as a Methodist... And my mom grew up as a Catholic... So they have a little different perspective on it, I think. But as far as the way that that, um... that that affects how they practice religion or anything like that, they're pretty similar."
>
> Bonnie

Donna expressed strong feelings that her parents lack of faith has negatively affected her relationship with both of them.

> "Well, I would say just them not having faith or religion has affected our relationship. Because I really don't tell my parents a lot. Especially my mom, I don't like, I don't, I haven't had that relationship where I can just talk to her about anything and ask her questions about anything. I've always had to go to people inside the church, if I'd wanted to ask certain questions, and it's like....so I'd say it affects us, because it's a touchy subject since my parents aren't practicing, and so, so it did probably affect our relationships a bit."

Informant relationship to family's spiritual tradition.

The final interview question associated with parental influence asked informants to describe their current relationship to their family's religious traditions. Interestingly, the responses to this question fell decidedly along denomination lines. Most of the women who had Baptist, Episcopal, Lutheran, or Methodist ties used phrases like "completely tied," "very connected" or "still connected" to describe their relationship to their particular denomination. Erin, whose parents do not have a spiritual tradition, cited her connection to the Lutheran church as a family tie to her grandmother. Renee, whose mother is

Mennonite and father is a Lutheran, described her tie to the Lutheran denomination as "a deeper connection to Dad's faith."

All four of the Presbyterian informants claimed ties to their local congregation, but not to the denomination itself. They cited the importance of the teachings of the church being aligned with Scripture, over denominational allegiance.

> "I don't know, like in the future, like if I would stay going to that church, or if I' would find another one, because the church I go to now at school, is, um, on the campus, is nondenominational. I really like that, because we don't have really any rules, you just follow the Bible. I really like that a lot..."
>
> Lee Ann

> "Well, I guess like, I'm, I've been taught so much that anything Bible based is good, and so...yeah, I feel connected to this Presbyterian church, but any church that's Bible based and Christian faith, so...."
>
> Kara

> "I don't think you need to pick just one denomination, as long as the church is based on the Bible, that's good..."
>
> Leah

> "So I've been going to a non-denominational church (at college), but, you know, I mean that, those essential things are still there, but like, this is, I mean, this church is definitely home...."
>
> Joy

Their responses reflect a tie to the church in which they grew up in, but it is a sentimental rather than doctrinal tie.

Two tables provide cross-case displays of the data pertinent to the third research question. Tables 4.3A and B provide a summation of the interview questions. The table is split into two pages because of the amount of information

that was gathered regarding parental influence. Table 4.4 provides a visual display of the informants' ecomaps of their connections to parents, family members, and family spiritual rituals. The arrows show flow of energy; left facing arrows show energy flow to the informant, right facing arrows show energy flow to the family member, and dual facing arrows
indicate bi-directional energy flow. The width of the arrow indicates the strength of the relationship; the wider the arrow, the closer the relationship. A straight line indicates a connection without any exchange of energy. A dashed line was used to indicate conflict of some sort in the relationship. A curved line illustrates that the relationship is cut off, or the connection is tenuous. The "d-d-d-d" shows that the relationship is distant. Several of the informants used more than one symbol to depict a particular relationship. Margaret used double arrows in all of her family relationships to show the difference she feels exists in the flow of energy between her and the family member. Leah delineated the difference between her relationships to her siblings, an arrow showing energy flow from Leah, and her relationship to other family members, showing distance. Jane also profiled the difference between siblings, energy flow from Jane to them, and the bi-directional arrow, illustrating her relationship to extended family. The other respondents who used two symbols (Emma, Molly, and Kara) were referencing multiple feelings regarding a single relationship.

TABLE 4.3A: PARENTAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AS INFLUENCE ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Name	Church Involvement	Religious Experiences	Family Rituals	Autonomy	Differences Parents Faith Expression	Effect of Parent Difference	Relate to Family Faith Tradition
Joann Baptist	Nursery, C-mas prog	Activities at holidays	Devos, prayer at meals	Not Mormon or Catholic	Mom verbal Dad actions	+Mom	Completely tied
Donna Baptist	Choir, plays, youth grp lead	Going to camp	When grand-parents visit	A lot-allowed attend church	None	Parents un-belief a neg.	N/A
Jacque Baptist	Church, choir, usher	Trip to Africa, conferences	Pray at meals, night prayers	Very free	Didn't live w/Dad	+Mom-didn't live w/Dad	Very connected
Libby Baptist	SS, yth grp, VBS, Pioneers	Church, baptism at 11	Pray at meals, eat aftr church	Had to go to church	Dad express, Mom reserved	+Mom, Dad very busy	Still a Baptist
Ellen Episcopalian	Church, acolyte, usher	None	Church, Sun. breakfast	Allowed to use rosary	Mom friendly Dad reserved	More like Mom	Very connected
Jane Episcopalian	SS, Camp	Holiday church wrship	Church, family gathers	Choice to attend church	Mom involved Dad-no faith	More like Mom	Defines me
Nicole Lutheran	Nursery, VBS church acolyte	Summer travel experience	Church, pray holiday meals	Yes—ok with Dad	M-doesn't express, D did	Can talk with Dad	Still connected
Erin Lutheran	At Grandma's in summer	Ask M/D why no church	None	Great autonomy	Mom mention spiritual	Same w/Mom and Dad	Faith of Grandmother
Margaret Lutheran	SS, Bible class, LHS	Easter worship	Family devotions	A lot!	Dad points, Mom paints	Be like Mom	In agreement
Lucy Lutheran	VBS, LES, yth grp, chrch	Confirmation, youth event	Bible stories, prayer, devos	It was part of what I did	Similar ways	Same w/ Mom and Dad	Still connected
Emma Lutheran	LES, LHS, SS, church	Worship services	Pray at meals, bedtime	Choice for yth grp and LHS	Dad talks about faith	Relates more to Dad	Connected
Renee Lutheran	Acoltye, lead yth grp	Mennonite camp meets	Singing, prayer, devos	A lot!	Mom & Dad quite different	Mom more open	Connected to Dad's faith

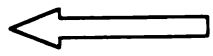
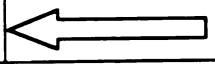
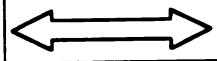
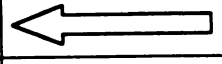
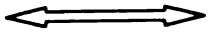
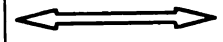
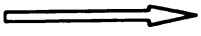
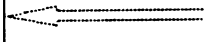
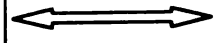
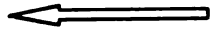
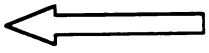
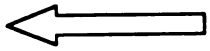
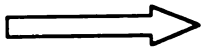
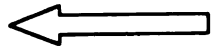
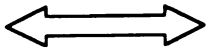
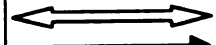
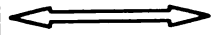
Legend: Devos=devotions; LES=Lutheran elementary school; LHS=Lutheran High School; yth grp=youth group, SS=Sunday School; VBS=Vacation Bible School

TABLE 4.3B: PARENTAL RELIGIOUS PRACTICES AS INFLUENCE ON IDENTITY DEVELOPMENT

Name	Church Involvement	Religious Experiences	Family Rituals	Autonomy	Differences Parents Faith Expression	Effect of Parent Difference	Relate to Family Faith Tradition
Lana Methodist	VBS, SS, yth grp, lay leader	Yth retreat, assist with communion	Church, Advent, pray at meals	A lot!	Mom verbal, Dad in action	More open with Mom	Same faith
Bonnie Methodist	Church, SS, yth group	Church camp	Pray at meals, holiday events	Great freedom	Dad knows more	Same w/ Mom and Dad	Same faith
Molly Methodist	Discipleship class, church	Discipleship class, friends	Pray at meals, church	Expected to believe	Dad example is faithful	Dad more open to talk	Enjoy being Methodist
Carrie Methodist	H.S. youth group	Visiting Auschwitz	None	Brought Mom to church	Dad-no expression	Something common w/M	Student ministry only
Leah Presbyterian	SS, yth group, mission trips	AWANA, being saved	Church, C-mas activities	Free	Dad verbal, Mom quiet	More like Dad	Allegiance to Bible base
Lee Ann Presbyterian	Church, yth grp, Pioneer	Friend who witnessed	Pray-meals & bed, church	Much autonomy	Mom open, Dad quiet	More like Dad	Local church only
Kara Presbyterian	Church Wed. & Sunday	Springhill Camp	Camp, friends, Mom's group	Felt free	Mom talks, Dad quiet	Easier to talk w/Mom	Local church only
Joy Presbyterian	Yth grp, serve projects, nursery	Being saved, Christian camping	Communion as a family	Great deal of freedom	Dad reserved, Mom more free	Talks more with Mom	Local church only

Legend: Devos=devotions; LES=Lutheran elementary school; LHS=Lutheran High School; yth grp=youth group; SS=Sunday School; VBS=Vacation Bible School

TABLE 4.4: FAMILY ECOMAP CONNECTIONS

Name	Mother	Father	Siblings/ other Family	Family Spiritual Rituals
Joann Baptist				
Donna Baptist				
Jacque Baptist		d-d-d-d-d	d-d-d-d-d	
Libby Baptist				
Ellen Episcopalian				
Jane Episcopalian				
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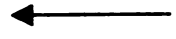
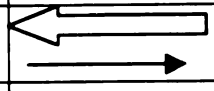
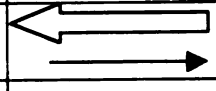
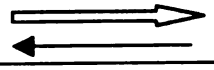
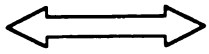
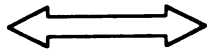
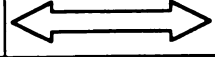
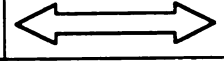
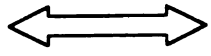
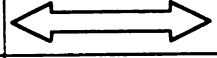
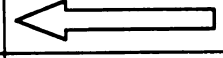
Erin Lutheran			d-d-d-d	
Margaret Lutheran				
Lucy Lutheran				
Emma Lutheran	d-d-d-d			
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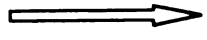
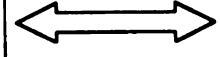
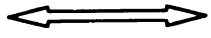
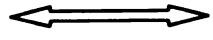
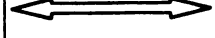
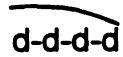
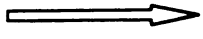
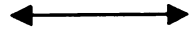
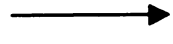
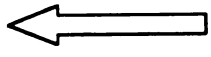
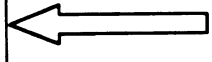
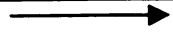
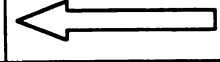
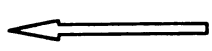
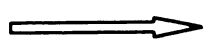
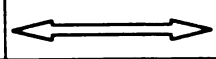
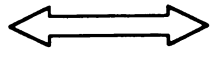
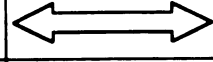
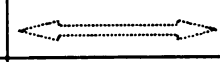
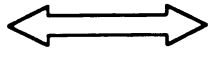
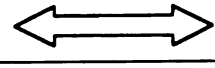
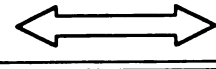
Lana Methodist			d-d-d-d-d	
Bonnie Methodist				
Molly Methodist	 d-d-d-d			 d-d-d-d
Carrie Methodist				
Leah Presbyterian			 d-d-d-d	
Lee Ann Presbyterian				
Kara Presbyterian		d-d-d-d		
Joy Presbyterian				d-d-d-d

Legend: --- =conflict; ____=good relationship; d-d-d=distant;  =cut off; =energy to another

 =energy to informant;  =bi-directional energy

Research Question Four: The Contribution of Spiritual Strengths and Resources to Female Adolescent Identity.

The fourth question that guided the research examined the role of the informant's spiritual strengths and resources in shaping her identity. The operational definition of spiritual strengths allowed for informants to describe their perceived resources and their own strengths. Three interview questions supplied insight into informants' spiritual strengths and resources, as well as information gleaned from each informant's ecomap. With regard to spiritual strengths and resources, there were no clear denominational trends.

Traditionally, the doctrine and teachings of mainline Christian religions have come from the life experience and perspective of men. Feminist theology holds that the spiritual-self-in-relation to God must include women's experience as well as men's (O'Connor, 1995). Feminist theology also challenges the narrow view of women as meek and mild (Rosenblatt, 1991). Rosenblatt (1991) believes that acknowledging women's spiritual strengths and resources allows for recognition not only of their spiritual nature, but also of their identity as leaders, and their options for vocations. Research question four sought information from informants regarding their spiritual-self-in-relationship to God, as well as to their spiritual leaders, and their faith community.

Involvement in faith community.

There was wide variety of involvement experiences within respondents' faith communities. Church and Sunday school attendance were frequent responses

to the query regarding involvement in faith community. Several respondents spoke with obvious passion regarding the influence of worship experiences.

> "...I know this sounds bizarre, like 'Oh, whatever...,' but I think if I had to choose, you know, if I could go to church on Christmas or if I could get presents, I would really pick church. I'm weird like that. I like church, I like to be in church, I like hymns."
>
> Margaret

> "Uh, I think...I think Christmas Eve services always stick out to me, and it's, it's always, you know, just the music, and, you know, the church is dark, and there are candles; I think it's, I think it's always very moving to me. And also services before Easter, and, Easter morning service is, has got to be my favorite..."
>
> Jane

For the informants who named church as significant, worship was a source of spiritual strength for them. One informant, Joy, narrowed the worship experience down to one specific element, communion, as providing significant spiritual strength for her.

> "That one (communion), every time, is always, it's always cool. It's the same every time, but it's not."

Within the context of church, three women named service within the worship service as meaningful in their involvement in their faith community. Within the context of this research this is notable because leadership in worship has been traditionally a male role. Both Jacque and Ellen have ushered in their respective churches, a position that has been a male role. Acoltying (lighting and extinguishing the candles on the altar) is typically done by children and adolescents, and was mentioned by Ellen and Renee. The role has high visibility before the congregation. Depending on the definition attached to the position, it

may or may not be a worship role that can be filled by a young girl. If it is viewed as an extension of the pastoral role, acolyting has traditionally been reserved for boys; if it is seen as a service role, acolyting can be done by both boys and girls. Jacque's service in worship was of a different nature; during her high school years she played the piano for the youth service, and also ushered.

Involvement in church youth group in junior and/or senior high was included as a notable activity within the faith community for fully half of the respondents. For some women, involvement in youth group occurred when they became too old for Sunday school.

> "I did Sunday school when I was little, ...and then, when I got into junior high I started doing junior high youth group. And then I did senior high youth group in high school."
>
> Emma

Donna also notes the difference that age made in her involvement in her faith community, as well as the opportunities for leadership that youth group provided.

> "Um, like, I would say once I could drive I was more involved....I was pretty involved in the youth group, and then I was involved in the youth council, and I was like secretary one year and treasurer one year, and president one year..."

Lee Ann talks about her youth group experience as an opportunity to gain experience on many levels, including leadership.

> "I went on the trip to Colorado with them that summer. And then the next year, um, I did the same thing, and I went to Mexico on a mission trip. And then my senior year, I was involved in, like they just started a leadership thing, for like, to run the Sunday morning services for the kids, not for the, I guess like Sunday school for high school. And I was involved in that, then the Mexico mission trip again...."

Renee describes her youth group experience at a small church where, in the absence of adult leaders, she took the responsibility of leading Bible studies. In addition, Renee and her sister made certain that the youth leader roles of acolyte and crucifer (carrying the cross) were covered in the worship services.

> "I ended up leading the youth group, um, Bible studies simply because none of the adults wanted to when I was fifteen. And I was one of....I remember one summer my sister and I were the acolyte and crucifer every Sunday just about, except when our family was out of town..."

Interestingly, Renee's college experiences have caused her to re-think her leadership roles. She is the informant quoted on page 89, referring to the need to lead from the background. Her experience at a Christian college appears to have changed her perspective on how she exercises her leadership abilities.

A few of the women mentioned involvement in "Pioneer girls" as an area of involvement in their spiritual community. This is notable because besides Sunday school, Pioneer Club was the only other activity mentioned which occurred at the elementary school level. Pioneer Club is also notable given their mission statement.

> Pioneer Clubs is a Christian ministry that's entirely driven by a passion to evangelize and disciple today's children. Pioneer Clubs provides programs for churches to sponsor a weekly club ministry for young people from age two through twelfth grade. Pioneer Clubs helps kids have fun, learn new skills, build relationships, study the Bible, and ultimately, learn to live for Christ in every aspect of life. (www.pioneerclubs.org)

Given their mission statement, Pioneer Clubs has the opportunity to influence spiritual identity, and thus, overall gender identity.

Several women described special events, usually sponsored by the denomination at the state or local level, which were very meaningful in shaping their spiritual identity. Jacque talked about the acceptance she felt in a large group at a regional conference.

> "Well, one really good religious experience I had, I went to, I can't remember the full name of the conference, but it was like a Midwest um, it was a regional....yeah, it was a regional Baptist conference, it was for the Midwest. And I went there for a couple of days, and it was churches from all over the Midwest. It was so great, I've never, I almost wish I went again, because I, probably the only time I didn't have a lot of fun, was because of the group of people that I was with. And that goes back to me not liking to be the new person or me not liking the person, to not know everybody as well....But the total experience, it was great. It was just great. And...it, it just felt like so much community, it just felt like everybody....it just amazed me you could bring all these people , pull all these people from different states, and you, just worship the Lord like that...."

Nicole spoke at length about a three week experience which her Sunday school teacher recommended. Nicole noted, "that summer was probably the biggest thing," and continues to influence her in her search for a college major and a career.

> "My Sunday school teacher heard of the Summer Sunday Sampler, and that's for people who thought they might be called or something, and just to let us go and have a taste of, um, what's it's like to be in seminary, like you could be a pastor, a... I don't even remember any more, but all those different things you could do..... It was just like seventeen of us for three weeks, and we attended classes, three different classes, three times a week. Each week was a different class. Um, we were guided by, um, like some people in the seminary, some younger people, and, we did a lot of volunteer work, we did a lot of praying and meditation, and, um devotions, and since there was only seventeen of us, over three weeks, we all got really close, and it was a really cool experience."

Jane described two programs, one that took place at her church, and the other was sponsored through the larger church body. Both programs offer guidance in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, as well as opportunity for leadership.

> "...my church does the "Journey to Adulthood" program now.... It's um, it's three different programs, and it starts with, right at thirteen, which is like junior high school students, that age group, and then they have, um, the high school group, and then they have the eighteen to nineteen year olds.... in high school I did a program called 'Happening,' and it's a spiritual retreat weekend for high school students, by high school students. Until recently it was completely run by high school students with only adult chaperones... There was a senior in high school, either in November or in May, you were the rector of the meeting, and you were in charge..."

The events described by these three informants left a lasting impression on their spiritual formation, perhaps in part because they occurred in an environment outside of what they associated as the ordinary.

Spiritual leaders.

A second question employed to investigate the research question regarding spiritual strengths and resources contributing to identity focused on spiritual leaders. The operational definition provided in Chapter 3 defined spiritual leaders as, "professional ministry staff of a church—senior pastor, youth pastor, youth leader, minister of music, director of Christian education, and the like." It became obvious over the course of the interview process that the informants defined spiritual leaders as anyone who had provided guidance and/or teaching in their spiritual lives. Friends were the most frequently named spiritual leaders, reflecting the make-up of the microsystem of college students. Mothers were also mentioned as spiritual leaders, and informants made reference to their ability to talk openly with their mothers. The naming of family members as spiritual leaders supports their influence in shaping gender identity.

> "My mom is one of those spiritual leaders for me... um, it's close. She's kind of more subtle and just like gentle..."
>
> Kara

Grandparents and siblings also were included among spiritual leaders for most informants.

> "I think my brother has also been, um, an important person in my spiritual life. We just kind of have complimented each other, I think. Uh, I got involved with like district youth groups and things like that before he did, and I introduced him to those things, and then he kind of got more involved than me. So it's kind of like we're both, we both pull each other up when we need it."
>
> Bonnie

There were six informants who, in naming the individuals whom they felt were their spiritual leaders, did not include anyone from their church's professional ministry staff. Renee was the only respondent who did not name any spiritual leaders. Her initial response was, "Hmmm, I don't always have the reverence for them that I'm supposed to." Renee went on to elucidate on individuals who had been in positions of spiritual leadership in her life for whom she had no respect. Ultimately, she named one of her college professors, and then added, "They're human just like me...and in some cases, not as intelligent."

The informants who named professional ministry staffers they considered their spiritual leaders included pastors, youth workers, music ministers, and campus chaplains. The ministry staff who were named had made some kind of personal connection with the informant. Erin identified seminary interns who, as spiritual leaders, had been helpful to her in defining her identity as a Christian and a lesbian, and her consideration of entering seminary.

> "I would have to say the last three interns, including Sue, who I never, I wasn't here when she was the intern, but I have met her. I went to her ordination. I don't know if you know anything about that. She's um, a lesbian woman who refuses to promise to remain celibate....um, John (campus pastor) went down to perform the ordination, she asked that he do it, and, so a bunch of us went down there. Even though I'd never met her, it was real important for me to go down.... And I met her then, and talked to her, and so we communicate fairly regularly, every couple weeks or so by email. Um, and she's been a big help to me in this process. And Janet Smith was our intern last year, who's also a lesbian woman..."
>
> Erin

Joy named two church staff members as instrumental in helping her to grow spiritually. Her experience illustrates the influence that church staff have the potential for exerting in the lives of young people.

> "Pete, Pete Becker, who is the music director for youth group, and Jeff Jones, who is the pastor, those two. Pete is definitely someone I would talk to on kind of a weekly basis, and he would ask em, you know whenever I'd see hi m, like, before I left for school (college), he's like, 'What are you going to be doing when you go to school, to, you know, keep in the faith,' and you know just asked a lot of questions that.... He definitely makes sure everybody's on track, as far as keeping up with....keeping up with our relationships with God."

Joann described the relationship she has with her pastor, whom she named as a spiritual leader in her life, who was also a close family friend.

> "And Pastor Chase is, uh, the pastor of my church, of course. And he's just a very wise man, and I just go to church and I learn so much from him... We have them over to our house, like, if they don't come over to our house then we either go out to eat with them every Sunday. So it's almost like they're family. Then they come to holidays; it's kinda crazy."

In naming spiritual leaders in her life, Bonnie actually described her pastor as a role model in her life. Bonnie belongs to a Methodist church, a denomination that ordains women, and so her pastor, as a woman, could provide the role model of a Christian woman.

> "Um, the assistant pastor at my church when I was in high school was, um, very involved with the youth, and she, uh, was kind of, kind of like a role model in a way, um, so, kind of an example for spiritual life and life in general..."

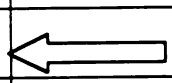
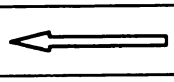
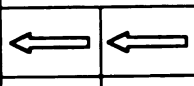
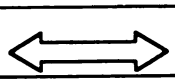
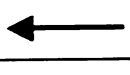
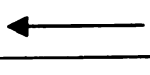
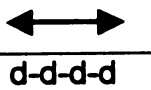
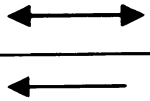
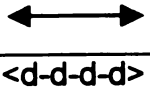
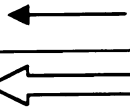
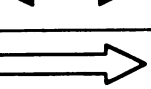
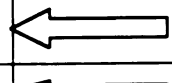
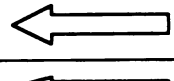
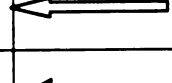
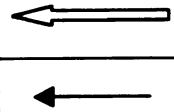
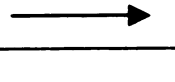
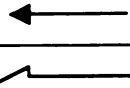
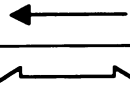
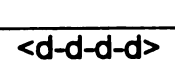
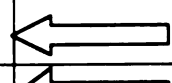
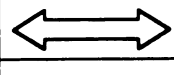
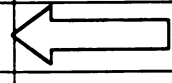
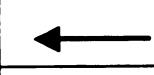
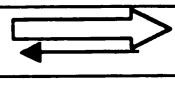
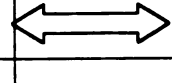
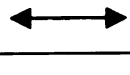
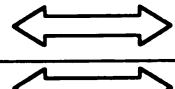
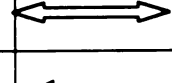
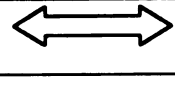
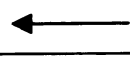
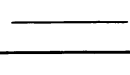
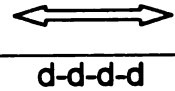
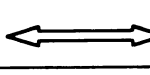
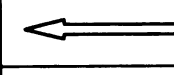
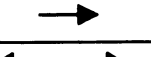
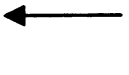
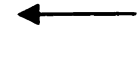
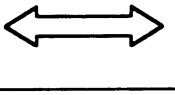
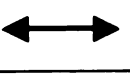
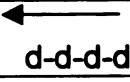
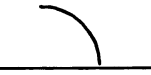
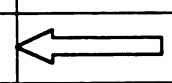
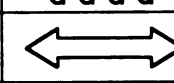
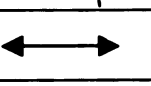
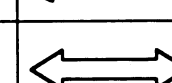
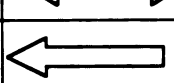
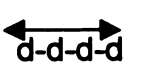
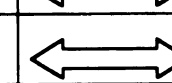
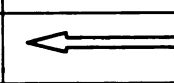
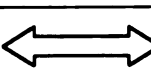
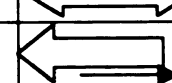
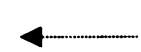
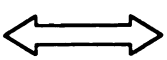
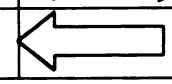
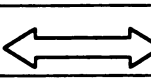
Lana's comments regarding her pastors echo the important role that women clergy play in the lives of young women.

> "My ministers back home, the couple, they, uh, they've really had impact. I think about the time I started to get, started to become more spiritual and more active, was when they started to come, when they, when they moved to our church...."
>
> Lana

Ecomaps.

The ecomaps created by each informant provide a visual picture of the personal relationships that provide spiritual strength for them, as well as the informant's perception of the resources they provide. Table 4.5 renders a summary of the personal relationships from each ecomap. The informants were instructed to indicate the strength of the relationship with the width of the line they used to connect the individual to themselves, and to use arrows to indicate flow of energy. Each informant's drawings were duplicated as closely as possible in Table 4.5. Arrows flowing toward informants indicate that they felt that they were receiving something (e.g. support, encouragement) from that individual. Arrows flowing away from informants indicate that they felt that they (the informants) were giving something to that individual. A bi-directional arrow indicates that there is both giving and receiving on the part of the informant. Reading across each row provides insight into each informant's perceived spiritual resources. Renee's ecomap indicates that her greatest resources are her siblings; Nicole's map does not indicate any strong spiritual resources. The ecomap readings from Donna, Nicole, Erin, Molly, and Carrie show that none of these informants perceives spiritual strength in their

TABLE 4.5: ECOMAP SPIRITUAL STRENGTHS

Name	Relationship to God	Relationship to Spiritual Leaders	Relationship to M/F Spiritual Traditions		Relationship to Siblings	Other Spiritual Leaders Included
Joann Baptist						Friends, G, CM
Donna Baptist						CS, CC
Jacque Baptist				d-d	d-d-d-d	Grandmother
Libby Baptist		<d-d-d-d>				Christian friends
Ellen Episcopalian						None
Jane Episcopalian						Aunts/Uncles, close friends
Nicole Lutheran						Close friends, boyfriend
Erin Lutheran					<d-d-d-d>	Grandmother, partner
Margaret Lutheran						Friends, G, roommates
Lucy Lutheran						Friends
Emma Lutheran			d-d			Yth leader, CP, G
Renee Lutheran						Boyfriend
Lana Methodist					d-d-d-d 	Ministers, friends
Bonnie Methodist						Female friend Wesley friends
Molly Methodist		 d-d-d-d	d-d			Friends
Carrie Methodist						None
Leah Presbyterian					 d-d-d-d	Boyfriend
Lee Ann Presbyterian						Friends
Kara Presbyterian				d-d		H.S.& college friends
Joy Presbyterian						Friends, strangers

LEGEND: G=Grandparents; CM=church members; CS=camp staff; CC=campus congregation; CP=campus pastor

relationship with their parents. Lucy appears to have multiple spiritual strengths, based on the number of bi-directional arrows and their given widths.

Blank circles were left on the ecomap, so that informants could write in spiritual strengths and/or resources that were unique to them. The last column on Table 8 indicates whether the informants included any individuals outside of their immediate family. The relationships named in this last column supports the earlier comments regarding informants' perceptions of who their spiritual leaders are.

Research Question Five: The Contribution of Self-Concept to Female Adolescent Identity.

The fifth research question focused on the contribution of self-concept to female identity. The researcher has posited that self-concept is influenced by church culture and practices, by parents, by gender ideology, and spiritual strengths and resources. The operational definition of self-concept included self-values, self-beliefs, self-feelings, and self-assessments. The interview questions which supported this section of the research asked about spiritual autonomy within the family of origin, the influence of spirituality on life plans, relationship to God, and how that relationship is nurtured.

The study of self-concept has, traditionally, been premised on the male experience (Adams, 1994). Feminist theorists have expanded the research to encompass conceptual perspectives based on women's experiences. Chodorow's (1978) theory emphasizes the importance of the relationship with

mother as primary caretaker. Jean Baker Miller (1991) contends that women's personality development occurs within relationships.

Self-values.

Examining the interview data, there is evidence to support the feminist perspectives of Chodorow and Miller. Informant's self-values, self-beliefs, and self- feelings evince the importance of relationships with others and with God. The theme of relationships was particularly prominent in the informants' self-values. They described their future in terms of expected relationships, especially those of wife and mother, as well as the value they place on marrying a Christian, and raising their children as Christians.

> "Um, but I definitely think I want to grow up and have a family..."
>
> Emma

> "I plan to get involved in the church community. I mean, I would like to meet a guy who is Christian. Or if I meet a guy that wasn't, that he'd be willing to start going to church, and stuff like that."
>
> Lucy

Eight respondents extended the expected relationship of marriage to include the role of motherhood. The influence of church and their experience in their own family is evident in the stated importance of raising children to have faith and to be involved with the church.

> "I'd like to have a family of my own, and I'd like to, you know, marry a Christian, and raise them going to church, and having a strong church background."
>
> Molly

> "Umm..well, I want my husband to be somebody who is also a strong Christian...so, yeah, like I want to have a strong Christian family, raise my kids to be Christian kids..."
>
> Libby

These quotes illustrate the influence of both church culture and family of origin in shaping the informant's self-concepts of wife and mother. Lee Ann's response was typical of the respondents who talked about the expectation for career, in that marriage and family was discussed first, and a career outside of the home was secondary.

> "Well, uh, I know for my family, for my husband, I won't even date anyone who's not a Christian right now. So they're going to be a Christian, and that's going to impact my life right there. Career wise, I don't know...."

Margaret was much more ambivalent about a career, but was quite certain about her future roles being in relationships and connected to the church.

> "Um, career, shameer... I don't know about career. Career is just—career is something you just do, but it's not really who you are, in my case, anyway. I'm gonna go to law school, probably, and do some kind of law, probably, but maybe not....I'll always be—I think I'll definitely be one of those adults who's completely, ridiculously up to her elbows in things at church at all times. I definitely see that happening and working with individuals within the church. I definitely see myself continuing to do volunteer work...."

Nicole values a variety of relationships, and all of them figure in to her long-term plans for her life.

> "...when I think about my future husband, I just picture some guy that I'm going to work side by side with, and do God's work, and do like, uh, community service... Um, my friends, my closest friends, are all strong Christians, and um, I plan on staying friends with them. I think that pretty much, if I can find a job where I feel like I'm really serving God, then I would be really happy...."

Nicole mentions her self-value of the importance of her spiritual relationship with God in choosing a career; other informants also focused on the influence of faith on career choice.

> "Well, I guess, I mean, I would want to make sure that whatever I'm doing is like, ethical... I want to be an ethical business woman...."
>
> Libby

> "I think that my religion has a lot to do with me wanting to be someone in the medical field, as far as being able to help people, and make a difference to other people, outside of my family...."
>
> Jane

Donna's response regarding the influence of spiritual beliefs on her future bears evidence to the security she experienced as a child attending church. Her description of her home life as a child was one where there was not much warmth or nurturing. Neighbors regularly took Donna and her sister to church, where church members became a surrogate family for her.

> "Yeah, it (church) was the perfect environment. So, like, because my parents would fight, and so I could go to church, and like, no fighting, just like, there was this one guy, and he was older, and like he would give candy to all the children every Sunday... So it was like really cool."

Donna's description of the church environment is a vital piece in understanding her description of how her faith shapes her expectations for her future.

"....and so yes, I'm graduating with a major in teaching; that doesn't mean that I want to end up there. I mean, I'd much rather end up, like at a church, married to a youth pastor, and like helping with the youth group, or just being really involved in the church. That's what I want, I want to be involved with the kids, more in a one-to-one situation, and small group settings than big classroom settings in public schools..."

Self-beliefs.

The theory of Kay Deaux (1987) was used to construct the theory upon which this research was based. Deaux views behavior from the human social behavioral perspective; that is, perceivers' cognitive dispositions operate to maintain their original expectancies for a target. Behavioral confirmation, frequently termed, "self-fulfilling prophecy," refers to the processes by which the perceiver's expectations for a target are adjusted in such a way that the resulting behavior objectively confirms the perceiver's initial expectancy. It was obvious that the teachings of the church influenced the expectancies for a target regarding informant beliefs about self, thus supporting Deaux's theory. The most prominent self-belief shared by respondents was the importance of submission to God; all desires and decisions must be open to God's guidance. Both Joann and Molly believe that God will lead them to a college major and a career.

"Well, right now, um, I'm undecided in a major, so I'm like really depending on God for that one."
Joann

"Yeah, like, I guess, you know, I think if God, He intends me to do something, like my personality would be good for some type of job, like he'll lead me there....so, I'm praying for him to show me how to use myself, to do what needs to be done."
Molly

Bonnie's spiritual beliefs have affected her self-belief regarding her intended career and role in life.

> "We've talked in Wesley sometimes about what kind of ministry people are called to. Some people are called to ministry, you know, pastoral ministry. Some people are just called to be Christians in the world. And that's, I think, where my role stands more."
>
> Bonnie

Lee Ann and Joy echoed the belief that God will guide them in making decisions.

> "I really rely on God to help me when I have decisions. Even the little things...."
>
> Lee Ann

> ".....I don't know, I guess my, definitely my spirituality, like my relationship with God is, you know, how I make all my decisions...."
>
> Joy

In addition to submission to God, Leah and Joann believe that in the marriage relationship, their behavior and opinions must be submissive to that of their husband as well.

> "Yeah, I, uh, well, I tend to have like...how do I word this? I tend to express my views quite a bit... when sometimes, like, as long as it's not going against my husbands beliefs—unless like my husband's going off of like biblical text, then it would be ok—but basically, I think I'm gonna have to learn how to be submissive..."
>
> Joann

> "In marriage, man is the leader...it's an equal relationship, but the man has the final say...."
>
> Leah

Church culture and doctrine, and perhaps family of origin have shaped these women's belief about the role of wife. The target behavior has caused them to adjust their expectancies accordingly.

Self-feelings.

The content of the interview questions shaped the feelings about self that were shared in the interview process. The self-feelings shared were focused particularly on the informant's relationship with God. The two prominent themes centered on closeness to God in prayer, and the role of worship/church attendance in maintaining a faith relationship with God. Several women spoke of the importance of prayer in feeling close to God.

> "Well, what keeps me close to God, I would say, is prayer...."
>
> Joann

> "When I pray and...I don't know, I can't even... I feel some type of connection, and you know someone's listening to you, and...and...I think you know that he's affecting your life and leading you, like that's when I feel close..."
>
> Molly

> "I think, well, how I feel close to God is I pray every night before I go to bed."
>
> Lucy

The self-feelings generated through prayer enhance the faith of the informant. This, in turn, encourages a change in the target behavior of the individual, that she be more "Christ-like," an ideology that has been shaped by androcentric doctrine and practice.

Attending church and participating in the service through song was the second way that respondents described feeling close to God.

"Ok, um, oh—church charge me often in a big way....But mostly, mostly hymns...I read some of those words and I'm just like, 'Oh! This is my life!' and I start crying...."

Margaret

"Prayer, and the services here (campus ministry)"

Carrie

Jane's response echoes the importance of being in relationships with people as well as with God.

"I think, going to church, and I think having the friends that I do, who support that and make sure that I'm...they're there for me, and if I need anything, I think that is a direct extension of God..."

Libby also feels that being around her Christian friends keep her close to God.

"Um...like being around other Christians, and you know, practicing worship, like I know when I go to, I go to a Christian camp over the summer, and when I get back from camp, I'm just on a spiritual high, and I feel so close then...So I guess it depends on who you're around, that helps influence that."

Self-assessment.

Self-assessment also was included in the operational definition of self-concept, and several informants offered assessments of where they were in their faith life, and what they felt they needed to change about the practice of their faith.

"...And I, I don't know, I feel like I've just been realizing more about myself, more about like, I don't know, things that aren't necessarily good things about myself, and, um, it's been a struggle to give those things up for me the past year, and, uh, yeah, I feel like God has just held on to me, and it's so frustrating sometimes..."

Kara

"I base my relationship with God too much on feelings, and I need to base it more on faith."

Leah

"I need to be closer....I'm close to God, but not close enough."

Jacque

Both Lana and Carrie offer more holistic self-assessments that described, from their perspective, just how they see themselves.

"Um, I think that my spirituality is who, above all, who I am. People who don't know me and just meet me for the fist time, I think that that's something they're going to pick up on, that, that something that's going to make my life what it is. Um, obviously if I go into ministry, my spirituality is making that everything. I mean, I'm going to be daily living that, and that's why I struggled when I was doubting, because I was like, 'Well, I know God's trying to call me, but why am I doubting all this?' ....And I think I went through that phase in my life so that, when people actually come to me to ask me that, I could be able to tell them, 'You know, I went through that too.'....."

Lana

"You know, a lot of people ask me why I believe, because most of the people I hang out with and am staying with aren't really religious at all; and I say, 'Well, logically, it just makes the most sense.' Um, like the Christian explanation for why we're here, and how things come about, you know. Because if I didn't have God, I don't think I would have any purpose to my life, you know...."

Carrie

These comprehensive self-assessments come from two women whose family and church experiences, thought to influence self-concept, are very different. These women happen to be the same age, and are both members of the Methodist denomination.

Table 4.6 provides a cross-case display of each of the areas that were operationally defined as a part of overall self-concept. Not all informants provided information in every category, and those boxes have been left blank in order to make the absence of information in those categories more visible. Reading across the categories provides insight into each informant's self-concept. Leah values God's direction in her life, believes the man is the leader in the marital relationship, and assesses that her faith is too frequently based on her feelings. The picture of Nicole's self-concept from Table 4.6 illustrates her verbal profession in the interview that she was searching for direction for her life. Nicole states definite values, but evinces no self-beliefs, feelings, or assessment. Likewise Margaret's, claim in the interview that, "I just keep slapping him (God) in the face, ignoring God, pretending he's not there, like going off and doing my own thing," is supported in her self-beliefs and self-assessment.

Overall, the components of self-concept provide insight into identity development, the contributing factors of formation as well as where each informant is in the process. Arnett's (2000) research builds a strong case for the ongoing development of identity through the early twenties, and that assertion is certainly supported in this research. Age of informant was not a factor in evincing a more complete picture of self-concept as a factor in identity development.

TABLE 4.6: THE CONTRIBUTION OF SELF-CONCEPT ON FEMALE ADOLESCENT GENDER IDENTITY

Name	Self-Values	Self-Beliefs	Self-Feelings	Self-Assessment
Joann Baptist	Prayer, Baptist husband	Submission in marriage	Close to God in prayer	Sin keeps her from God
Donna Baptist	Marry C., $$ doesn't matter		Close to God in devos & prayer	Growing closer to God
Jacque Baptist	Establish career before family		God is present in daily events	Could be closer to God
Libby Baptist	CF, be ethical business	Jesus is best friend	C. friends keep her close- God	
Ellen Episcopalian	Involve in church, marry E		Always feels close to God	Thankful
Jane Episcopalian	Helping people		Close to God in church, people	
Nicole Lutheran	Serve God,MC CF, Cfriends			
Erin Lutheran		Works w/God, support by God	Close to God via shared view	
Margaret Lutheran	Example set by parents	She is unfaithful-God	Church, hymns =close to God	Frequently wanders fr faith
Lucy Lutheran	MC, CF, L., faith infuse wrk		Prayer & CF =close to God	
Emma Lutheran	Being Lutheran	God as source of Strength	People of faith =close to God	
Renee Lutheran	Stay home Mom, h.school		Pray, worship =close to God	
Lana Methodist	Faith		Sometimes distant fr God	Feelings get in way w/God
Bonnie Methodist	CF	Her role to be C. in world	God protects	
Molly Methodist	MC	God will lead to career	Close to God in prayer	
Carrie Methodist	Faith, career over kids/famly	God gives life purpose	Close to God in church, prayer	Faith gives life meaning
Leah Presbyterian	God's direction in life	Man is leader in marriage		Faith based too much feeling
Lee Ann Presbyterian	MC, God's input- decisions	God will help w/decisions		
Kara Presbyterian	Spending time w/ God	God has a plan		Need to be obedient to God
Joy Presbyterian	MC, God's input-decisions	God is everything	Strength, joy, peace, wisdom	

Legend: C=Christian; CF=Christian family; devos=devotions; E=Episcopalian; L=Lutheran
MC=marry a Christian

Research Question Six: The Contribution of Gender Ideology to Female Adolescent Identity Development.

The final research question centered on the contribution of gender ideology to female identity. Operationally defined as, "the informant's self-description of gender appropriate behaviors," four questions from the interview informed the findings regarding gender ideology.

Women's role in the church.

Jean Baker Miller (1991) asserts that female identity seeks to fulfill two needs, to use all of a woman's capacities, and to do so within a context that will fulfill her desire to be "in relationship" with another. The spiritual focus of this research, and the informants' ties to mainline denominational churches, must be acknowledged as presenting unique contexts for creating the desire to be "in relationship." Feminist theologian King (1995) contends that gender and religious culture are interrelated, as "perceptions of ourselves are shaped by and deeply rooted in our culturally shared religious and philosophical heritage" (p. 2). The historically paternalistic perspective of Christian doctrine and practice supports women entrusting their care to men. In addition, paternalistic doctrine places women as second class citizens, submissive to men, and limits their roles to those of wife and mother. The influence of the church in shaping gender ideology, and, in turn, identity development, was clearly evident in the informant's responses to the questions regarding women's role in the church, and how their faith will influence plans for the future. As discussed under research question two, informant's self-description of appropriate roles for women in the church fell

neatly along denominational lines. Women from churches that include women at all levels of service, including pastor, noted this in their responses. All four Methodist women used terms such as "no distinction," and "equal" in describing women's roles in the church. The Presbyterian informants, from a branch of the Presbyterian denomination that does not acknowledge women's ordination, all made mention of the inappropriateness of women holding the pastoral role in their responses. These women did, however, support women in other leadership roles within the church. The Baptist informants were more restrictive in describing women's role in the church, and named very traditional female roles such as food preparation, nursery care, and office work. Joann, a Baptist, asserted that women's role in the church is to "be submissive." Jacque, who grew up in a Baptist congregation in which women are ordained, named the traditional women's roles first, and named the role of pastor at the end of her response. The Lutheran women were clearly split along denomination lines. Those belonging to a more liberal Lutheran denomination were very forthright in naming women as equal, and as leaders. Women from the more conservative Lutheran denomination characterized women's role in the church as "servant," "helper," "in the background," and Renee's response, of "finding glory in other than leadership positions." The influence of church doctrine and culture were clearly evident in the gender ideology that emerged from the informants' descriptions of women's roles in the church.

Life plans.

The gender ideology that was present in the self-described appropriate women's roles in church also was evident in the self-described expectations for the future. Nineteen of the twenty respondents included the gender appropriate role of wife and mother as part of their future plans. In employing the operational definition of gender identity as a commitment to the domains that one sees as central to personhood, and to have an overriding sense of self that coordinates those commitments, the respondents evince appropriate gender ideology and identity (Moshman, 1999). The influence of church and family in shaping the expectations for marriage and motherhood were evident in several of the responses.

> "I know I'm going to raise my kids in the Lutheran church, like how I was raised. An, um, and just like, I know there's some things I'll do different than my family. Like I think I'll be more likely to have family devotions and stuff like that, and, you know, talk about the relationship aspect of it earlier on. Because growing up a lot of time I thought that it was about...like, 'You're a Christian, and this is what Christian's do.' Not, 'You have this person in your life and because of Him you act this way.'"
>
> Emma

> "I mean, I would like to raise my family Lutheran and have my kids grow up like I did and, you know, go to church, learn about God and stuff."
>
> Lucy

> "Um, well, despite my—well, I want to—I want to be a stay-at-home mom. A home-school mom. Um, and I want to raise my kids to have strong faith and sound habits because I think in a lot of cases morality is nothing more than a habit you're forced in to."
>
> Renee

Erin, who is in a committed lesbian relationship, did not name wife and mother as future roles. Erin's response shows appropriate gender ideology, as these roles would be less defined and clear in a lesbian relationship. Erin also evinced gender ideology in her description of future plans.

> "Um, I'm trying to decide if, I mean now I feel like it's a decision I have to make, or a decision I have to look for, whether I want to pursue sociology or to pursue seminary...um and I really have no idea. And I know that sexuality and the church are going to be a part of it..."

Autonomy.

Interview questions regarding autonomy and church support for goals yielded much less information about gender ideology. The responses to both questions were, universally, short, concise, and positive. Libby was the only respondent who claimed that she had to go church, although she didn't specifically say that she felt she had no autonomy.

> "Well, I mean it wasn't up to us to go to church. Like, I mean our family, we had to go, but like our parents' made us go, but it didn't feel like to me, that they were making me go, because I wanted to go. But it wasn't an option if I were to not want to go."

The sameness of responses did not yield information useful to ascertaining the contribution of autonomy in gender ideology.

Support from church for goals.

Likewise the respondents felt that their church supported the goals that they had set for themselves. Some respondents noted feeling differences between congregations at home and on campus regarding support, but everyone felt supported at one place or the other. Most women did not elaborate on their

responses, and so did not offer the depth necessary to glean insight regarding the contribution of church support to gender ideology and/or gender identity. The overwhelmingly positive feelings of support from the church may be attributed to a number of factors. As college students, the informants who referred to feeling supported by their congregation at home are not there very often any more, and so, perhaps, have only limited involvement and contact. Secondly, those who referred to a campus ministry as supportive of their life goals are participating in churches completely focused on meeting the needs of college students.

Table 4.7 offers a cross-case summary of the gender ideology of each informant. A theme was frequently evident between the informant's description of women's role in the church and their explanation of how their spirituality influenced their life plans. Joann cites women's role in the church as that of submission; she also lists submission to her husband as one of the ways her spirituality will influence her life plans. Gender equality is part of Nicole's ideology, as she believes that women can serve in any capacity in the church, and she also dreams of working side-by-side with her husband. Leah's gender ideology includes women's submission to male authority. She listed several roles for women in the church, but by omission made it clear that pastor is not one of those roles. In her life plans, Leah described the man as the leader in marriage.

The Effects of College Experiences on Spiritual Beliefs.

The final question addressed college experiences as they related to their spiritual beliefs. Informants were given the opportunity to discuss course work or

TABLE 4.7: CONTRIBUTION OF GENDER IDEOLOGY TO FEMALE ADOLESCENT GENDER IDENTITY

Name	Women's Role in Church	Spirituality Influences Life Plans
Joann Baptist	Be submissive, not a pastor	Be submissive
Donna Baptist	Organize events, not a pastor	Be a youth pastor's wife
Jacque Baptist	Take care of food, deaconess, female pastor	Get career together, then family
Libby Baptist	"Hearth keepers," nursery, office work, not pastor	Husband a strong Christian, C. family, business ethics
Ellen Episcopalian	Take care of things, plan, altar guild, priests	Marry E., raise children in church, help
Jane Episcopalian	Important roles—equality	Career choice-help people, how to raise children
Nicole Lutheran	Women can serve in any capacity	Marry a C., work side-by-side, raise C. children
Erin Lutheran	Equal to men, responsible to erase sexist ideas	Guide career choice, focus on church and sexuality
Margaret Lutheran	Helper and servant	Respect husband, involved in church, not into a career
Lucy Lutheran	More in the background, support	Remain L., children grow up "like I did, " career
Emma Lutheran	Many positions, but not pastor	Marriage as lifetime commitment, raise children
Renee Lutheran	Find glory in service other than leadership	Stay-at-home mom, home school children
Lana Methodist	All are from God, equal gifts to offer	Spirituality is who I am, base family on faith
Bonnie Methodist	Important role, not different from men	Ministry of being a C. in the world, raise family in chrch
Molly Methodist	No distinction	Marry a Christian, go to church
Carrie Methodist	Ideally same as men, not reality	Career over children and family
Leah Presbyterian	Elders, youth ministry, teacher	Man is leader in marriage, faith will effect mother role
Lee Ann Presbyterian	Deacons, elders, not teaching, not pastors	Christian husband, business ethics
Kara Presbyterian	Not the head, not pastor, involved in other ways	Be in God's will, raise kids in church, pray w/them
Joy Presbyterian	Big role-everything but pastor	Marry Christian, effects every decision

Legend: C=Christian; E=Episcopalian; L=Lutheran

other activities in which they may have taken part that had challenged or encouraged their spiritual beliefs. All but one respondent had some sort of experience to relate, and some had multiple experiences. The most common responses were focused in the academic realm of college life, especially concerning religion courses.

> "Well, I took a class called Religions in America, and, um, that kind of exposed me to all of them, too. Especially like, seeing all the non-Christian faiths, they're, it was really interesting. And I never even really knew they existed. I mean, Baptist is what it was."
>
> Libby

> "Actually, I took a, a comparative religion class, which is a requirement at (state university).... Which I think is really cool. Um, and we touched on, we didn't get into a lot of the lesser known religions, but obviously we had Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and Islam....We had to do two different projects, and one of them, if you were protestant you had to either go to a Jewish or Hindu service....So I went to a Hindu service, and they had shrines, you know, and I just, that's just outside my realm of understanding..."
>
> Jane

These responses are typical of those offered by the informants, and they spoke of the new perspectives on spirituality and life philosophy that were brought to light for them.

Courses outside of the religion and theology also were mentioned as having had influence on the informants.

> "Um...I took a women's study course, it was Women and Literature. And it was really a fun class, and I really like it. It just kind of made me think about things. Kind of like, the, there's only one person. You know, because the subject of the literature was marriage and romance...But it was just kind of like, no one want to hear about what happens after your marriage, all of those stories just end in marriage....And it was kind of disappointing to realize that your life wasn't going to be like that, but at the same time, I think, life has it's merits, so it just made me think about where God, because it was obviously a non-Christian view of the way people were."
>
> Nicole

Emma, who attended Lutheran schools for her entire K-12 education, found her first semester at a public university quite different.

> "In my English class last semester, it was, my teacher wasn't a Christian, and that's the first contact I'd had with it, with having non-Christian teachers..."

Other experiences that were recounted fell under happenings on campus or in the residence halls, or with a campus ministry activity. A summary of informants' college experiences is provided in Table 4.8.

Summary of Findings

This chapter presented the major findings of the research study. Each of the six research questions was examined using informant responses from the interview questions and the ecomaps. Examination of the data collected revealed that Christian church culture and the family of origin do affect the development of identity, as well as overall gender identity in females.

TABLE 4.8: INFORMANTS' COLLEGE EXPERIENCES

Name	Academic Experience	Student Life Experience
Joann Baptist	Biblical Lit class-doctrine goes against B. beliefs	Drinking alcohol at student parties
Donna Baptist	Old Testament class-prof was atheist	
Jacque Baptist		
Libby Baptist	Religions in America class-exposure	
Ellen Episcopalian	Eastern religions course-positive	Evangelized by students-negative
Jane Episcopalian	Comparative religion course, speech class	
Nicole Lutheran	Women and Literature course; a Prof who is C.	
Erin Lutheran	Course on history of Israel-used Bible as text	
Margaret Lutheran	Religion 201 course	Meeting non-Christians
Lucy Lutheran		Discussions with roommate and friends
Emma Lutheran	English course, philosophy course	
Renee Lutheran	Biblical Lit course	
Lana Methodist	Theology on Film, Anthropology, Astronomy	
Bonnie Methodist	Course on English Bible	
Molly Methodist		Spring break trip with campus ministry group
Carrie Methodist		Attending Jewish student group w/boyfriend
Leah Presbyterian	Old Testament course	Transferring colleges after sophomore year
Lee Ann Presbyterian	Comments made by professors	Involvement with campus ministry
Kara Presbyterian		"Day of Awakening" campus ministry event
Joy Presbyterian	Theology course= +; Anthropology course= -	Exposed to different belief systems

Interviews and ecomaps clearly revealed the influence of church culture on female identity development via practices with regard to leadership and ordination. Informants' responses, which named spiritual leaders within the church, as well as church worship practices and denominational doctrinal beliefs, revealed how church culture affects identity development. No two informants attended the same church while they were growing up, yet the description of basic beliefs was completely discernable along denominational lines.

The actual practices of the church effected female identity development through the presence, or lack thereof, of women in leadership and pastoral roles. Again, there was distinct evidence of the influence of each mainline denomination's practices regarding women in leadership, based on the responses of the informants. The Episcopalian and Methodist women supported women's service in the church in a variety of roles, including those of leadership and clergy. The Baptist women, with one exception, limited women's roles within the church to helping and organizing/planning events. The one Baptist woman who supported women in leadership and pastoral roles came from a congregation that had a woman pastor. The Lutheran women were split along conservative and liberal lines. Those who came from the more liberal branch supported equality for women in all areas of service in the church; those from the more conservative branch did not support women in the pastoral role. Presbyterian informants were all from a conservative branch of the denomination, and they supported women as leaders, but did not think women should be in

positions of authority. None of the Presbyterian women supported women's ordination.

The religious practices and beliefs of parents influenced female identity via spiritual rituals and practices that took place in the home, choices about involvement in church activities, and through personal expression of faith. Where there were differences in parental expressions of faith, informants were very clear about the effects of those differences. The ecomaps provided input regarding how connected informants felt to their parents, as well as whether informants felt encouraged and supported by them.

With regard to spiritual strengths and resources, most informants cited multiple ways that their spirituality had been nurtured over the years. Worship, youth group activities, and special events (e.g. trips, retreats, attending religious camps) were activities that the informants counted as offering spiritual strength, or were a resource. Informant ecomaps provided insight into relationships with God, spiritual leaders, and family members, and gave a visual picture of the strength of each of those relationships.

Self-concept was shown to influence female adolescent identity through the self-values, self-beliefs, self-feelings, and self-assessments held by each informant. Church doctrine, church practice, and family of origin were all implicated in creating self-concept. The importance of being in relationships with God and with others was shown to be key to self-concept. Submission to God, and in some cases, also to spouse, were examples of self-concept provided by

informants. Self-concept also included the roles of wife and mother, and these relational roles were placed ahead of career aspirations.

Gender ideology was shown to contribute to female adolescent gender identity via the church culture and practice, and family of origin. Informants gathered messages regarding gender-appropriate behavior from their church and their parents, and created their own gender ideology based on what they heard, observed, participated in, and lived. Gender ideology was gleaned through informants' self-described appropriate roles for women in the church, as well as their narration of how their spirituality has influenced their life plans.

Chapter Five will provide discussion regarding the findings relative to each of the research questions. In addition, the chapter will include personal observations as well as suggestions for future research.

Chapter 5: Discussion and Conclusions

Overview

The purpose of this study was to understand the role of family of origin as well as church culture and practice in the development of female gender identity. The exploration of the influence of church culture and the family system in shaping female adolescent identity formation was accomplished through interviewing twenty college women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two. In addition, information was gathered from each informant via a spiritual ecomap, which was created during the interview process. The women who participated in the interview process were candid in responding to the verbal questions, and thoughtful in the creation of their ecomaps. Their responses supported the theoretical underpinnings of the research, and provided insight into the shaping of gender identity by family and church culture. Discussion of the findings will be divided into two sections; the first section will address the theoretical foundations of the research, the second section will examine the key findings.

Theoretical Foundations

Two theories provided the foundation for this research: the human ecological theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner, and the feminist theory of human interaction by Deaux and Major. This study supported Bronfenbrenner's (1989) human ecological perspective of human development as a joint function of both the person and the environment. Environmental influences of religious denominations were evident in attitudes regarding women's

leadership roles in church, in expectations for career and family, and in gender ideology. Environmental influences of family were evinced in the informants' spiritual strengths and resources, in self-concept, and in gender ideology. The joint function of the person and her environment was seen in the creation of twenty unique ecomaps. Despite the similarity of denomination, each informant had her own experiences within her local church, with family and friends, and these experiences were reflected in their ecomaps. In addition, when asked to delineate the beliefs of their denomination, informant responses, although similar in some respects, ultimately reflected different aspects of denominational doctrine. Personal factors also were evident in the informants' descriptions of their relationship to God, of what keeps them close to God, and in their college experiences. Each informant expressed a distinctive combination of spiritual activities that they felt nourished their beliefs.

The mesosystemic relationship of church and family was evident in the interaction of the parents as they took their children to church. For some informants, the mesosystemic church and family relationship of weekly church attendance as a family played an important role in their childhood experience, and had great influence in shaping their spiritual beliefs. The mesosystemic church/family relationship is also evident in the choice of some parents to send their children to parochial school. Another example of the church/family relationship occurred in the instances when informants were allowed to travel

with church groups, in which chaperones/youth counselors took on the responsibilities of safety and well-being of the youth.

Deaux and Major's (1987) theory asserts that gender-related behaviors take place within the context of social interaction. This was evident in the question regarding the role of women in the church, where responses followed clear denominational lines. Women cited church practices and role models from their church experience that reflected the church's influence as a socializing force in creating expectations for the "proper" or accepted roles for women in the church. Over the years, the social interaction the informants had experienced at church proved influential in their emerging gender identity.

Feminist theology has established the role of androcentric doctrine in socializing women to become dependent helpers (Barta, 1991). Deaux's theory of "gender belief system" supports the assertions of feminist theologians. The "gender belief system" consists of both descriptive and prescriptive elements believed to be true about men and women, and serves as the foundation for gender stereotypes. The predominance of informants' self-stated life-plans, which revolved around marriage and family, illustrates a "gender belief system" supported by many mainline Christian doctrines and practices. Despite the fact that informants had committed their resources in the pursuit of an undergraduate degree, the most prevalent response to the question regarding life plans focused on the roles of wife and mother. The influence of the church in creating a "gender belief system" also was evident

in comments made by some informants regarding why women cannot be pastors—that they are too emotional, and that they must be submissive.

Figure 5.1(p. 161), discussed in Chapter Two (Figure 2. 4), displays the influences that were conceptualized to shape female gender identity. Figure 5.2 presents a revised conceptual map, reflecting three changes. First, the arrow showing church culture and practice influences parents and family of origin has been changed from a solid line to a broken line. Information regarding parents' involvement in church, and their spiritual beliefs was gathered from the informant's perspective. The interview process did not allow for input from parents, thus there was no direct information regarding the influence of the church on parents, siblings, or other family members. The second set of changes in the conceptual map reflects the research findings that offered solid support for the influence of church culture and practice and parents/family of origin in influencing the identity development process. To this end, the arrows have been made thicker, to reflect the level of influence. The final change is at the far right side of the map, where individual arrows had emanated from each of the concepts of identity development to female adolescent gender identity. The research methodology employed did not treat the concepts separately, so to reflect the inter-related data, an arrow connecting the three concepts is then connected to the outcome of gender identity.

This study sought to examine the influences of church and family in shaping female adolescent gender identity, and was well served by human

FIGURE 5.1: CONCEPTUAL MAP

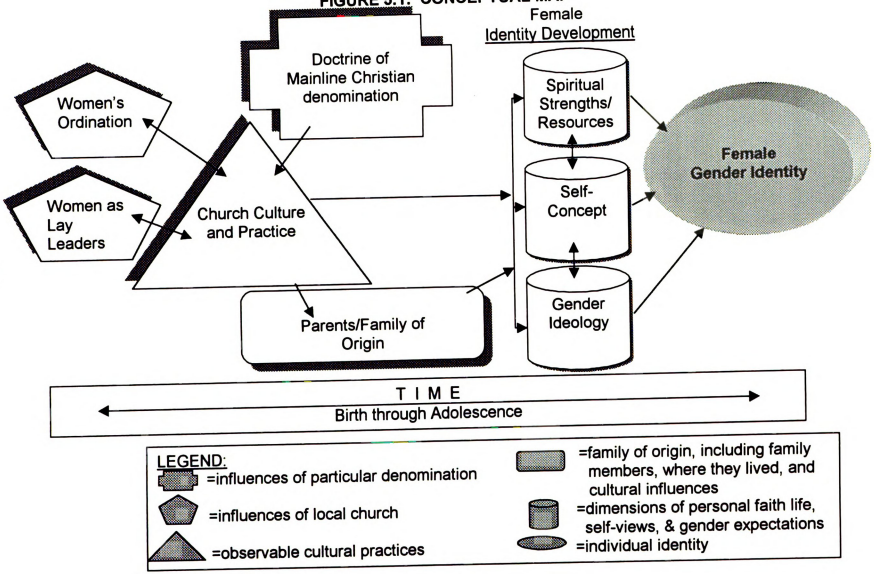
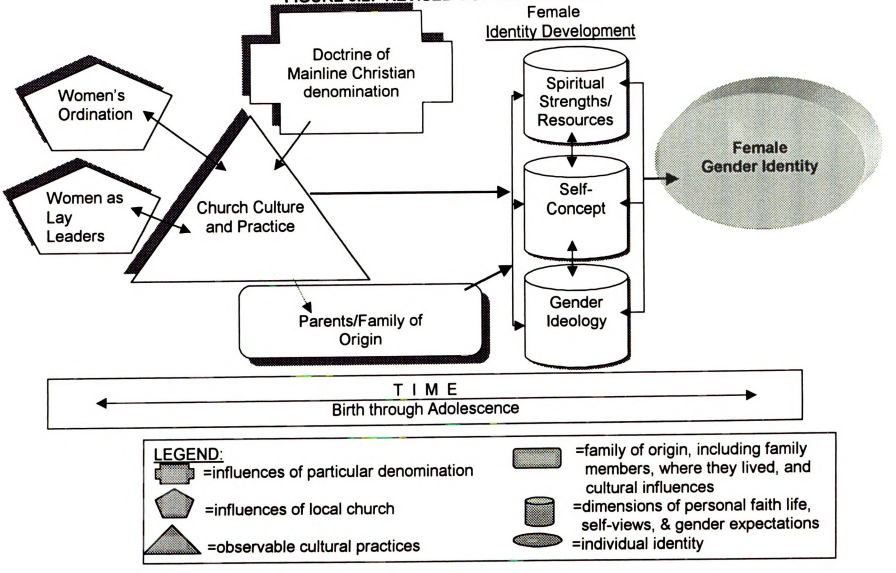


FIGURE 5.2: REVISED CONCEPTUAL MAP



ecology theory, with its focus on the interdependence of family and its environment. Both laws of nature and human-derived rules guide the transactions between family and environment. This study showed the influence of human-derived rules of church and family in shaping female gender identity. The feminist theory of Deaux acknowledged the influence of the social situation in creating expectancies regarding gender schema and behavior. The informants in this study provided examples of how they contextualized their behavior and cognition to meet the demands of the immediate situation and the goals of their social interactions. Libby spoke passionately of being an ethical businesswoman, yet denied the role of leadership to women within the church. Margaret is attending a premier university, and discussed her plans to attend law school; however, when queried about life plans, she downplayed career plans over opportunities to do volunteer work within the church.

Key Findings

Analysis of the data revealed five themes that were evinced as factors contributing to female adolescent identity development. Doctrinal stance, church activities, spiritual leaders, relationship to God, and family expression of faith were consistent themes woven through the interview data. Identity development, as discussed in Chapter Two, is an ongoing process throughout the adolescent years. The five themes that emerged from the data played a role in shaping the informants' spiritual strengths and resources, their self-concept, and their gender ideology, which, together, created their identity.

Table 5.1 (p. 165) displays the association between the research questions, the coding schemes employed to analyze the interviews, and the key findings. The table illustrates how the five themes support the six research questions that guided the study.

Theme One: The Influence of the Church's Doctrinal Stance.

The influence of the church's doctrinal stance on the informants was evident at several points in the interview process, and was shown to ultimately influence identity formation directly and indirectly. This theme was chosen for discussion first because it informs subsequent themes. The strong similarity of responses by denomination from informants regarding the beliefs and major teachings of their church evinced how the denomination's doctrine is communicated, even to younger members. The respondents presented key doctrinal issues when asked, and knew the beliefs and practices unique to their denomination. The doctrinal teachings of the informants' denomination also informed their perspective on women's role in the church. All of the women involved in the interview process provided a description of women's roles that was in compliance with the theological teachings of their denomination. The opportunity for ongoing doctrinal influence was seen in the responses from informants from four of the five denominations included in the study, in which they claimed ongoing allegiance to their denomination. Doctrinal influence also was evident in the gender ideology of informants, which was predominantly focused on assuming the roles of wife and mother. Within these roles, doctrinal influence

TABLE 5.1: LINKING RESEARCH QUESTIONS, CODES, AND KEY FINDINGS

Research Question	Coding Schemes	Theme
1. How does the culture of the church influence female adolescent identity development?	CC-church culture RT-religious tradition WRC-women's role in church GOD-relationship w/God SL-spiritual leaders	1. Influence of church's doctrinal stance 4. Relationship with and perspective of God
2. How do the practices of the church influence female adolescent identity development?	RT WRC GOSUP	1.Influence of church's doctrinal stance 2. Importance of involvement in church activities
3. How do parents' religious practices and beliefs influence female adolescent identity development?	PAM-parents' marital status PDIFF-parental differences RITS-family spiritual rituals/practices AUTO-autonomy EXP-standout religious experiences	4. Relationship with and perspective of God 5. Expression of spiritual beliefs within the family
4. How do spiritual strengths and resources contribute to female adolescent identity?	SPR-spiritual resources SS-spiritual strengths SL-spiritual leaders GOD EXP RITS	3. Presence and "who" of spiritual leaders 4. Relationship with and perspective of God 5. Expression of spiritual beliefs within the family
5. How does self-concept contribute to female adolescent identity?	COLEX-college classes/experiences CONNECT-connection to religious tradition AUTO-autonomy w/in family's religious tradition LIFP-life plans GOD	1. Influence of church's doctrinal stance 2. Importance of involvement in church activities 3. Presence and "who" of spiritual leaders 4. Relationship with and perspective of God 5. Expression of spiritual beliefs within the family
6. How does gender ideology contribute to female adolescent identity?	CAFAM-expectations for career and family LIFP AUTO WRC GOSUP	1. Influence of church's doctrinal stance 2. Importance of involvement in church activities 3. Presence and "who" of spiritual leaders 4. Relationship with and perspective of God 5. Expression of spiritual beliefs within the family

was further evident in the description informants provided regarding the assumption of the wife and mother roles. Informants from denominations that ascribe to strict gender roles included submission to husband, and assuming the role of mother meant staying at home with the children.

It is important to note that historically theology has been the domain of men; men have been the ones to transform biblical text into theological stance, and the transformation has been informed by their male experience (Young, 1995). Feminist theologians have asserted that ecclesial teachings have a propensity to use scriptural images of women that present them as passive, meek, and gentle (Rosenblatt, 1991). This representation of women fails to recognize women's ability to be initiators in the same way the men are, and creates a very narrow theological depiction of women (Rosenblatt, 1991). The responses of the informants in this study clearly supports the effects of androcentric doctrine in shaping attitudes about who women are.

Deaux and Major's (1987) gender-related theory asserts that behavior is affected by personal beliefs as well as the desired outcomes of the interaction. The theology of women as passive and meek translates to a doctrinal stance that proclaims passive and meek as the God-intended role for women; in turn, the church creates practices which allow women to be involved only in roles that are supported by passive and meek behavior. Together, theology, doctrinal stance, and church practice influence personal beliefs and desired for outcomes of gender ideology.

Theme Two: The Importance of Involvement in Church Activities.

The interview process revealed the pivotal role of educational and recreational church activities in the lives of informants in this study. Irrespective of the level of commitment to the church held by parents, religious education was something all informants participated in. Sunday school, vacation Bible school, and Pioneer Club were viewed by informants as contributing to the shaping of their spiritual beliefs during the elementary school years. Several informants from one denomination noted the influence of having attended parochial schools that were associated with their local churches. Two of the informants attended parochial school from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Religious education was included at all grade levels.

The influence of denominational doctrine is evident in these religious education agencies, as their teachings are informed by doctrinal beliefs. Many denominations have publishing companies that produce doctrinally approved materials for use in these educational agencies. The choice of Bible stories studied, the pictures used to illustrate the stories, the way the stories are told, and the language chosen (e.g. inclusive, or use of "man" as generic for all people) are influenced by denominational doctrine. In turn, these materials become the vehicle to communicate doctrinal positions. Feminist theologians assert that educational practices influence gender expectations of the believer (King, 1995, Graham, 1996).

Through junior high and high school, the focus of church involvement for the informants turned to recreational activities, Bible studies, and special

events which were a part of an organized youth ministry associated with the church. At this level, informants described not only the effects of the activity itself (e.g. a community service event), but also the relationships established with the adults serving as youth counselors. Those adults, no doubt, taught and encouraged faith and life perspectives that aligned with the doctrinal beliefs of the denomination. Ultimately, these religious and recreational activities influenced identity through the content of materials, the focus of activities, the role models of teachers and counselors, the choice of activities, and the events that young people were encouraged to attend. Another source of influence that occurred within the context of religious education was socialization with other children/youth who espoused the same beliefs. Church activities changed over time, as did the level of involvement by informants. Bronfenbrenner's (1989) concept of the chronosystem supports the changes in activity and involvement, as well as the effects of interaction within the church itself.

The effectiveness of religious education in creating a belief system for participants was evident in the responses provided by the informants to the question about college experiences that had affected their religious beliefs. All of the informants related that they had had at least one experience in the classroom or elsewhere on campus that had challenged them to think and/or opened them to new thoughts. However, these experiences did not cause them to make changes to their existing belief system; rather, they sought to find a way to make the experience fit their current system, or they rejected the

experience outright. Deaux and Major (1987) affirm that people need to display stability in their behavior. The application of this theory would explain the informants' reactions to these new experiences or concepts as college students as the need to routinize their behavior and cognition in accord with pre-established conceptualizations and behavior patterns, which were learned in previous educational encounters.

Theme Three: The Presence and "Who" of Spiritual Leaders.

Verbally and visually informants indicated individuals they felt had provided spiritual leadership in their lives. Spiritual leaders were named in the interviews, and their relationships to the informants were depicted in the informants' ecomaps. Though operationally defined by the researcher to be individuals who hold various offices of public ministry, it turned out that this was not always the case. Those named as spiritual leaders were not abstract figure-heads, they were individuals with whom each informant had some sort of personal relationship. Spiritual leaders were people who were a part of the informant's microsystem, predominantly friends and family. This phenomenon supports Jean Baker Miller's (1991) and Carol Gilligan's (1982) assertions regarding the importance of females being in relationships in the identity process, and that those relationships are defined in terms of caring and responsibility.

The preponderance of family members named as spiritual leaders illustrates the fifth theme regarding family influence in shaping gender identity. Mothers, fathers, and grandparents were the family members named as

spiritual leaders. Mothers were the most frequently noted spiritual leaders. Perhaps this was because of the prominent role mothers have, according to Chodorow (1978), in the lives of their daughters, whom they view as an extension of themselves.

It is also interesting that informants from all denominations represented in the study, including informants who asserted that women should not hold leadership positions in the church, mentioned mothers. It would appear that informants make a distinction between formal and personal spiritual leadership; women can't be pastors, but they can be spiritual mentors on an inter-personal level. Also, despite the rhetoric and teaching of denominations regarding the male as holding the God-given "head of household" role, fathers were not always seen as the spiritual head of the family, nor named as a spiritual leader. It must be pointed out that seventeen of the twenty respondents came from intact families, and so had a father present in the household.

The influence of doctrine is present in this third theme as well. Denominational doctrine informs the beliefs and practices of the spiritual leader, who, in turn, has an influence in the life of the informant.

Theme Four: The Relationship with and Perspective of God.

Informed by denominational doctrine and teachings, informants' perspectives regarding who God is influenced their gender identity. Some informants described God as someone who makes decisions for them, as was the case for three women who indicated that they were confident that

God would provide them with an academic major for their college career. Others spoke of God as "Father," or protector, and of their reliance on him to meet their needs. Their descriptive narrations of God were clearly masculine; thus, informants solidly evinced the claims of feminist theologians who assert that the language of Scripture and the gender of God is viewed by many Christians not as an expression for the time in which it was written, but as something real and unchanging regarding the nature of God (Graham, 1996). The embodiment of God as male forever dooms women to a lower status. Women can never hope to be held in the same esteem as men; after all, men are the same gender as God himself. Practically speaking, God as male also withholds ordination as pastor from women.

Relationships with God were described overwhelmingly in passive terms; informants relied on, waited on, or sought patience. A more active, assertive stance was evinced when informants discussed what keeps them close to God. Prayer, Bible study, worship, and talking with friends bespoke involvement and responsibility on the part of the respondent in building and maintaining a relationship with God. The majority of informants know God through church; they were introduced to the concepts of faith and a relationship with God as children. These women continue to know God through worship, educational opportunities, and Christian friends. Over time, as the informants' cognitive abilities change and mature, the language of worship (e.g. inclusive language vs. use of "male" as inclusive of everyone), the focus of sermons and Bible studies, and the leadership models present in

church organization add detail to the God they know. Androcentric doctrinal influence was present even in denominations that embrace women at all levels of leadership and service; informants from those churches described typical female roles first, and then went on to name the more traditionally male roles of deacon, elder, and/or pastor.

Theme Five: The Expression of Spiritual Beliefs Within the Family.

Expression of spiritual beliefs in the home and the rituals attached to those beliefs communicate the importance and place of faith in everyday life. This final theme also was informed by denominational doctrine, first through the decision by the parent(s) to be a member of a particular church/denomination, and then in how that denomination shapes the parent(s) faith. The environment of the church (e.g. the church's posture on women) affects parents' attitudes and perspectives on gender ideology. Additional denominational influence occurs through the materials chosen for family devotions, in the choice of spiritual activities conducted in the home, and in the activities at church in which the family chooses to be involved. Spiritual expression in the home affects the sociological, psychological, and behavioral environments of the family, which, in turn, shape the development of attitudes, values, expectations, and patterns of decision-making for its members (Andrews, Bubolz, & Paolucci, 1980).

The most common expressions of spiritual beliefs among the informants in this study were prayer at mealtime and/or at bedtime. The activity of prayer acknowledges the presence of and belief in God on the part of the parents. In

addition, prayer encourages the development of a relationship between participant and God, so prayer in the home was a way for parents to introduce their children to God, and to encourage them to have a relationship. Another prevalent spiritual expression in the home was Advent activities. Advent, which precedes Christmas, serves as an example of the influence of denominational doctrine within the home, as not all denominations acknowledge the season. Informants described Advent activities as special and different from other events that happened within their home, and understood that the presence of these activities communicated the importance of Advent and Christmas within the context of their faith life.

Attending church each week as a family conveyed to the informants the importance of faith in the lives of their parents, since this was the one time throughout the week that informants could be certain that their families would all be together in one place. Some families extended this time together by including a meal after church. For several informants this meal was also an educational time, as their families discussed the sermon that was given in church, and the important lessons and applications pertinent to each family member.

Bronfenbrenner's (1989) theory asserts that the effects of the environment play an important role in human development, as the individual interacts with its total surroundings. Parents choose the family religious activities and the expectation for church attendance, both of which shape the environment within the home. As parents create the family environment, that environment

has an effect on the other environments outside of the family, just as those outside environments can affect the family. Female gender identity development takes place in the mutual accommodation that occurs between the settings in which the individual lives (Bronfenbrenner, 1989).

The relationship between parents and informants in this study was affected by the ways in which parents expressed their faith. The individual personality make-up of parents and informants as well as individual expression of faith worked together to create varying degrees of closeness. Overall, the expression of faith by a parent appeared to increase the likelihood that the informant would describe the relationship as close. Deaux's (1987) interaction-based model acknowledges the power of the social situation as an influence in gender identity development. The power of the situation was evident in the comments made by some informants, who explained that their perspective on the role of wife/mother was based on how their own mother had fulfilled those roles.

Methodological Issues

Qualitative research strategies are, by their nature, relatively unstructured (Greenstein, 2001). The interview questions certainly provided some organization to the research process; however, it must be acknowledged that no two interviews were the same. The personality of the informant affected the depth of information gathered. Some women's responses were straight to the point, while other women provided more information than they were asked to provide. I found myself wanting to prod those who were more quiet or

reticent in their responses, or to ask questions that were not in the interview format. In an effort to maintain a sense of research integrity, I refrained from straying too far from the interview questions. I did ask for clarification when I did not understand an informant's response, or could not follow the train of thought. The ecomaps were useful in filling in sketchy information, particularly among less verbal informants. Ultimately, however, I feel that I was able to gain a more complete picture of gender identity development from the more verbal informants.

Another methodological issue concerned three of the interview questions, which did not yield the depth of information that was intended. By the time I realized that the questions were not eliciting depth of content, I had already completed several interviews. The questions that proved difficult can be found on Table 5.2 along with the actual intent of the question and the informants' perception of the question. I felt that if I had totally re-worded the questions, it would have created an uneven process that would have affected the data. The lack of depth in these responses was not fatal to the overall research.

I recognize that qualitative research is not value free (Greenstein, 2001). Throughout the interview process I was conscious of my own epistemological orientation regarding the androcentric doctrine and teachings present in many mainline denominations. Having struggled with the messages I have received from my own denomination regarding my "place" within both church and society, I was conscious of my bias in every interview. This certainly

TABLE 5.2: DIFFICULT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Question	Actual Intent of the Question	What Was Provided by Informants
11. What sort of religious experiences stand out during your years at home?	What were the informant's most memorable religious experiences within the context of the family?	Religious experiences that occurred during their growing up years which took place in association with their church
13. How much autonomy did you experience within your family's spiritual tradition?	Did the informant have the freedom to make choices regarding her spiritual beliefs and practices?	Whether the informant thought her parents would have supported choices if she had wanted to make them
20. Do you feel that your church is open and supportive to you as a woman in the goals that you have set for yourself?	Did the informant feel that her church supported her pursuit of higher education? Career plans?	Whether the informant felt she had been supported in the development of her faith life.

influenced my reticence to stray from the interview question format. However, my interest in exploring the influence of the culture of mainline Christian denominations and the family system in the development of female adolescent gender identity overwhelmed my personal concerns regarding bias. Qualitative methodology allowed me to move beyond my own perspective, and attempt to understand the contexts of church and family from the standpoint of the informants themselves. The case study approach allowed me to "develop as full an understanding" of each informant as possible (Punch, 1998, p. 150).

Limitations

There are several limitations of the present research. The sample of denominationally mainline Christian college women was not representative of all college women who belong to mainline Christian denominations. First, there was a lack of ethnic inclusion in the sample population. The predominance of Caucasian women overshadowed women of other ethnic origins who, indeed, have valuable contributions to make in the study of gender identity development. Secondly, the informants were primarily from middle class families; most of the parents were college graduates, several had graduate degrees. Third, there were only two Episcopalians represented in the sample, whereas each of the other denominations included at least four representatives.

Another area of limitation in the study was the restriction of denominations. Mainline Christian denominations exclude several other major Christian

church bodies, including Catholicism and non-denominational churches. It must also be pointed out that the researcher made assumptions regarding the mainline Christian denominations that were represented in the study. A continuum exists within each denomination, representing variations on practices and beliefs within individual churches as well as groups of congregations. Informants were not queried regarding the specific practices of the congregation in which they grew up in, or their ties to a specific division (e.g. branch, synod, convention) of the denomination to which they belonged. Therefore, data regarding the context and environment of the congregations in which the informants grew up was not available to inform within group differences regarding denominational contribution to gender identity.

The fifth area of limitation was geographical, as the informants were all college students from within the state of Michigan. In addition, the majority of women in the sample population were raised in the Mid-West, and more specifically, in Southeastern Michigan. Churches within the same denomination as well as family dynamics are influenced by regional factors such as climate, economy, and culture. These differences were not represented in the sample population. Therefore, this study cannot address the experiences of Christian women outside of mainline denominations beyond the Mid-West.

Last, it must be noted that this research did not gather information regarding gendered practices in the home. The interview process focused only on spiritual and religious practices within the home, as well as parents'

expression of their own spirituality. The study gathered no information regarding how gender roles were played out at home, or if gender roles within the family mirrored the portrayal of gender roles by the church.

Recommendations for Future Research

Several questions for further research remain. In the study of religion and parents as influences in identity development, inclusion of denominations beyond the bounds of mainline Christianity would increase the likelihood of informants from ethnicities other than Caucasian. The effect of regional factors could be explored by expanding the sample to include informants from other areas of the U.S. Broadening the denominations included in the study also would increase the participation of informants from all economic classes.

The investigation of the relationship between church and family would illustrate what influence the church has in the microsystem of the family's day-to-day life. In addition, the study of church and family could reveal whether the activities within the home mirror gender expectations as they are portrayed at church.

This study included a high number of intact families, and the informants asserted rather traditional gender roles both in the church and in the family. Further study regarding the influence of church and family on the development of gender identity could include more single-parent families, to observe whether the absence of a parent contributes to gender identity. A study focusing on father-only families would allow insight into the effects of the proscribed gender roles that are taught within some denominations.

From a feminist perspective, while the relational aspect of identity was clearly evident, there was surprisingly scant evidence of informants' awareness of or engagement in the desire to be equal and included in the work and life of their church and denomination. Theologically, the effects of androcentric doctrine and practice were manifest in informants' attitudes about self as well as women's role in the faith community, but again, they made no mention struggle with the doctrine or practice. This stands in sharp contrast to the prevailing attitudes and practices regarding women's roles in society as well as on university campuses. Future research needs to be designed so that information regarding the conflicting messages from church and society could be gathered. Opportunity to ask such questions could be incorporated in the interview process.

Finally, there are some questions that have arisen from this study that would be appropriately answered through a longitudinal study. The informants in the present study were developmentally in early adulthood; a longitudinal study that followed informants for ten to fifteen years beyond their college experience would provide information regarding the influences of career and family choices on gender identity. Longitudinal data also would bring insight to whether there were any differences in the sense of support informants feel from their church between those who become stay-at-home mothers and those who work outside of the home. An extended study would also allow the researcher to gain perspective on whether church doctrine and practice remain ongoing influences in gender identity.

Implications

This research study was constructed following the traditional mode of scientific inquiry; that is, interest in gender identity was based upon theory, and theory was used to form the research questions and operationalize them into the interview process. Two theoretical frameworks served as the foundation of this study, Bronfenbrenner's human ecological theory, and Deaux and Major's gender-related behavioral theory. These theories were chosen after careful review of the available literature regarding the development of gender identity. Since many of the well-known identity theories (e.g. Freud, Erikson) are premised on male development, Deaux and Major's feminist perspective was an exceptional fit for the research topic. The review of literature also was informed by feminist theology, which addressed the androcentric influence of church doctrine and practice.

These theoretical perspectives affected the design and execution of this study. Bronfenbrenner's (1989) assertion of the interplay between the person and the environment over the course of time directed the conceptual foundation of the study as well as the research questions. The study also incorporated Bronfenbrenner's (1989) concept of the *mesosystem*, examining the linkages and processes that occur between the informants' families and their churches. Deaux and Major's (1987) theory informed the research questions which sought to investigate the church as a socializing force in creating expectations for gender roles. These two theories worked harmoniously in the present research.

The interview process revealed the great bearing that the doctrine and practices of the church have on shaping what the individual perceives to be her spiritual strengths and resources. In turn, the spiritual strengths and resources influenced self-concept and gender ideology. The triangulation of data was key in bringing the central role of self-chosen spiritual strengths into focus. The use of informant-created ecomaps enhanced the interview data, and provided a visual picture of the spiritual resources that comprised each informant's life.

One of the key components of spiritual strengths and resources was the informant's perception of her relationships, with family members, with spiritual leaders, with Christian friends, and with her faith community. This relational aspect revealed that the individuals perceived by the informant as being spiritual leaders were people who were part of their microsystem. Church doctrine, therefore, has direct influence on spiritual leaders, through the ability to dictate the gender of positions within the church—Sunday school teachers, youth group counselors, youth Bible class teachers, and pastors—people who would have direct contact with the informant and potential to be viewed as a spiritual leader.

Further examination of the relational aspect of spiritual strengths and resources revealed the prominence of family members who were named as spiritual leaders. Family members exist in both the microsystem of the church and the microsystem of the family. Informants evinced that their parents' spiritual expression brought them closer together, and those whose parents

did not have a spiritual tradition indicated that this created distance in their relationship. The importance of a relationship in the perception of one's spiritual leaders holds insight for the training of religious educators as well as the religious community as they serve parents and families.

The unique position of spiritual strengths and resources informing self-concept and gender ideology have their theoretical foundation in the blended theory of Deaux and Major and Bronfenbrenner. However, employing another human ecology theory may well expand the implications for future study. Bronfenbrenner's theory does not acknowledge issues of boundaries, open and closed systems, and self-implied filtering of information and ideas, all of which were implied in the responses of the informants. Having acknowledged the need for future research to include examination of the seeming lack of struggle with the conflicting message from church and society, a focus on systems theory would allow investigation into the unexamined issues that were presented in this research.

Summary

This research represents a first step in studying the joint influences of church culture and family on female gender identity development. While the scope of the study was limited, the data indicated that strong influences on the development of gender identity exist within the doctrinal practices and culture of the church. Church leaders need to be aware of the messages regarding gender ideology that emanate from religious practices. Research data support the importance of faith traditions that comprise inclusive

language in Scripture and worship, teaching Bible stories that illustrate the lives of men and women, and a church culture that is inclusive of all people.

This study supports the awareness that exists among Christian parents regarding the influence that the expression of spiritual beliefs has within their family. Informants shared accounts of family traditions that included bedtime prayer, devotions, weekly church attendance, and holiday activities. These narratives illustrated their parents' cognizance of the importance of their own religious expression within the family. Parents also need to be aware of the effect that the practices and culture of the church have on the development of their daughter's gender identity. Together, church and family can contribute to awareness and practices that will assist young women in developing gender identities that are not limited to passive, meek, mild, or submissive roles, but include strong, self-initiating, responsible roles that will allow them to lead full lives unlimited by restrictive gender ideologies.

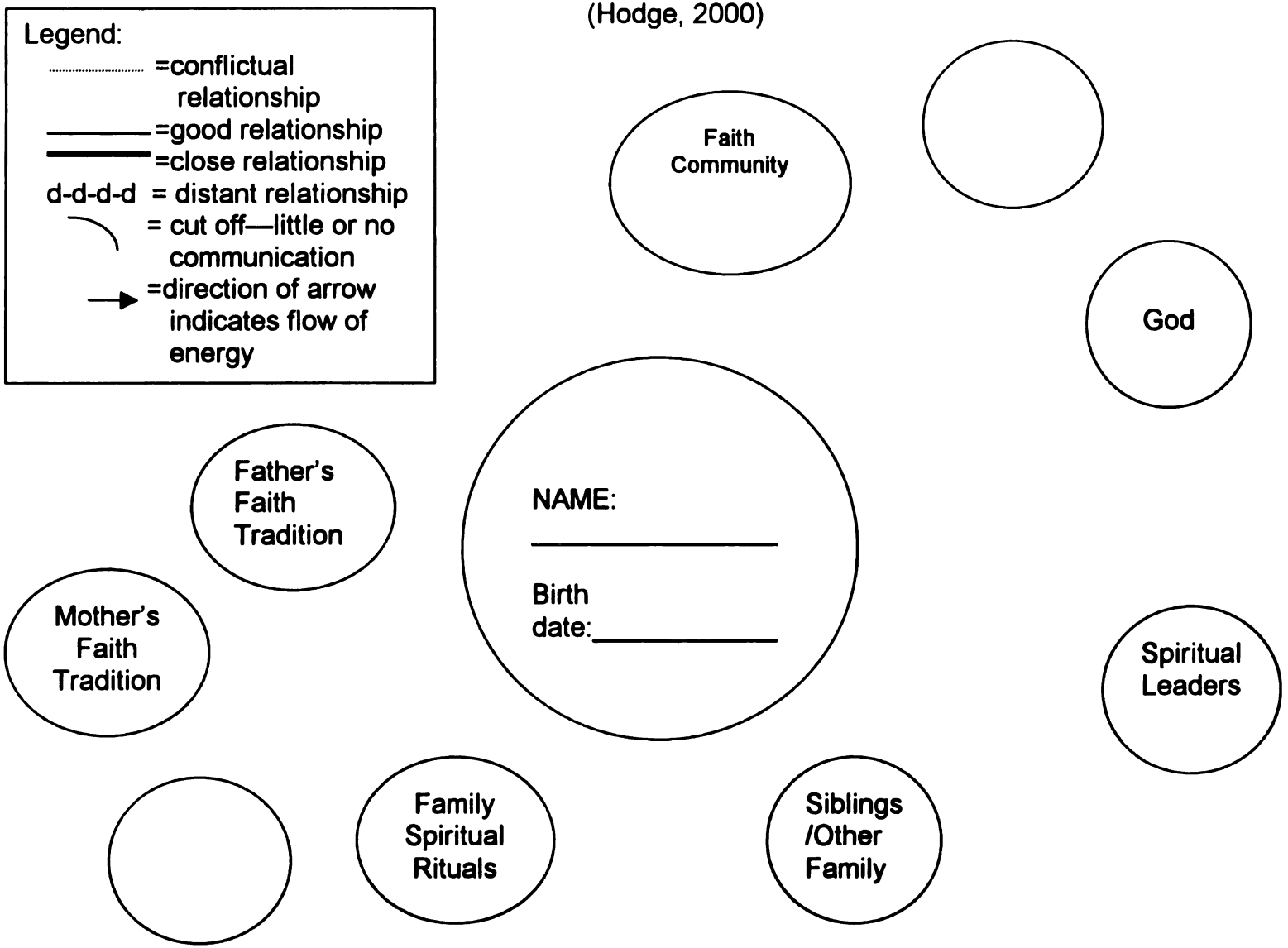
APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. What is your name?
2. How old are you?
3. What city and state did you grow up in?
4. Please tell me all of the people who lived in your house while you were growing up. Tell me about them only by relationship (e.g. mother, father, brother). If your parents are divorced, and you spent time at two residences, please include the people who lived with you in both residences.
5. What is the highest level of education attained by each of your parents/step-parents?
6. What was the religious tradition you grew up in?
7. What are the primary beliefs of your religious community?
8. Tell me your definition of what it means to be religious.
9. What was your level of involvement in your faith community as you were growing up?
10. How did your family express its spiritual beliefs (at home)?
11. What sort of religious experiences stand out during your years at home?
12. What particular rituals or practices nurture your family's spiritual tradition?
13. How much autonomy did you experience within your family's spiritual tradition?
14. What were the similarities/differences between your parents' expressions of faith?

15. How did those differences in beliefs/practices affect you and your relationship with either parent?
16. How would you describe your current relationship to your family's religious traditions?
17. Describe your relationship with those you consider to hold a position of spiritual leadership in your life.
18. What do you believe is women's role in your church?
19. How does your spirituality relate to your plans for your life? Your expectations for career and family?
20. Do you feel that your church is open and supportive to you as a woman in the goals that you have set for yourself?
21. Describe your relationship to God.
22. What facilitates the sense of closeness (distance) with God?
23. Are you more or less connected to the denomination you grew up in now that you are in college?
24. Have you taken any classes or had any particular experiences as a college student that have affected your religious beliefs?

Appendix B: Spiritual Ecomap
(Hodge, 2000)



Appendix C: Contact Summary Form

CONTACT TYPE:

SITE:
CONTACT DATE:
DATE WRITTEN:
WRITTEN BY:

1. Main issues the struck me with this contact:

2. Summarize the information I got (or failed to get):

Question	Information
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	

15.

16.

17.

18.

19.

20.

21.

22.

23.

24.

3. Anything else that struck me as salient, interesting, illuminating, or important?

4. New (or remaining) questions?

5. Concerns?

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

You are being asked to participate in a research study. The study is being conducted by Linda Behrendt, a doctoral candidate in Family and Child Ecology at Michigan State University. In order to decide whether or not you should agree to be a part of this study, you need to understand the risks and benefits in order to make a decision. This process is called informed consent.

This consent form gives information about the research study. After an explanation of this study is given by the researcher, you will be asked to sign this form if you agree to participate.

Purpose of this study
The purpose of this study is to investigate the influences of both religion and parents in shaping female gender identity.

Relevant Information
You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a college student involved in a denominational campus ministry. You are being asked to participate in an interview process in which you will be asked a series of questions about your religious upbringing and family involvement. In addition, you will be asked to create an ecomap—a visual picture of your relationships with those who hold significance to you in the practice of your religious life. The interview will take approximately one hour. You are free to withdraw at any time.

All information gathered in the interview will be confidential. Data for the purposes of this study will be confidential, identified only by an assigned file number. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Risks and benefits
It is not expected that the interview process will pose any physical, psychological, social, or economic harm. Any possible benefits for the participant may come through personal insight gained upon reflection of the interview process; however, there is no guarantee of benefits.

Other Information
Should you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant, you may call the Human Subjects Committee representative, David E. Wright, Ph.D. at 517-355-2180. Should you have any other questions regarding this study, please call Linda Behrendt at 734-995-7346.

You have the right to refuse to participate in this research study, thereby refusing to sign this consent form, if you so desire, without any fear of prejudice. You are free to refuse to continue participate in this study at any time. You will be given a copy of this consent form. Your signature indicates that you have read the information written above and have volunteered to participate in this study.

Signature of Participant Witness

_____ _____

Date_____

I have fully explained to the participant the nature and purpose of the above study and risks involved. I have answered and will answer all questions to the best of my ability.

Investigator Witness

_____ _____

Date_____

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