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TO BE IS TO BE IN RELATIONSHIP

by

Donna Jean O'Connor Hayes

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyola University of Chicago in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
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VITA

Donna Jean O'Connor Hayes was born on April 27, 1945 on the south side of Chicago. She is the second of six children. Donna spent the first twenty-five years of her life living on the south side of Chicago.

Donna's education started with the Sisters of Mercy at old St. Xavier, 47th and Cottage Grove Avenue, Chicago. She attended Mother McAuley High School, graduating in 1963. After graduation, Donna entered the Sisters of Mercy. During this time, she attended St. Xavier College, Chicago. In 1967, she left the Sisters of Mercy. In 1969, Donna finished her Bachelor of Arts degree in Fine Arts at Northeastern University, Chicago.

Donna taught for a short time at Fenger High School in Chicago. In 1970, Donna married her husband, Harry. The next several years were spent at home having and caring for four children -- Carol, Anne, Donna and Margaret.

The Hayes family spent time in Urbana, Illinois and Palmyra, Wisconsin. During this time, Donna taught and directed religious education classes. While in Palmyra, she also taught adult extension classes in art

from the University of Wisconsin, Whitewater.

In 1976, the Hayes family returned to Illinois. Donna attended Mundelein College from 1984-1986 and received a Master of Arts degree in Religious Studies.

Donna was Director of Religious Education at Notre Dame Parish in Clarendon Hills, Illinois from 1986-1989. Donna has been an Associate Member with the Sisters of Mercy, Chicago, since 1983. She has served on the Associate Member Board and is presently on the R.C.I.A./Formation Committee of the Sisters of Mercy.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
VITA	iii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. TRINITY AS THE GROUND OF COMMUNITARIAN LOVE	6
III. THE BALANCE OF ONENESS AND SEPARATENESS IN RELATIONSHIPS	22
IV. DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN CHURCH	52
V. THE ART OF PASTORAL COUNSELING WHEN GROUNDED IN RELATIONAL LOVE OF THE TRINITY	75
BIBLIOGRAPHY	86

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This thesis is based on the assumption that we as humans are created in the image and likeness of our God. This God is a relational God. The Christian God has revealed three persons of God to us. These three persons, our Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier, are three separate persons united in one God.¹ Within God is oneness and separateness. This oneness and separateness seem to be a struggle of humankind. If it is true that humankind is made in the image and likeness of a relational God, then the struggle of oneness and separateness is inevitable for humankind.

It is an individual struggle with social ramifications. The Documents of Vatican II observe this struggle over and over. The following two excerpts are from "The Pastoral Constitution of the Church in the Modern World":

¹When speaking of the Trinity, the three terms used throughout the paper will be: the Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier or Holy Spirit. In writing about the communitarian love of the Trinity, I am writing about the relationship between the three persons. I choose not to get involved with the gender of God. In order to avoid the gender issue, the term Godself will be used as a neutral pronoun. This paper will be addressing the oneness and separateness of persons in relationships.

Man's social nature makes it evident that the progress of human person and the advance of society itself hinge on each other. For the beginning, the subject and the goal of all social institutions is and must be the human person, which for its part and by its very nature stands completely in need of social life. This social life is not something added on to man. Hence, through his dealings with others, through reciprocal duties, and through fraternal dialogue he develops all his gifts and is able to rise to his destiny. ²

God did not create man for life in isolation, but for the formation of social unity. So also 'it has pleased God to make men holy and save them not merely as individuals, without any mutual bonds, but by making them into a single people, a people which acknowledges Him in truth and serves Him in holiness.' So from the beginning of salvation history He has chosen men not just as individuals but as members of a certain community. ³

Theology is not alone in its stance that humans are relational beings and cannot come to wholeness/holiness outside of relationships.

Jean Baker Miller, M.D.⁴ a psychiatrist, has done much research on how people relate, and how healthy and non-healthy relationships manifest themselves. Dr. Miller says: "I believe the answer is that each person becomes a

² Walter M. Abbott, S.J. ed., trans. Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher, The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 224.

³ Ibid., 230.

⁴ Jean Baker Miller, M.D. is Scholar-in-Residence at the Stone Center for Developmental Services and Studies at Wellesley College and Clinical Professor of Psychiatry at the Boston University School of Medicine. She is the author of Toward a New Psychology of Women and editor of Psychoanalysis of Women.

more developed and more active individual only as she or he is more fully related to others. ⁵

Many psychiatrists, psychologists, pastoral counselors, spiritual directors, and theologians working under the same premise that we as humans are relational beings, try to make meaning and sense out of how persons in healthy relationships manifest themselves.

With the assumption that we are relational beings, the argument of this thesis is that just as one must bond and differentiate within one's family in order to be a healthy individual and family member, so also must one differentiate within the Church to be a healthy disciple and member of the Church. This thesis will be grappling with the tension of oneness and separateness. It will be seen that differentiation is necessary in order for an individual to come to healthy relationships in his or her life.

This paper will begin with the triune God of the Christian tradition, interpreted as community, as a God of relationships grounded in love. The God of relational love, the triune God, a God that is separate yet one, will be seen as the ground of wholeness/holiness, the ground of all being.

⁵ Jean Baker Miller, M.D., "What Do We Mean by Relationships?" (1986) Work in Progress Papers, Wellesley College, Wellesley, Mass.

Murray Bowen's "Differentiation of Self" will be presented. The concept of differentiation of self "defines people according to the degree of fusion, of differentiation between emotional and intellectual functioning."⁶ The dynamics of differentiation of self will then be conceptualized in Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy's Contextual Family Theory. From these two theories what it means to be a healthy individual in relationship to others will become clear, as defined by Murray Bowen, conceptualized in Nagy and applied to pastoral counseling by this writer. Just as the triune God is a God of autonomy and a God of relationships, so too will it be seen that a healthy individual in the image and likeness of God is autonomous and relational.

The concept of "differentiation of self" and Nagy's theory will then be applied to Walter Bruggeman's theory of faith development. The correlation of these two theories and their applicability to today's Church will then be demonstrated.

The conclusion expected is that interrelatedness and independence of individuals, "differentiation of self" whether in family or Church, is necessary for healthy individuals within community. Wholeness or holiness of an

⁶Murray Bowen, Family Therapy in Clinical Practice, (New York: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1978), 362.

individual in community is grounded in communitarian love of the Trinity, the triune God. Just as the triune God is a God of autonomy and a God of relationships, so too will it be seen that a healthy individual, in the image and likeness of God, is autonomous and relational, separate yet one.

With the conclusion that to be a healthy individual within family or Church one needs to differentiate from each, the effects of this conclusion on the art of pastoral counseling will then be explored.

CHAPTER II

TRINITY AS THE GROUND OF COMMUNITARIAN LOVE

The doctrine of the Trinity is about the God of love, the God of relationships. It is not my intent to defend or explain the belief in a Triune God. It is my intent to present the communitarian love of the Trinity as the ground for the communitarian love of humans.

Throughout the course of history the Trinitarian doctrine has and continues to be a mystery. Mystery can be responded to in two ways. One response would be that a mystery cannot be understood. This response would fit with the traditional teaching of mystery after Vatican I. Mystery was seen as a revealed truth that cannot be understood during one's earthly life; it would be understood in heaven. Karl Rahner,¹ a noted theologian of the twentieth century, claims that this response to mystery is inadequate. Rahner says that the mysteries of Trinity, Incarnation and Grace can be intelligently

¹ Gerald McCool, ed., A Rahner Reader (New York: Crossroads, 1984), 108.

connected to make Christian Revelation a coherent whole. This connection can occur in the study of Christian anthropology, which has the ability to reflect on human consciousness and human experience, synthesizing and structuring each, bringing greater understanding to Christian experience in relation to Christian revelation.

Thus Christianity's three central mysteries are inseparable moments both of the self-communication of the Holy Mystery to historical man and of historical man's return to the Holy Mystery in love.²

This experiential approach through Christian revelation, calls for a different response to mystery. The response to mystery now becomes a lived phenomenon. We live the mystery of the Trinity by living life through relationships of love, the communitarian love of humans, grounded in the communitarian love of the Trinity.

George Maloney, S.J.³ in Uncreated Energy: A Journey into the Authentic Sources of Christian Faith, says that the Mystery of the Trinity has been explained in

² Ibid., 109.

³ George Maloney, S.J. is a Jesuit priest and founder of the Pope John XXIII Center for Eastern Christian Studies at Fordham University and the Director of Contemplative Ministries in Midway City, California. He is recognized world wide for his works on prayer and Eastern Christian spirituality. He is a Jesuit priest of the Russian Byzantine Rite with a doctorate in Oriental Theology from the Pontifical Oriental Institute.

speculative theology and in mystical theology.⁴ Maloney integrates these with theological traditions. He examines the Trinity as a Community of Love in constant loving contact with humankind.

Maloney's theology of Trinity will be presented along with four theologians who address the theology of humans living in response to a God of relationship. The task is two-fold: 1) to show how the Triune God of love as Triune is a relational God, and 2) how humankind made in the image and likeness of God is also relational. The first part of the task is accomplished in presenting George Maloney's theology. The second is accomplished by presenting theologians who connect the relationships of individuals to community and to a God who is relational within God and with humankind. The intent to present the communitarian love of the Trinity as the ground for the communitarian love of humans will thus be accomplished.

George Maloney goes back into Catholic tradition and unites the mystical tradition and the speculative tradition. The mystical tradition is based on experience of God and the speculative tradition is based on logical theories about God. Maloney says that as human beings we are constantly being drawn into the heart of God.

⁴George Maloney, S.J., Uncreated Energy: A Journey into the Authentic Sources of Created Faith (New York: Amity House, 1987), 3.

...in order to be divinized and to share the triune life. In God's transcendence and immanence, the dynamism of His energies is an interaction with us human beings, all in order to lead us to a transfiguration whereby we will be truly made sharers in the very life and love of the Holy Trinity.⁵

It is essential here to understand what is meant by God's energies. God gives itself to us through loving actions. Action is not meant as a thing, as in doing something but as God itself in God's immanence, meaning the God that is with us. "God's energetic actions are God as God, from God's one essence, gives itself to us dynamically. This is primarily what grace is for the Greek Fathers." ⁶

The Trinity remains incommunicable in essence. The essence of God remains speculative. The immanence of God is realized through the energies of God. The energies of God "signify an exterior manifestation of the Trinity of God." ⁷ Energies of God are the basis for mystical theology and experience.

Maloney paraphrases Gregory Palamas ⁸ in reference to the essence and immanence of God.

⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁶ Ibid., 9.

⁷ Ibid., 68.

⁸ St. Gregory Palamas was an Eastern theologian who developed the writings of Greek Fathers especially the writings of St. Gregory of Nazianzus and Pseudo-Dionysius.

...the essence of God which is unknowable and incommunicable and the energies or divine operations which are forces proper to and inseparable from God's essence in which He goes forth from Himself, manifests and communicates Himself, is a recognition of the fact that God is both totally inaccessible and at the same time accessible. ⁹

It is through the energies of God, the self-communication of a triune God that we know about the communitarian love of the Trinity. The Trinity is revealed to us throughout scriptures. The doctrine of the Trinity evolved out the experience of God's kenotic love (self-emptying) in the crucified and risen Christ. In the Trinity the Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier essentially empty themselves in loving sacrifice toward each other. It is this self-emptying that is the communitarian love of the Trinity.

"Love, in order to exist, in humankind or God, must always be loving, always pouring itself out from its own abundance, always giving of itself."¹⁰ Tied to the mysterious makeup of a God as an I that is also a We is God's bursting forth from within God's own perfect, circular, loving, self-containment to love us so that we

⁹ George Maloney, S.J., Uncreated Energy: A Journey into the Authentic Sources of Christian Faith (New York: Amity House, 1987), 68.

¹⁰ Ibid., 38.

might accept God's love and become happy in sharing God's own very family-life, that of Trinity. The nature of God is that, while being one in essence, it demands a plurality as objects of God's love of God's infinite Self-giving.¹¹

It is this self-emptying of God we see throughout Biblical History. God empties Godself as loving energies into the universe and brings all things into existence, in the act of creation. Loving energies of God are emptied into the world by God, incarnated as Christ Jesus and returned back to God by the emptying of Jesus as love, the Sanctifier to the Creator. The Sanctifier as love is emptied into all of creation as God's loving actions, energies or grace.

Karl Rahner gives us a basic principle when he declares that the relationships of the Trinity within the community between Father and Son in the same Spirit of love are the same relationships of the Trinity outward toward the created world.¹²

We cannot conceive the three Persons within the Trinity in static terms. Personhood is a process of becoming through freely positing oneself as a gift in love to the other. Such an interchange not only brings about a unity but also a

¹¹ Ibid. 7.

¹² George Maloney, S.J., God's Exploding Love (New York: Amity House, 1987), 128.

differentiation and a uniqueness of each person involved. ¹³

We see most clearly the communitarian love of the Trinity revealed to us in the cross/resurrection of Christ. Maloney describes this revelation of love:

This is all a work of God's love, freely given to humankind. God spills out God's Love in activity in the creation of humankind and the universe, in the Incarnation of God's Divine Son, Jesus Christ, in the Redemption by the God-Man of the whole human and subhuman cosmos, in the sanctification and final Parousia through the Holy Spirit. These are all actions of God prompted by the one constant act of love.

Love, in order to exist, in humankind or God, must always be loving, always pouring itself out from its own abundance, always giving of itself. It is thus through God's action of God's loving us (and this we call grace in its most primary meaning according to the Greek Fathers) and in and through God's life in us by our loving in return that we come to union with Love Itself. This is God in God's loving, uncreated energies, as we will explain; it is the whole Trinitarian love in active relationships with humankind. In this oneness of Love, we are united with every other human being created and loved by God.¹⁴

It is this communitarian love of the Trinity that is the ground of all our loving relationships. We love because we were first loved: "Love consists in this: it is not we who loved God but God loved us. 1 John 4:10 This communitarian love of the Trinity is constant and always

¹³ Ibid., 128.

¹⁴ George Maloney, S.J., God's Exploding Love (New York: Amity House, 1987), 38.

with us in habitual grace. We can do nothing without God. Habitual grace is God's uncreated energies within us. Maloney quotes Palamas when discussing grace as energy.

Grace...is the energy of procession of the one nature: the divinity insofar as it is ineffably distinct from the essence and communicates itself to created beings, deifying them. ¹⁵

Grace is not the essence of God. Grace is the immanence of God manifested in uncreated energies within humankind. Maloney says that grace has become a "thing" to be stored up in some heavenly bank "for the day of reckoning, instead of the Trinity living its uncreated energies within us, working dynamically to divinize us and through us to bring the Incarnation and Redemption to the world."¹⁶

God, the essential Trinity, is the Giver, and God in His energies, which enable God to be known outside Himself and which are inseparable from the divine nature which they manifest, is the gift of uncreated grace. ¹⁷

In conclusion, the relationship of the Trinity is one of self-emptying love that is ever active, ever positing oneself as gift to another. Speculative theologians look at the relation of the Trinity as can be

¹⁵ Ibid., 90.

¹⁶ Ibid., 90.

¹⁷ Ibid., 92.

seen concretely in biblical history and make meaning out of it in the cross/resurrection of Christ. Mystical theologians discuss the relationship of Trinity more from the experience of grace within self and the cosmos as uncreated energies. As persons made in the image and likeness of God it becomes our task to respond to and connect to the uncreated energies of God and empty ourselves in love to God, all of creation, and to all of humankind. We will now look at some theologians who connect the communitarian love of the Trinity, the self-emptying love, to relationships among persons and envision the action of grace in community.

There have been many writings in both psychology and theology about relationships between individuals and the communitarian aspects of their relationships. Four theological authors will be presented here who connect the relationships of individuals to community and to a God who is relational with Godself and humankind.

These authors' theories will be presented briefly to support that the communitarian love of the Trinity is the ground for the communitarian love of humans.

Bruno Forte, a priest and member of the Theological Faculty at the University of Naples, has written a recent book in which he addresses the Trinity in

and as history. The Easter story, the Paschal Mystery, is the expressions of the Trinity as the God of love in history. The Creator and Redeemer are two person of the Trinity united in love. This unification in love is the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit.

Beginning with the revelation of love Loving, Loved and Unifying in freedom, which is the Easter story, it goes on to affirm that unity, or, if you will, the one and unique divine essence (dynamically understood) is love, that the only God is Love, in the indelible Trinitarian differentiation of Loving, Loved and Love personified.¹⁸

Forte throughout his book explains how the Triune God is the God of Love who is not only the God of love, but the God who Loves and is Loved and personifies Love.¹⁹ Each person of the Trinity is separate and self-directed - the Lover, the Loved and the personified Love. One does not engulf or swallow up the other. This communication of love brings the three into a oneness; they are not separate. This is the mystery of the Trinity - three differentiated persons in one God, revealing Godself in history as three differentiated persons.

¹⁸ Bruno Forte, The Trinity As History (New York: Alba House, 1989), 149.

¹⁹ Ibid., 149.

In human relatedness, this oneness and separateness of the Triune God create a tension that we all feel. Allan Schnarr, Ph.D. ²⁰ writes about this tension in a paper on the Spirit of the Trinity.

I believe every person knows this tension between oneness and separateness. At some level of ourselves each of us has known oneness with another, though always at a cost of some loss of separate selfhood. Also, each of us has known moments of freely chosen self-definition, though always at the cost of some degree of isolation, of loss of connection with others. Trinity is the promise that each of us can freely create our truest selves while united in Spirit-love to the other person in our lives. The Spirit of Trinity is the balance of oneness and separateness.²¹

Author Rosemary Haughton claims we need a language to speak about the giving and receiving of love ²² to talk about the giving and receiving of love within the Trinity, the giving and receiving of love among humans, and the giving and receiving of love between the spheres

²⁰ Allan Schnarr, Ph.D., is an adjunct Professor of Psychology, in the Institute of Pastoral Studies at Loyola University of Chicago

²¹ Allan Schnarr, Paper presented, "Oneness and Separateness: The Spirit of Trinity." 1985.

²² Rosemary Haughton is a lecturer, novelist, and theologian. Along with her family and friends, Rosemary has started a small independent community devoted to the ministry of working on and for the land, to education, and to the pursuit of a just social reality. For a more complete and comprehensive look at her Theory of Exchange, read chapter three of her book, The Passionate God.

of the divine and of the created cosmos, particularly between God and humans. Haughton's book The Passionate God is written to help create such a language.

She calls this language and theory the "Exchange Doctrine." In her language, Haughton substitutes the word "love" for "being." "Being" has a static quality to it; "love" is a word that is always flowing. Love cannot be static; if it is not given, it is not love and, if it is given, it must be received, even if the reception is chilly. Love is exchange. Haughton talks about the Trinity as the God of love. The exchange of love is always happening within the Triune God.²³ This exchange is the oneness of the three separate persons.

Another aspect of Haughton's theory of exchange is the concept of breakthrough and the concept of "spheres." "Spheres" are ways of apprehending reality around us. "Spheres" contain barriers. The barriers must be broken and, as they are broken through one moves to a new level of consciousness, a new level of perceiving reality. This occurs because the barriers broken create an openness and reception of humankind for the Divine as love. Haughton calls God a passionate God because the God of

²³ Rosemary Haughton, The Passionate God, (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 18-37.

love, the God of the Trinity, is seen not only as creative peacefulness but also as violent breakthroughs.

Death is an example of a violent breakthrough in one's reality consciousness. When death touches persons closely, they are changed. The response to beauty can be another violent breakthrough in one's reality consciousness. When breakthroughs happen, people are moved to a greater level of consciousness, greater awareness of who they are in relation to themselves, in relation to others and in relation to their God. Breakthroughs differentiate and unite.

We return again to the oneness and the separateness of relationship within the communitarian love of the Trinity. The Triune community of God is a community of love and freedom. God in God's utter love and selflessness chooses freely to reveal Godself, in the Word made Flesh, to God's people. The Word made Flesh is the inner expression of God's self-emptying love to humans. The Spirit is the power of the self-emptying love, enabling humans to more fully grasp the love of the Divine and live the love of the Trinity to a fuller degree. "The Spirit desires to bring all persons to live the life of the Trinity, the primal community of an I-Thou in a We relationship." ²⁴

²⁴ George Maloney, God's Exploding Love, (New York: Alba House, 1987), 64.

It is the belief of the Christian faith that we are made in the image and likeness of God. If this be the case, then it would seem evident that if the Trinity is the revelation of a God who is one and at the same time community - three persons in one God - then are we not as humans to be separate as persons yet one in community?

Frank G. Kirkpatrick ²⁵ in his very comprehensive and challenging book on community, Community: A Trinity of Models, ²⁶ posits three models of community for discussion and critique. These three models are; the Atomistic/Contractarian Model of Community, the Organic/Functional Model of Community, and the Mutual/Personal Model of Community. ²⁷

Kirkpatrick believes the Mutual/Personal Model of Community can provide the dialectic which holds together both the "realism" of where we are as individuals in our relationships and the hopes and vision of a future community of loving relationships in the world as God intended it to be.

²⁵ Frank G. Kirkpatrick is a process theologian. He is chairman of the Religion Department at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut.

²⁶ Frank C. Kirkpatrick, Community: A Trinity of Models, (Washington D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1986), 218.

²⁷ The first two models will not be discussed in this paper. The third model, Mutual/Personal Model of Community, will be reviewed in relationship to this paper.

The Mutual/Personal Model of Community is based on the philosophy of John Macmurray.²⁸ The model is excellent in explaining and giving structure to living relationships of love in community as the reflection of God in the universe.

Kirkpatrick, through his critique of different Community models, concludes that we are individuals who are meant to exist in relationship to others in community. This relationship is a reflection of a God who is relational.

It is my belief that the communitarian love of the Trinity is the ground of the communitarian love of humankind. The Trinity has been presented by many as mystery. God is mystery, but the response to mystery does not have to be irrational. Response to mystery can be a lived phenomenal process of individuals existing in loving relationships to others in community and in loving relationship to God. The response to mystery as lived phenomenal process seems to be what each of the presented authors has described, connected in some way to reality, made real in their writings just as the living of loving

²⁸ John Macmurray was a moral philosopher and meta-physician. During the 1930's Macmurray wrote and had many publications on the theoretical and political links between Christianity and Marxian thought.

is real in life.

I will now proceed to describe and connect to reality, how we need to live the relational love of the Trinity, differentiated and united, not only in our families but within the Church. It is when we can live the relational love of the Trinity, differentiated and united, that we are healthy Church members and disciples of Christ.

CHAPTER III

THE BALANCE OF ONENESS AND SEPARATENESS IN RELATIONSHIPS

In the field of psychology, family systems has been a move from viewing individuals as autonomous, psychological entities to viewing them as parts of a whole. The family is seen as an emotional unit and an individual is part of that unit.¹ Murray Bowen is a prominent family systems theorist. Bowen's Family Systems Theory contains two main variables; 1) the degree of anxiety and cause of anxiety in a system, and 2) the degree of integration of the self. Bowen calls this degree of integration of the self, "differentiation of self." For Bowen, differentiation of self is the cornerstone for Family Systems Theory. In this chapter, Bowen's concept of "differentiation of self" will be explained. Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy's "Contextual Family Theory" will be used to view the dynamics of the process of "differentiation of self" at work within a family unit.

Murray Bowen's professional interest in families

¹ Michael E. Kerr, "Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self," The Atlantic Monthly, September, 1985, 35.

began when he was a psychiatrist at the Menninger Clinic in Topeka, Kansas in the late 1940's. This was the beginning of "Family Systems Theory." The family is looked at as an individual unity comprising a whole. Each individual emotional unit affects the whole. The word "system" is used as the descriptive for the whole unit. While at the clinic Bowen treated many different types of patients for alcoholism, depression, and schizophrenia in both outpatient and inpatient settings. Bowen was different from the traditional psychiatrist. He had contact with the families of his patients. In the 1940's this contact with the family of the patient was uncommon because it was felt that contact with the family would create transference problems.

This considerable contact with the family members of his inpatients led Bowen to observe the highly "symbiotic" relationship between the schizophrenic patient and her or his mother. Coming from a natural science background, Bowen saw this symbiotic relationship as a fact of nature, part of the evolutionary process.

A mother's intimate involvement with her child during its early years was typical of mammals, and in most instances the young mammal gradually grew away from the mother to become an independent adult. In human schizophrenia, however, the mother-child involvement was much more intense than average and was prolonged well into adult life. ²

² Ibid., 36.

A symbiotic relationship with one's primary caretaker is essential and necessary. Pathology occurs when one does not separate from the primary caretaker within the family system at developmental points in one's life.

In 1954, Bowen left the Menninger Clinic for the National Institute of Mental Health. At the National Institute of Mental Health, Bowen initiated project NIMH which ran for five years. This project involved observing entire nuclear families interacting with the schizophrenic member in an inpatient setting. Two observations were made in the early months of the NIMH research:

First the emotional intensity in the relationship between the mothers and the schizophrenic patients was much stronger than previously supposed ... The second ... was that the intensity of this mother-patient process was not particularly different from the emotional intensity of relationships throughout the nuclear family.³

It was originally thought that the relationship between the mothers and the schizophrenic patient was one in which two people respond and react to each other in a specific way. In the search to find the specific way of response and action, Bowen discovered the relationship was more dynamically intense than a particular behavior response or action. Each person seemed to be living and acting and being for each other. There were few or no

³ Ibid., 37.

boundaries between the mother and the schizophrenic patient. They lacked definition of who each one was, they lacked ego boundaries.

These two people were then observed to be a dependent fragment of a larger whole. These two members related in similar fashion to other members of the family. The difference in the relationship with other members was the degree of emotional fusion.⁴ The difference was quantitative, not qualitative.

After five years, Bowen ended his research at the National Institute of Mental Health and moved to the department of psychiatry at Georgetown University Medical Center. Georgetown University has an outpatient facility. Bowen had many families with problems less severe than schizophrenia. Broadening his studies to encompass many types of problems brought about an interesting observation. Still observing the relationship process among family members, Bowen found that the "relationship process that had been observed in families with a schizophrenic member was present in all families; they

⁴ Murray Bowen, M.D., Family Therapy in Clinical Practice (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978), 119.

were simply exaggerated in the families with a schizophrenic member".⁵

From this research, Murray Bowen's concept of "differentiation of self" emerged. "Differentiation of Self" is the cornerstone of Bowen's Family Systems Theory. "The concept defines people according to the degree of fusion, or differentiation, between emotional and intellectual functioning."⁶

This degree of fusion or differentiation lies on a continuum. At the lower end of the continuum are those whose emotions and intellect are so fused they are dominated by their automatic emotions. Those at the other end of the continuum are those who are most differentiated. They are able to separate their emotions and intellectual functioning.

Bowen describes what he means by the emotional and intellectual systems. The emotional system includes states of contentment, agitation, fear, weeping and laughing. The states of contentment include also times after feeding, sleeping or mating. States of agitation also include times of flight, fight and search for food. The emotional system also governs the automatic functions

⁵ Michael E. Kerr, "Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self," The Atlantic Monthly, September 1955, 40.

⁶ Murray Bowen, M.D., "Family Therapy in Clinical Practice" (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978), 362.

of the nervous system and one's instincts that govern the life process in all living things.

The intellectual system is a function of the cerebral cortex and involves the ability to think, reason and reflect. The intellectual system is what makes humankind different from the rest of nature and enables humans to govern their lives in certain areas according to logic, intellect and reason. Dysfunction is caused in individuals to the degree that they cannot separate their emotional system from their intellectual system. To the degree individuals cannot separate their emotions from intellect within themselves, they will not be able to separate from another. They will lack boundaries and be fused emotionally with another. What another feels, they feel as their own feeling; what another thinks, they think as their own thoughts.⁷

Bowen says,

...it is impossible for there to be more than relative separation between emotional and intellectual functioning, but those whose intellectual functioning can retain relative autonomy in periods of stress are more flexible, more adaptable, and more independent of the emotionality about them.⁸

⁷ Ibid., 357.

⁸ Ibid., 362.

In between the two extremes are a number of mixes between emotionality and intellectual functioning. These mixes constitute the degree of differentiation of self. Bowen says the drive to differentiate and the drive to stay connected to others are instinctual. We are driven by two forces that balance one another. In the Handbook of Family Therapy, Kerr summarizes this theory:

Bowen (1971) has proposed that in human relationship systems there are two natural forces that act to counterbalance each other: a force towards individuality or autonomy and a force towards togetherness or fusion. The individuality force is rooted in an instinctual drive to be a self-contained, independent organism, an individual in one's own right. The togetherness force is rooted in an instinctual need for others, a sense of being connected to the group or another person.⁹

Differentiating is considered a basic life process. It is the process of finding out who one is in relationship to others. This process has to do with differentiating oneself emotionally which has to do with the degree of emotional fusion. Because of this, Bowen does not speak of mental illness but rather of emotional illness. "Emotional illness is considered a deep process involving the basic life process of the organism." ¹⁰

⁹ Benjamin B. Wolman and George Stricker, eds., Handbook of Family and Marital Therapy (New York: Plenum press, 1983), 236.

¹⁰ Murray Bowen, M.D., Family Therapy in Clinical Practice (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978), 356.

This basic process is differentiation of self. Emotional functioning is on a continuum depending on the degree that one has differentiated.

Another aspect of differentiation of self that is important in explaining emotional fusion involves the levels of "solid self" and "pseudo-self" in a person. "In periods of emotional intimacy, two pseudo-selves will fuse into each other, one losing self to the other, who gains self." 11

The solid self does not participate in this fusion phenomenon. The solid self knows self. In a given situation the solid self can say, "This is who I am, what I will say, what I will do or not do." The beliefs, opinions, convictions and life principles of the solid self are arrived at through reflecting and integrating life experiences. Bowen says that integration is the product of the intellectual process of reasoning, considering alternatives and making choices. When individuals make a choice they claim responsibility for self and the consequences of the choice. They operate on a consistent basis out of their beliefs, opinions, convictions and principles that define their identity.

The pseudo-self is a creation of emotional pressure

11 Ibid., 365.

and can be changed by emotional pressure. Pseudo-self is a pretend self. The need to belong and be accepted overcomes the need to be oneself, to stand firm in one's solid self. The pseudo-self often does not know a solid self. The norms and behaviors of the pseudo-self have been defined by the systems the self functions within.

Pseudo-self refers to knowledge and beliefs acquired from others which are incorporated by the intellect and negotiable in relationships with others. Pseudo-self is created by emotional pressure and is modified by emotional pressure. ¹²

A pseudo-self will get involved with a particular group because of emotional relatedness, and not for what the group adheres to or believes. Bowen calls the pseudo-self an actor. They can pretend to be more or less important, more or less attractive than they really are. Bowen says the pseudo-self is difficult to detect:

...There is enough of the imposter in all of us so that it is difficult to detect lesser degrees of the imposter in others. On the other hand, a good actor can appear so much for real that it can be difficult for the actor or for others without detailed knowledge of how emotional systems function to know the dividing line between the solid self and pseudo-self.¹³

Based on experience Bowen thinks that the level of solid self is lower than the level of pseudo-self in each of us. Bowen gives us an example of lower pseudo-self

¹² Michael E. Kerr, "Chronic Anxiety and Defining a Self," The Atlantic Monthly, September 1985) 43.

¹³ Murray Bowen, M.D., Family Therapy in Clinical Practice (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978), 365.

emotionally fused in a marriage. Two pseudo-selves marry and merge into a we-ness. One partner trades part of self so the other can be the dominant one. The dominant one accepts this. There is giving and taking, borrowing and sharing of pseudo-selves to create a we-ness which is destructive to both. The adaptive spouse over time may lose so much of self that she or he may become de-selved. She or he is no longer able to make decisions and "collapses in selfless dysfunction - psychosis or chronic physical illness."¹⁴

The we-ness is not a real we-ness. Neither spouse knows who she or he is and what she or he can bring to the relationship. They lose themselves in emotional fusion. John Bradshaw ¹⁵ says it in another way:

A mature person is one who has differentiated himself from all others and established clearly marked ego boundaries. A mature person has a good identity. Such a person is able to relate to his family system in meaningful ways without being fused or joined to them. This means that one is emotionally free and can

¹⁴ Ibid., 366.

¹⁵ John Bradshaw is host of the nationally televised PBS series "Bradshaw On: The Family" as well as the previous "Eight Stages of Man." He has studied for the Roman Catholic priesthood, earning three degrees from the University of Toronto. For the past twenty years he has worked as a counselor, a theologian, a management consultant and a public speaker. John Bradshaw is married and has three children.

choose to move near without anger or absorption and move away without guilt.¹⁶

Bowen created a scale from 0-100 to show the gradation in human functioning and degrees of differentiation of self. This scale is to help with the understanding of emotional illness as being on a continuum. The lower end of the scale is the most undifferentiated person and the upper end is the more highly differentiated person. This scale is best described in terms of four areas; 1) low differentiation (0-25), 2) moderate differentiation (25-50), 3) moderate to good differentiation (50-75) and 4) high differentiation (75-100).

Low Differentiation:

This is the lower end of the scale 0-25. People at this stage are emotionally needy and reactive to others. Here an individual spends energy seeking approval and harmonious relationships. There is so much energy spent on seeking approval from others that little energy is left for one's own self-directed goals. Persons of a lower differentiation stay connected to the primary caretaker, usually mother, in a symbiotic way. They

¹⁶ John Bradshaw, Bradshaw On: The Family (Florida: Health Communications, Inc., 1987), 42.

cannot separate, distinguish their emotional feelings from those of the other. Those of lesser differentiation do not exist as separate emotional entities. Lesser differentiated persons react rather than respond to the emotions of the other.

The extreme neediness of lesser differentiated persons makes long term relationships difficult to obtain. When they fail to achieve approval they can spend their life in withdrawal or fighting the relationship system. When withdrawal or opposition occurs between two emotional units of a system, the whole relational system is affected.

Bowen claims the hard-core schizophrenics are in the low differentiation stage of 0-10. The hard-core schizophrenic is a person in total withdrawal. He describes persons of lower differentiation as the "incorrigible drug addicts" and the "skid row alcoholics."

Moderate Differentiation

Those at level two on the differentiation scale range from 25-50. They have taken the norms of culture or society and made them their own. Lacking a sense of who they are as individuals, they define themselves by the norms of others. Like those at level one, they are invested in seeking love and approval from others. Unfortunately, this pursuit is expended at great cost to themselves and to their inner values.

An example of moderate differentiation can be seen in many adolescents. A teenager may take on the value of parents that excessive drinking and use of drugs is morally wrong. A teenager may truly hold that excessive drinking is morally wrong, but when out with their friends, they may partake in excessive drinking because they are afraid of losing their friends. Teenagers at times clearly will go against their internalized values to win approval from their peers.

Individuals can also take on and live cultural values that are destructive to themselves and others. Persons of moderate differentiation seem to lack the ability to critique traditions and norms of the past and move toward change. Their personhood is defined by tradition and norms from the past and not from within themselves. Alice Miller ¹⁷ in her book, For Your Own Good, lists some of the examples of false information and beliefs that have been passed on from generation to generation. Miller names some of these norms:

1. A feeling of duty produces love.
2. Hatred can be done away with by forbidding it.
3. Parents deserve respect simply because they are parents.
4. Children are undeserving of respect simply because they are children.

¹⁷ Alice Miller has devoted herself to writing after practicing psychoanalysis for over twenty years. She lives in Europe. Her writings are related to the child rearing practices that have been practiced in the past and how many of these practices have contributed to the destruction, the pathology of adults.

5. Obedience makes a child strong.
6. A high degree of self-esteem is harmful.
7. A low degree of self-esteem makes a person altruistic.
8. Tenderness (doting) is harmful.
9. Responding to a child's need is wrong.
10. Severity and coldness are a good preparation for life.
11. A pretense of gratitude is better than honest ingratitude.
12. The way you behave is more important than the way you really are.
13. Neither parents nor God would survive being offended.
14. The body is something dirty and disgusting.
15. Strong feelings are harmful.
16. Parents are creatures free of drives and guilt.
- 17 . Parents are always right. ¹⁸

Persons at a moderate level of differentiation tend to accept norms handed down from ancestors without question. Those of moderate differentiation live out of their pseudo-self. An individual working out of the "solid self" is at a higher level of differentiation.

Moderate to Good Differentiation

This level falls on the scale at the range of 50-75. The persons at the lower end of the 50-75 range are still very much concerned about what others may think of them. They will hesitate to say what they believe. They know they do not agree with another but are not yet

¹⁸ Alice Miller, trans. Hildegarde and Hunter Hannum, For Your Own Good (New York: Giroux, 1984), 59-60.

able to speak the disagreement verbally. People at the higher end of the 50-75 have the freedom of moving back and forth between seeking emotional closeness and pursuing independent goals.

At this level we see the instinctual balance of the two forces of togetherness and autonomy, oneness and separateness, working in relationships. As individuals become free enough to express the solid self they begin to feel the tension of these two forces.

The balance of these two forces in relationship is never static. The forces are in constant motion with each member of the relationship carefully monitoring the current status of the balance. A feeling of too much togetherness with its accompanying sense of loss of self will trigger efforts to recover some individuality. A feeling of too little togetherness will stimulate moves toward emotional closeness.... These are natural, instinctual forces producing fascinating homeostatic interplay and it is a mistake to consider one force positive and the other negative. ¹⁹

High Differentiation

This level is divided into two sections; 75-95 and 95-100. People who are categorized in the range of 75-95 are considered rare in Bowen's view. These individuals are able to monitor and feel when they are becoming off balance -- either fusing their emotions with another or not connecting with the emotions of another. Higher

¹⁹ Michael E. Kerr, M.D., "Family Systems Theory and Therapy," Benjamin B. Wolman and George Stricher, eds., Handbook of Family and Marital Therapy (New York: Plenum Press, 1983) 236.

differentiated individuals are "inner directed" adults.

These individuals are sure of their beliefs but not dogmatically fixed in their thinking. They are open to growth and change. They are listeners who do not react but respond to others. They assume total responsibility for their actions. Their actions and their beliefs are harmonious. They can tolerate and respect the differences of others. They are realistic in their assessment of themselves and others. They know that they depend on others but do not use others. Their need for others does not impede their functioning. They are able to be in an intimate relationship with others. A mutual, intimate relationship is one in which there is giving and receiving by individuals, a sharing of ideas and feelings and the willingness to be vulnerable in an environment of acceptance of openness, a willingness to be influenced and possibly changed by these interchanges of ideas and feelings. There is an ability to stand up close to someone being vulnerable to their influence and not fearing the risk of losing oneself. To not fear losing oneself and to be able to be vulnerable are critical to an intimate relationship. These strengths come from integrating and reflecting the beliefs, opinions, convictions and life experience in knowing the "solid self." These strengths come from a higher level of differentiation of self.

Bowen considers the scale range of 95-100 a hypothetical or theoretical range. He does not see anyone ever reaching this level. The goal of "high differentiation" is the balance of oneness and separateness, demonstrated by an individual's interdependence. The individual maintains an interrelatedness firmly grounded in the ability to stand alone and to stand with others. Bowen cautions not to make the common mistake of equating persons of higher differentiation with "rugged individualism."

I consider rugged individualism to be the exaggerated pretend posture of a person struggling against emotional fusion. The differentiated person is always aware of others and the relational system around him.²⁰

The process of differentiation is a process of change. This process has been called "defining a self." Individuals can only change their basic level of differentiation in relationship to another. Bowen claims that people of similar differentiation are attracted to and seek relationships with one another. A couple of lower level differentiation without serious effort toward change will produce a family and children of similar differentiation. This family pattern of lower differentiation can be changed when an individual decides to change her or his own level of differentiation. In

²⁰ Murray Bowen, M.D., Family Therapy in Clinical Practice (New York: Jason Aronson, 1978) 370.

order to change, the individual wanting to change must find another who is of a higher level of differentiation to guide her or him through the process of change, or growth.

From Bowen's process we learn that, humanly speaking, no one can help another grow who has not gone through that growth. It is from the more developed vantage point that one can accurately detect the impasses of previous levels and help people move beyond them. ²¹

The wanting to change and move toward greater differentiation may not and often is not a conscious act by the individual. Many times the desire for growth and change is brought on by a crisis, individual or family. Many times a mother will go into therapy because there are problems at home with a child and she seeks help with the problem. It is then that she may see needed growth in her own life and begin to work on defining herself and how she is in relationship with others, particularly the child having difficulty.

This one individual seeking help for a particular problem may start the process of higher differentiation within herself and the entire family. When one individual changes, others change in their response to that individual.

The next section will look at some of the dynamics

²¹ Robert T. Sears, S.J., "Healing and Family Spiritual/Emotional Systems," The Journal of Christian Healing, Vol. 5., (1983), 14-15.

at work within a family system when change is desired and worked at. Ivan Boszormenyi-Nagy is a family system theorist who developed what he calls "Contextual Family Therapy." His theory will be used to look at the relational dynamics that are in operation when one is working, consciously or unconsciously, on differentiation of self. ²² Nagy says the hope for the possibility of achieving a higher level of differentiation comes from intergenerational gifts, which help individuals move toward a goal of building creative community, establishing the oneness and separateness, the differentiation, necessary for mutually intimate relationships.

In "Contextual Family Therapy," Nagy seeks to integrate the systemic view of Bowen's classical family therapy with psychodynamics of the individual. Nagy's theory assumes that one is rooted in the history of one's family and one will only differentiate and gain autonomy by coming to terms with the strengths and the weaknesses inherent in one's family. These strengths and weaknesses are one's intergenerational gifts. This grappling process

²² There are two primary references used in the research of Nagy's theory. They are Ivan-Boszormenyi-Nagy and David N. Ulrich, "Contextual Family Therapy," in A. Gurman and D. Kniskern, eds., Handbook of Family Therapy (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1981) and David N. Ulrich, "Contextual Family and Marital Therapy," in Benjamin B. Wolman and George Stricher, eds., Handbook of Family and Marital Therapy (New York: Plenum Press, 1983).

fosters not only a greater degree of autonomy, but an appreciation for one's family of origin and thus, a healthy connectedness with family. This connectedness is considered healthy because it relies on a lesser degree of fusion, the inability to separate one's emotions from another's - mine are yours and yours are mine.

Contextual therapy approaches the therapeutic relationship from the individual's perspective and takes into account all those who may be affected by the individual's therapy within the family system. For example, a married, alcoholic male with children, who has decided to change, will effect change on every relation in the family system. His wife, after years of co-dependency, will more than likely need to learn how to relate to him in an interdependent way. The children will most likely need time to trust the person they now see their father to be.

Nagy, in his contextual therapy, sees that the factors that affect relations can be sorted into four interlocking dimensions: the facts dimension, the psychological dimension, the transactional dimension, and the relational ethical dimension.

The facts dimension consists of the undisputed reality of one's roots, illnesses, parents (real and adoptive), and number of siblings. For example, it is a fact that I was born an Irish Catholic. It is a fact that

I am the second generation born in America. It is a fact that I am also female and the second child out of six children. I have three sisters and two brothers -- both brothers younger than myself. It is a fact that I was fourteen when my youngest sister was born, and I watched and cared for her a great deal. According to Nagy, these facts affect my relationships.

The psychological dimension refers to the dynamics of the person. That a child grows up as an abused child is a fact. How the child has internalized the effect of being abused and the attitudes that accompany this reality illustrate the psychological dimension. The fact that one has been abused can be repressed, denied, or distorted. An individual may feel inner rage because of child abuse, but is not in touch with the rage or may have displaced it onto his or her own children. The contextual therapist works with an individual to get in touch with her rage and direct it toward the original person. Contextual therapy does not ignore the psychoanalytic aspect of therapy. Rather, the theory incorporates the way individuals understand and internalize the facts.

The transactional dimension includes interactions or events within families that mask the real need or struggle. Aspects of transactions that mask the real need or struggle are phenomena such as triangles, coalitions,

distance and pursuit, application of power, interruption of feedback.

The relational dimension is regarded by Nagy to be the cornerstone of contextual therapy. It is the commitment of the contextual therapist to take into consideration and have concern for all those who will be affected by treatment. The relational dimension deals with the balance of fairness within a relationship.

We consider relational ethics to be a fundamental dynamic force, holding family and societal relationships together through mutuality and trustworthiness of relationship. According to multilateral logic, the balance of fairness between people is the most profound and inclusive context. This is the context to which the term 'contextual therapy' applies. ²³

Nagy gives an example to illustrate this fairness. A wife comes into therapy and tells her story of how her marriage has deteriorated over the years. Her complaint may be of her husband's indifference to her and how she does not feel listened to by him. When asked to describe how her husband is indifferent to her, she not only tells about how he watches television when she wants to talk, but what she did for him and how he failed to do for her, how he took from her and she gave to him. Her pain is not only from the indifference, but also from the feeling that somehow the relationship is off balance. She is feeling

²³ A. Gurman and D. Kniskern, eds., Handbook of Family Therapy (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1981), 160.

she gave more than he. This issue of fairness is present in all relationships. The issue of fairness goes deeper in family relationships, because they are relationships we cannot get out of and the issues can go back into previous generations.

In order to assess the question of fairness, Nagy "starts with the recognition that each person has 'basic welfare interests' including survival, growth and relatedness."²⁴ A recognized fairness issue would be a child's need for affection. Affection is an essential need for the child's growth and relatedness. It is only fair that the child receives affection. If the child doesn't, there will be a lack within the child that will impair his development. If there is fairness exchange, the interest of family members will be recognized. Persons of lower differentiation, working out of a pseudo-self, will tend not to deal in issues of fairness. They come into relationships in need and take from the other. There is not a fair exchange of selves. Issues of fairness are give and take in a relationship over a period of time, many years. The balance may at any time go one way or the other, one person may have given more for a

²⁴ Michael E. Kerr, M.D., "Family Systems Theory and Therapy," Benjamin B. Wolman and George Stricher, eds., Handbook of Family and Marital Therapy (New York: Plenum Press, 1983), 188.

while than another trusting a return. An example given by Nagy is the woman who remains in a secretarial job so her husband can finish school. She expects that what she has invested in the common fund will eventually be replaced. She may later go to school herself. When fairness is respected one person is not depleted of self.

As members of a family work out issues of give and take, relationships of trust are being built. In contextual therapy, the move toward trust is called "rejunctive" and the move away from trust is called "disjunctive." Trust is seen as the critical element in holding a relationship together. Trust is the faith that another will be predictable, dependable and genuine. Persons trust that another is concerned for the good of the relationship. It seems that to the degree that one can trust another, one can achieve "differentiation of self." To the degree that one can trust, one can risk separating oneself from another and know that he or she can still be in connection with the other.

The first stage of Eric Erikson's developmental theory is called "trust vs. mistrust." Basic trust for Erikson is the cornerstone of the personality. Contextual therapists look to see if this same basic trust has been fostered and developed in children, and also if it is being fostered in the continuing relationships of the family. Basic trust will be tested at different times

throughout development. The adolescent stage can again be used as an example. Can parents trust their teenager enough to give her the freedom it will take to achieve the autonomy necessary to differentiate within the family system? Many parents cannot. Many times the severe restrictions and limitations imposed drive some adolescents either into submission or acting out.

Two factors in contextual therapy that are implicit in considering trustworthiness are: 1) the ledger of merit and indebtedness and 2) invisible loyalties. Ledger is the balance sheet for fairness. The balance of the ledger is essential for one's autonomy as an individual. To the degree that one can balance the ledger of merit and indebtedness, one will achieve the oneness and separateness that is essential for Bowen's differentiation of self. If one is not able to balance the ledger she or he would remain emotionally fused with another.

David N. Ulrich, a colleague and co-author with Nagy gives an example of ledger balancing. He notes the daughter who stays home with her parents in order to meet her parents' needs. It may seem that she is giving her siblings the gift of freedom from care for their parents. In truth, she is robbing them of their responsibility to contribute to the balance of fairness, she is paying too much of a price in filial devotion and sacrifice to her parents. At the same time, the parents begin to feel that

they are not doing enough for themselves. This imbalance of fairness keeps people stuck at levels of differentiation. The daughter who is at home can become overly identified with her parents. It may become difficult for her to separate herself from her parents, unable to identify her feelings and emotions separately from her parents'. ²⁵

The balancing of the ledger can only occur in a context of responsibilities to others. It is not a bookkeeping process but rather, over time, a look at whether the investment of one individual over-balances the investments of others in the family.

This stuckness of unfairness can be broken in several ways. The daughter can decide that she is overly responsible for her parents and begin to separate from them. She needs to identify her needs and what she desires to accomplish in her own life. A sibling can also break the stuckness. One of her siblings can begin to insist that they take part in the care of their parents. In claiming this responsibility, the daughter at home is forced to relinquish some of her over-responsibility, thus beginning to balance the ledger. The parents can also contribute to balancing the ledger by claiming their responsibility and not allowing the daughter to control

²⁵ Ibid., 190.

their lives.

If any one individual begins to balance the ledger of fairness, she or he begins to enact change in the system. This change in the system is relational. This balancing of the ledger would seem to move one toward greater differentiation of self. The balance of relationship would most likely be moving toward a balance of oneness and separateness.

Nagy does not see this as an easy process. Nagy claims that many of the patterns of behavior that contribute to an unbalanced ledger are passed down from generation to generation. A contextual therapist goes back three generations to look at the behaviors that may contribute to imbalance of the ledger. This parallels Bowen's belief that a parents of lower level differentiation lacking serious effort toward change will produce a family of children of similiar differentiation. The children of that family will in turn produce families of similiar differentiation.

Contextual therapy emphasizes the imperative of a multigenerational view where the influence of at least three generations of a person's family system are take into consideration. Adherents of contextual therapy strongly believe that unless the ancestral tree is examined, the psychological, transactional and relational aspects of contextual therapy lose crucial meaning. This

loss of meaning is particular related to loyalties. Loyalties are the second aspect of contextual therapy that leads one toward or away from trustworthiness.

Nagy see loyalties as a "universal and central relational dynamic." A child's loyalty is initially to her or his natural parents. Loyalty is reinforced by the parents' nurturance in a context of a balanced give and take. If a parent cannot maintain an adequate give and take; the child's potential for relating may be impaired. It would seem that to the degree that one's potential for relating is impaired, one's ability to differentiate is similarly impaired.

This initial loyalty to one's parents is so strong that it can be seen to split loyalties in an adopted child. This loyalty to unknown natural parents is borne out in the phenomena that many adoptive children will search for their natural parents.

Loyalties can be disguised. It may seem at times, because of behaviors that reflect adversarial relationships, that a basic trust loyalty is not present. Nagy believes that the initial loyalties exist and advises that when working with a family, never assume that the deepest level of relationship between parent and child is adversarial. Many times what looks like an adversarial relationship is really a connected relationship, and the adversarial conduct by the child is a way of expressing

loyalty to the parent. This adversarial conduct is usually aimed at correcting an imbalance in the family ledger of accounts.

Split loyalties occur when a child is not allowed by her or his parents to move between them. A child may not be allowed to move closer to one parent without being accused of disloyalty to another. Split loyalties are seen many time in divorce situations. The issue is not the split between the parents, but, rather, the "issue is the unconditional nature of the child's involvement in the split." ²⁶ The child is made to choose one parent over the other. The child is not allowed to have rejunctive relationships with both parents.

The goal of contextual therapy is to enable family members to shift their intentions from disjunctive to rejunctive action. To that end, each individual will move toward her or his individual integrity and autonomy as well.

When one moves toward individual integrity and autonomy she will also be moving toward defining of self. At the same time, one will move toward healthy, interdependent relationships within the multigenerational

²⁶ A. Gurman and D. Kniskern, eds., Handbook of Family Therapy (New York: Brunner/Mazel, 1981), 165.

family system. It has been seen that as an individual begins to change in a system, the relationships within the whole system change to some degree.

Nagy's theory assumes that individuals are rooted in the history of their family and will only differentiate and gain autonomy by coming to terms with the strengths and weakness inherent in their families. This assumption that individuals are rooted in the history of their family is also the hope for the possibility for achieving a higher level of differentiation. As individuals come to terms with the strengths and weakness in their history they will move toward a goal of creating community, establishing the oneness and separateness necessary for mutual intimate relationships.

Bowen's concept of "differentiation of self" has been defined and used in Nagy's "contextual therapy" to view the dynamics of the process of differentiation of self within a family system. Walter Bruggemann's faith development process will be reviewed in the next section to see what similiar dynamics are present in an individual's faith development and in the differentiation of self within her family.

CHAPTER IV

DIFFERENTIATION WITHIN CHURCH

The goal of contextual therapy is to enable individuals to move toward rejunctive relationships within the family. Rejunctive relationships are established as family members work at give and take. A greater trustworthiness begins to emerge because of increased concern individuals within the system have for one another. When one is moving toward rejunctive relationships one is involved in the differentiation process. Trust in relationships is the key ingredient to differentiation of self. Nagy says that to move toward rejunctive relationships, we need to examine our ancestral trees and see our disjunctive issues. This grasp of disjunctive issues brings one to a greater freedom within oneself and within relationships with another.

In contextual therapy the move toward trust is "rejunctive" and the move away from trust is "disjunctive." Trust is seen as the critical element in holding a relationship together. In the previous chapter we saw how the move towards rejunction is affected by;

1) the ledger of merit and indebtedness and 2) invisible loyalties. Disjunctive issues can be seen in the over-indebtedness we hold to past events and also the loyalties based on connectedness that keep us fused to another. The questions for differentiation of self become: What is it in my life and family history that keeps me from defining who I am as an individual? What keeps me fused to another, or several others, in an unhealthy manner, unable to separate my emotions from another, to stand alone yet connected to another?

We have seen in theology through the mystery of the Trinity, and in psychology, through family systems theory and contextual family therapy, that we are communal individuals. We come to wholeness/holiness in relationship to others. If we come to wholeness/holiness in relationship to others, the process of differentiation necessarily exists not only within one's family but within all the "systems" one is connected with.

Church is also a system. It is necessary for one to differentiate within the Church "system" to be a healthy Church member. How does one move toward the balance of oneness and separateness as seen in the Spirit of the Trinity and systems theory? How does one differentiate within the Church? Walter Brueggeman's ¹

¹ Walter Brueggemann is Professor of Old Testament at Columbus Theological Seminary in Atlanta, Georgia.

faith development theory will be used to illustrate the differentiation process within a Church system.

Brueggemann's theory will be examined and then compared to Nagy's Contextual Family Therapy for the similarities of the dynamics of the differentiation of self within these theories.

Walter Brueggemann's Hope Within History lays out Israel's faith development from a sociological standpoint. He states that humans are interpersonal and social beings. Brueggemann requires that Israel's faith development be "understood in a particular, concrete, radical and transformative way." ² For Brueggemann, the "social construction of reality"³ is essential for psychological formation.

The Exodus literature mounts an argument that individual personhood is always a communal enterprise. Therefore the stages are never merely about interiority and yet are always about interaction in which the person is evoked, assaulted, and impinged upon in formative and transformative ways, depending on the other parties to the interaction. ⁴

Faith development is a communal experience for

² Walter Brueggemann, Hope Within History (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 7.

³ A phrase Brueggemann borrows from L. Berger and Thomas Luchmann, The Social Construction of Reality (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1966), meaning the social reality in which persons are living.

⁴ Walter Brueggemann, Hope Within History (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1987), 9.

Brueggemann. For Bowen and Nagy, differentiation of self is a communal experience. An individual cannot differentiate within her or his family without the interaction "in which the person is evoked, assaulted, and impinged upon in formative and transformative ways, depending on the other parties to the interaction." ⁵ A family member begins to ask: Why is my family the way it is? How do I fit within the context of my family's workings? Brueggemann says that a child of a faith community will ask "Why does my community perceive reality in this way and not in some other way?" ⁶

A dynamic faith, a faith that transforms and redescribes life, has three dimensions to it according to Brueggemann; 1) critique of ideology, 2) embrace of the pain and 3) practice of social imagination. Each of these dimensions is now examined and related to Nagy's differentiation of self.

Critique of ideology is the beginning of faith identity. Critique of ideology is the naming of the social reality. The Israelites had to name the oppression they were under. Each individual Israelite had to face the reality that because she or he was an Israelite, she or he was also a slave under the rule of Pharaoh.

⁵ Ibid., 9.

⁶ Ibid., 10.

Brueggemann's summary of Israel's critique of ideology is as follows:

- (1) The Israelite knows that he or she lives in a contrived world. Egyptian arrangements are not at all thought to be either absolute or worthy of trust and respect.
- (2) The contrivance is not a matter of accident or indifference. It is quite intentionally designed to serve the special interests of some at the expense of others.
- (3) Because this technological-ideological world is a contrivance and not a given, it may be undone and dismantled-deconstructed. The world may then be arranged in an alternative way if one has the courage and wits to do so.
- (4) The agent of such dismantling, deconstruction and delegitimation is known by name -- Yahweh. The Israelite shaped by narrative recital is a helpless, isolated victim but has an ally so powerful that the dismantling of the contrived empire is sure and can be counted on. ⁷

Brueggemann does not see this as easily fitting into a growth stage. He perceives the critique of ideology as disjunctive. Critique of ideology is pointing out situations that are not to be trusted. This critique of ideology seems to bring in many parts of Nagy's theory. The historical facts are considered in the critique. The psychological dimension is considered. An Israelite is born oppressed. How does an individual Israelite internalize and move in response to oppression? The relational dimension is also in the critique of ideology. The relational dimension deals with the balance of fairness within a relationship. The Israelites did not

⁷ Ibid., 12.

see their plight as fair or just. The Israelites in the critique of ideology name their disjunctive issues. According to Nagy it is the grasp of the disjunctive issues that brings one to a greater freedom within self and within relationship with another.

The critique of ideology, the naming of disjunctive issues, is what each individual needs to do in order to be moved to a freedom to act in response to the disjunctive issues. Brueggemann's second dimension of faith development, the embracing of pain, is the act in response to the disjunctive issues. The embracing of pain for the Israelites happens when they begin to move out of Egypt from slavery into freedom. This move is not easy. The Israelites are oppressed by and enmeshed with the Egyptians. "They are paralyzed, bought off, or intimidated through a carefully nurtured symbiotic relationship of dependency upon the system." ⁸ We have seen that, according to Bowen, a symbiotic dependent relationship is the type of relationship a person of low differentiation engages in. To move to greater differentiation means to become less fused with one's primary caretaker and the rest of the "system." The Egyptians had to do the same.

Brueggemann claims when the Israelites cried out

⁸ Ibid., 13.

their pain they began the process of moving toward greater faith. When they cried out their pain they began the process that would lead them to greater freedom as a people and less dependence on the Egyptians. They began to differentiate.

How can one begin to move out of an oppressed system in which she or he is enmeshed? Brueggemann says that "one cannot move out of such a system unless one understands critically how it was that there was a move into it." ⁹ The critique of how one moves into the system as it is begins with going back into history. Nagy puts great emphasis on multigenerational history. It is this same multigenerational history that the Israelites needed to look at in order to differentiate from the Egyptians. How did they get to be an oppressed people enmeshed with the Egyptians? The Exodus story contains the Israelite story of how they became oppressed and enmeshed. The Israelites tell their story and it is this public processing of their pain that begins to move them out of slavery into freedom, from oppression and enmeshment to differentiation.

When the Israelites begin to cry out their pain through their story they begin the public processing of pain. This public processing of pain was new for both

⁹ Ibid., 15.

Egypt and the Israelites. The Israelites were beginning to reject the dominance and rule of the Egyptians. The Israelites denied the truth out of which the Egyptian system operated, i.e., that the Israelites were to be the slaves of the Egyptians. They were no longer going to play the game according to the rules of the Egyptians. They felt their pain, trusted their pain and cried out their pain. They would no longer be dominated by the Egyptians. Their relationship was going to change.

Relational ethics, for Nagy, is the cornerstone for contextual therapy. Relational ethics is the force that holds family and societal relationships together. These relationships are held together because of trust and mutuality. The relationship between the Egyptians and the Israelites was not of trust and mutuality but of oppression and enmeshment. When they critiqued the ideology, realized their pain and cried out their pain the Israelites began the process of differentiation within the Egyptian system.

The critique of ideology and the public outcry of pain lead to Brueggemann's third dimension of faith development, the release of a new social imagination. As oppressed individuals within a system dominated by the Egyptians, the Israelites become an oppressed people. As an oppressed people they find great difficulty in moving out of oppression. They depend on the Egyptians for the

necessities of life. The ability to imagine that it could be different is blocked by the false belief that they could not survive without the Egyptians. It is when the Israelites realize and cry out their pain that they begin to imagine how things could be different. What would it be like to be out of this pain? How do we go about changing the present scenario? The release of social imagination brings with it hope that things can be different and the courage to act toward making things different. A new consciousness is arrived at, a new vision is sought after.

For a family that is enmeshed, the differentiation process usually begins with one or two members. With the Israelites it began with one member, Moses. Moses was separated from the Israelites yet connected to them. He was an Israelite raised as an Egyptian. Moses's connection spoke loudly when he killed the Egyptian who was treating an Israelite badly. He ran off and hid from the Egyptians because he knew he was now identified with the Israelites. He was seemingly not enmeshed with the Israelites. He was capable of coming to his people and saying to them that things can be different, things can change, look at how they can be. Moses had a vision that was given to him by God, a God that was compassionate and jealous. The Israelites chose to believe in this God of

hope rather than in the existence of oppression under the Egyptians.

For Walter Brueggemann, faith development is a process of choosing gods. Who is the God that is to be believed in? The Israelites left the god of Pharoah, who oppressed them but supplied them with food and shelter, and chose the God of hope and new life. Faith development for Brueggemann cannot be worked with empty, formal considerations. We are people of history and our faith development must be seen within a historical context with specific and concrete data and issues of time, environment and situations. Faith development is achieved individually and collectively. Faith development is the differentiation within a faith community. One person, Moses, was beginning to see things differently, to critique the present ideology of the faith community, to cry out the pain and present new options for change. This one person affects others and the faith community begins to move toward change and greater freedom.

This is much the same for differentiation of self within the context of contextual therapy. One individual begins to critique the ideologies of the family, cry out the pain and choose different ways of relating, more rejunctive ways. One person in the process of differentiation affects the whole family. As Moses needed faith in God to guide him in his and the Israelites' faith

community, so must the individual in a family have faith in another individual who is a little more along the way in the process of differentiation to lead her or him and guide her or him. If a person is really in the process of differentiation, then she or he will affect the entire family in moving toward change.

This comparison of differentiation of self within a family and within a church or faith community has its strong points and its weak points. Discussion about differentiation within one's family focuses upon an individual. Discussion about faith development as differentiation within a faith community or church in Brueggemann's model refers to a whole community's faith growth. It may be argued that this is like comparing apples and oranges. This writer takes the stance that differentiation of self is the move from disjunctive to rejunctive relationships. Whether it be a faith community differentiating or an individual differentiating, the process is going to look much the same. Brueggemann's faith development theory of a community will be applied to the faith development of an individual. The purpose of this application is to demonstrate that as an individual differentiates within her or his family, she or he also needs to differentiate within her or his faith community or Church.

The process of differentiation of self in Nagy's Contextual Family Therapy and Brueggeman's faith development seems to look the same in several areas. In contextual family therapy, Nagy seeks to integrate the systemic view of Bowen's classical family therapy with psychodynamics of the individual. Nagy's theory assumes that one is rooted in the history of one's family and one will only differentiate and gain autonomy by coming to terms with the strengths and the weaknesses inherent in one's family. These strengths and weaknesses are one's intergenerational gifts. This grappling process fosters not only a greater degree of autonomy, but an appreciation for one's family of origin and thus, a healthy connectedness with family. This connectedness is considered healthy because it relies on a lesser degree of fusion, the inability to separate one's emotions from another's.

Brueggeman's faith development parallels Nagy's theory in many aspects. Brueggemann also assumes that one is rooted in the history of one's faith community, and will only develop in her or his faith as she or he comes to terms with the strengths and weaknesses inherent in the faith community. These strengths and weaknesses are intergenerational gifts. This grappling process fosters not only a greater degree of autonomy but an appreciation

for one's faith community and thus a healthier connectedness to the faith community. As with Nagy, this connectedness is considered healthy because it relies on a lesser degree of fusion, the ability to separate one's individual faith growth from the faith growth of the faith community. Moses was able to lead the Israelites out of Egypt because he was not as enmeshed in the faith community and could see greater possibilities.

Brueggemann's faith development theory seems to require differentiation of self within one's faith community or Church. If one's faith development is a differentiation of self within one's Church, then it seems that it is necessary to differentiate within one's Church in order to be a healthy member of the Church.

What would this process of differentiation look like in today's Church? In today's Church, critique of ideology could be likened to going over the ledger and expressing the myths, the beliefs within the traditional Church, that form one as a member of the Church. This critique needs to be done at two levels - the collective and the individual. The collective level would be examining Church as Church with certain teachings and traditions. What has happened to the Church in the past two thousand years? How do these happenings oppress or give life to the Church today? This critiquing of

ideology should then bring to light some of the injustices within the Church and bring into clear focus the basic myths, the truths that are foundational to the Church, such as Jesus is the saviour who lived, was crucified and was raised from the dead. This seems to be a basic truth. What are some others? What are not?

The second level of differentiation would be at an individual level. Do I as an individual hold certain myths that are not really part of the Church's teachings and traditions? Do some of the myths of my family get carried over into Church? For example, if I were brought up never to question authority and told that anyone in authority was always right, is it difficult for me to realize that priests and religious can make mistakes? At one point it was taught that only religious were called to holiness. Do I still believe that?

The purpose in critiquing the ideology would be to see how far off the path of original truths the Church might have wandered or I as an individual might have wandered. If during the critique some of the myths are found not to be basic to the original truths, as Church, or as an individual, one must be able to cry out the pain of oppression from truth and let go of the myths. The pain involves seeing how these myths have been disjunctive to oneself.

This is not a simple process. It is a process in which one is always attempting to balance the tension of oneness and separateness that is inevitable in relationships. It is a process that takes much reading, discussion, growth opportunities and self-reflection.

The process of differentiation is active in the Roman Catholic Church today. Eugene Kennedy¹⁰ in Tomorrow's Catholics: Yesterday's Church speaks in this writer's opinion to this process of differentiation. Kennedy names a division in the church which he calls Culture One and Culture Two. This division is not a split in the church but, rather, different ways of being emotionally and intellectually involved with the church.

Culture One is intrinsically dependent on the Church as institution for its existence. Culture Two is intrinsically dependent on the church as mystery and only extrinsically dependent on it as institution.¹¹

Culture Two Catholics began to emerge more fully after Vatican II. They are people who respond to mystery as a lived phenomenon. When life is lived in response to mystery rather than solving mystery, the process of faith development, as differentiation within church, begins.

¹⁰ Eugene Kennedy is a professor of psychology at Loyola University of Chicago.

¹¹ Eugene Kennedy, Tomorrow's Catholics: Yesterday's Church (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 9.

Brueggemann says that a dynamic faith, a faith that transforms and redescribes life has three dimensions; 1) critique of ideology, 2) embrace of pain and 3) practice of social imagination. We have seen that these three dimensions are akin to Nagy's differentiation process. Applying Brueggemann's faith dimensions to Kennedy's Culture Two Catholics, we will see the process of differentiation in action.

Kennedy defines culture as:

...the differing phenomenological views of religion, church and world that can make two Catholics, kneeling next to each other in the same pew, quite different from one another. Culture here refers to the combination of elements that shape these differing ways of looking at and introducing religious order and meaning into the surrounding world.¹²

Up until Vatican II, Kennedy sees the Catholic Church as One Culture. After Vatican II, the Culture Two Catholic began to emerge as one separating within the Catholic Church yet remaining one with the Catholic Church. The Culture Two Catholic is usually quite invested in the institutional church. The Culture Two Catholic is in the process of critiquing the ideology, crying the pain and coming to a new social imagination. In critiquing the ideology, the Culture Two Catholic:

- 1) knows that some of the situations within the institutional church are contrived, 2) the contrivance is

¹² Ibid., 4.

intentional, 3) things can be changed, and 4) as with the Israelites the agent for change is known by name -- Yahweh.

National Catholic Reporter, of February 16, 1990 has an article titled "New Coalitions Replacing Church as Faith-Proprietor." This article names four groups within the Church who are "critiquing the ideology": 1) women church groups, such as Women's Ordination Conferences, Conference for Catholic Lesbians, Woman's Alliances for Theology, Ethics and Ritual and Catholics for a Free Choice, 2) healing and justice communities, such as, Quixote Center, Dignity, CORPUS and Fellowship of Christian Ministries, 3) creation centered spirituality, changing the way Catholics look at themselves and the world, and 4) those Mary E. Hunt calls "people on the edge of the pews," exemplified by the Chicago-based Call to Action but mirrored by many who try their best to get around the institutional rules and still remain within the institutional church.¹³

These four groupings seem to fit into Kennedy's Culture Two Catholics, "intrinsically dependent on the church as mystery and only extrinsically dependent on it

¹³ Mary E. Hunt, "New Coalitions Replacing Church as Faith-Proprietor," National Catholic Reporter, 16 February 1990, 3.

as institution."¹⁴

In order to be concrete in the analogy of Culture Two Catholics being in the process of differentiation within the church, the women church groups will be used as an example for the analysis. This group is chosen because this writer is familiar with the issues of women within the church.

The women's groups have been critiquing the ideology. They are naming the disjunctive issues. Women theologians have gone back into the history of the church and retrieved the positions of women in the church as leaders, teachers and prophets. Women theologians point to the ministry of Jesus and his acceptance of women as the ground for their argument that women have been and can be leaders, teachers and prophets within today's church. Jesus in his ministry freed women from oppression. Women are no longer accepting the position of domination and oppression because they see it as contrived to enhance the patriarchal structure. Because it is contrived, there can be change. Women again can be leaders, prophets and teachers in the church.¹⁵ The change agent for today's

¹⁴ Eugene Kennedy, Tomorrow's Catholics: Yesterday's Church (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 9.

¹⁵ Rosemary Haughton, The Recreation of Eve (Alenois: Templegate Publishers, 1985). In this book, Rosemary Haughton looks to the ministry of Jesus and His acceptance of women as leaders, prophets, and teachers.

women in the church is known by name -- Jesus.

The second faith dimension is the embracing of pain. Women have in the past been paralyzed and intimidated through a carefully nurtured symbiotic relationship of dependency upon the system. Bowen would name this relationship as low differentiation. Women have named their enmeshment, their oppression, and have taken steps to move toward freedom. There are some groups of women who celebrate the sacramental life of the church without an ordained male priest.

This writer was with a group of women who are in the process of moving from the symbiotic relationship of depending upon the institutional church to one of celebration. Last summer at an all women retreat, the group was dependent upon a priest to come and celebrate the eucharist. The eucharistic liturgy was scheduled for Saturday at 5:00 p.m. At 5:30 p.m., the priest had not shown. Twenty women had been sitting around a circle waiting for thirty minutes. Those women were well educated in the sacraments and celebrations of the church; some of these women had masters degrees in theology and some doctorates in ministry. These women agreed that they would wait ten more minutes and then have a sharing of the bread and wine celebration. The priest did arrive; he had gotten lost.

Many women in the group would have acted earlier but out of respect and reverence for a few older women, who are intrinsically dependent upon the church, they waited. It was agreed that anyone who did not wish to stay for the sharing of bread and wine without a priest would leave. Those that would have stayed talked later, and the concensus was that most believed that the sacramentality of the celebration, God's presence, would have existed without a priest present.

In the process of crying out their pain, women are moving toward greater freedom. In crying out their pain, women are looking back into their history to discover the freeing power of Jesus from oppression and enmeshment. They have come to believe that things can be different. Women are coming to the awareness that they have been sold "a bill of goods" that was not true.

Women are crying out their pain in the telling of their story. The story is long; it involves oppression throughout most of history in a very patriarchal world. Women are crying out their pain and trusting their pain. Trust has been seen as a key ingredient in Brueggemann's faith development and Nagy's contextual therapy.

The critique of ideology and the crying out of pain has lead women to the third dimension of faith development, the release of a new social imagination. As with a family that is enmeshed, the differentiation

process usually begins with one or two members. The same is true for the women church as women move from dependency to freedom, and to a new social imagination of what is possible. Some of the women who lead the way are Mary Daly, Rosemary Ruether, Dorothe Soelle, Elizabeth Schussler Fiorenza, Edwina Gately and many more.

Women church groups are involved in Walter Brueggemann's three faith dimensions 1) the critique of ideology, 2) crying out the pain and 3) a new social imagination. As women move through Brueggemann's faith development, they are differentiating within the church. They are moving from a symbiotic relationship of dependency to freedom. As people become more differentiated, they respond and act more out of their "solid self." Women have begun to define who they are in relationship to the church. Women are in the tension of oneness yet separateness. Women are relating to the church through their emotional and intellectual system.

Eugene Kennedy says that the reason for Culture Two Catholics is the use of the intellectual system, the capacity to think, reason and reflect.

The achievements flowed from the education that the First Culture made available through its energy and sacrifice for its children and grandchildren. The latter group, well trained in theology as well as arts and science, become the citizens of Culture Two.¹⁶

¹⁶ Eugene Kennedy, Tomorrow's Catholics: Yesterday's Church (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 11.

Culture Two Catholics according to Kennedy, consider themselves very much a part of the church. This writer suggests they are people who have begun to differentiate within the church. Some of the dynamics of differentiation have been seen with the women's church group. The same dynamics can possibly be seen in other groups of Culture Two Catholics.

The Culture Two Catholic, as demonstrated in the women church group, exhibit the oneness and separateness that we see evident in healthy relationships. The oneness and separateness of relationships is the interdependence, the differentiation, we as humans, created in the image and likeness of God, all move toward. The Trinity has been seen as the ground and model for our relationships with others. We are relational beings. We are people of history. Our history shapes our personhood. Bowen and Nagy say we must come to terms with our personal history. Brueggemann says we must come to terms with our personal and communal history and envision a new social imagination from our histories.

It is our task to discover our uniqueness, to come to know our true selves, the Christ within us, since we are made in the image and likeness of God. I suggest that this task can be accomplished through the process of differentiation, as we differentiate within family and church. How does this task of differentiation affect the

art of pastoral counseling? The next chapter explores this question.

CHAPTER V

THE ART OF PASTORAL COUNSELING WHEN GROUNDED IN RELATIONAL LOVE OF THE TRINITY

This final chapter will integrate concepts from Bowen, Nagy and Brueggemann and apply them to pastoral counseling. This integration and application will begin with a few remarks about the concept of wholeness/holiness and then concepts of this thesis will be applied to the primary task of pastoral counseling.

The terms wholeness and holiness have been used throughout this thesis. This writer sees holiness as the spirituality of wholeness. The Vatican II documents say that all of humankind is called to holiness, no matter one's state in life. "All of Christ's followers, therefore, are invited and bound to pursue holiness and the perfect fulfillment of their proper state."¹ But holiness is not achieved alone; humans are relational. "For by his innermost nature, man is a social being, and unless he relates himself to others he can neither live nor develop his potential."² Holiness is who one was

¹ Walter M. Abbott, S.J. ed., trans. Very Rev. Msgr. Joseph Gallagher, The Documents of Vatican II (New York: Guild Press, 1966), 72.

² Ibid., 211.

meant to be in the "eyes of God" with all of one's gifts and limitations. Holiness is living the essence of humanness. Holiness is the spirituality of wholeness.

Wholeness is viewed as a process that is life long, reaching fruition only through relationships with others. "Differentiation of self" is a process that leads toward wholeness. It is a process in which one can find out how one is in relationship to others. A struggle inherent in the process is the tension of oneness and separateness in relationships with self, others and God.

The return to God through loving relationships is the Christian's primary task. The journey of life "salvation" comes to fruition through one's relationship with one's God, relationship with self (knowing one's true or solid self) and relationships with others.

"Thus the Christian faith begins and ends in God. It begins with the self-revelation of God and it ends with the reality of the God who is revealed, while the manner and process of the revelation takes in the whole sweep of human history and the whole range of human experience, gathered up in Jesus Christ and brought back into focus so that "God may be all in all."³

The return to God through loving relationships being the primary task of humankind suggests to this

³ Monika K. Hellwig, Understanding Catholicism (New York: Paulist Press, 1981), 192

writer that the primary task of pastoral counseling necessarily becomes the healing of relationships. The goal of pastoral counseling would be to establish rejunctive relationships, relationships of trust. If a person has come to pastoral counseling, it may be assumed that establishing rejunctive relationships needs to occur in all three areas of God, self and others.

My present internship site brings me into contact with people from lower socio-economic status. Many of these clients come with tragic histories of violence done to them in all forms of abuse -- sexual, physical and emotional -- creating very low self esteem. The relationships with others and self are truly in need of healing.

Next year, I will be ministering to people from an upper-middle to upper socio-economic status. I do not imagine the task to be different. The externals may cast a story with different adjectives, but I believe, as with the people I counsel now, relationships with self and others will be in need of healing.

The establishment of rejunctive relationships can be achieved through differentiation of self in the context of Nagy's contextual therapy. This writer views all four dimensions (the facts, the psychological, the transactional and the relational) as essential in

establishing rejunctive relationships. As pastoral counselor, this writer needs to add two elements from Walter Brueggemann's faith development which seem essential in establishing rejunctive relationships.

The first element is the fourth characteristic of Brueggemann's critique of ideology which is the change agent known by name, "Yahweh." God is the agent of change. The client and pastoral counselor are co-creators with God. A pastoral counselor ministers from the ground of the communitarian love of the Trinity and seeks to see how God is in another's life. It may not always be appropriate to incorporate God's "act-uality" in one's life into the counseling session. Recognizing God's action in one's life is not the attempt to find the good in everything; rather, it is dancing the cosmos dance. God is the change agent, change will begin to occur when the uncreated energies, God's grace, within the client, are actualized. The cosmos dance begins to be one of hope rather than despair.

"...if we could let go of our own obsessions with what we think is the meaning of it all, we might be able to hear God's call and follow Him in His mysterious, cosmic dance. We do not have to go very far to catch echoes of that game, and of that dancing..."⁴

The second element that this writer adds as pastoral counselor is Brueggemann's practice of social

⁴ Thomas Merton, New Seeds of Contemplation (New York: New Direction Books, 1962), 296.

imagination. The practice of social imagination stems from dancing the dance with God. The dance is going through the dimensions of contextual therapy. What is the client's history? How does the history affect the inner dynamics of the individual? How do the history and the inner dynamics affect the way a person relates? What needs to be different in the way the client relates in order to affect change? But the process does not end here. The process proceeds to the practice of social imagination -- what life would be like if things were different.

These two elements: 1) God, the agent of change, and 2) the practice of social imagination add hope to the counseling session. This hope for this writer stems from a Creation-centered spirituality.

For myself as pastoral counselor, a Creation-centered spirituality seems to fit best with healing of relationships with self, others and God. Creation-centered spirituality allows the client and myself to become co-creators, with Yahweh being the source and agent of change through grace.

Creation-centered spirituality believes in a God incarnate, a God whose divinity is fully manifested in the midst of the human. God is a God incarnate in each and every human. God is a God incarnate in all of creation.

In human creatureliness, one recognizes and reverences the Divine within self and other. This recognition of the divine is the beginning of creating rejunctive relationships. When one begins to recognize the Divine in all of creation, a potential is awakened and a movement toward the Divine is started. One begins to share in the creation of the universe, a sharing in God's creation. One begins to dance the cosmos dance. One begins to co-create.

Counselor and client become co-creators to the degree in which they are able to tap into the power, the energy, the grace of the Holy Spirit that flows through all of life as love. To be in touch with God's Spirit, one must develop a theology of wonder and awe. A theology of wonder and awe makes full use of one's gift of religious imagination. The gift of religious imagination enables a person to envision a more fully evolved cosmos. Brueggemann says to change we must imagine something different. The task now becomes moving toward and living the vision created by one's religious imagination. The task of the client and pastoral counselor is to create the vision of how a rejunctive relationship might look.

Humans strive for this vision in the everydayness of life with the unconditional acceptance of human existence. This vision is how one, of what life lived to

fuller completion, might look. As one chooses to live this fuller life, the self is opened to the empowerment of the Spirit. This openness to the Spirit is a movement into a life of freedom.

"Freedom is ultimately an openness to everything, to everything without exception: openness to absolute truth, to absolute love, and to the absolute infinity of human life in its immediacy to the very reality which we call God."⁵

In this immediacy to ultimate mystery, human beings in their creatureliness stand in awe before the God of creation, separate yet dependent upon God, standing before God with the awareness of their limitations, yet full of hope. For it is in and through the power of the Spirit that humankind is saved. It is in and through the power of the Spirit that people move toward rejunctive relationships with self, others and God.

Pastoral counselors are involved in co-creation when they sit with and assist another to come in contact with herself or himself, others, and God, and begin to imagine life lived to fuller completion. This is the task of us all -- to come to wholeness within ourselves, to a unity with others characterized by oneness and separateness, and to a oneness with our Creator. Pastoral

⁵ Karl Rahner, Foundations of Christian Faith: An Introduction to the Idea of Christianity. (New York: Crossroads, 1987), 402.

counselors walk with others as they walk their journey of wholeness, of freedom. Pastoral counselors in relationship to their client are together counselor and client co-creators with the Spirit.

Relationships are the ground of our being. They are the ground of our being because we have a relational God. To come to a greater degree of wholeness within our relationships, Bowen says we need to differentiate. Nagy says we need to move from disjunctive to rejunctive relationships. Brueggemann says we need to critique ideology, embrace the pain and have a vision, social imagination.

We relate to others in many groupings, systems, in our life. In this thesis, family relationships and church relationships have been examined. All is a process. To be is to be in relationship. Wholeness/holiness depends upon our relationships. Our relationships need to be rejunctive; they need to have a quality of trust. The paradox for the Christian is that the only way one can begin to have rejunctive relationships is to trust in the communitarian love of the Trinity. God is the change agent. God is love. We love because God first loved us. We trust because God first trusted us. It is only with and through God's love that we will come to wholeness/holiness.

This thesis started with the assumption that we as humans are created in the image and likeness of our God, a God who is a relational God, manifested in the mystery of the Trinity. The mystery of the Trinity (the eternal love between Creator, Redeemer and Sanctifier) is the model of all love, life and communion in creation. Within the Trinity are a oneness and separateness of persons. This oneness and separateness have been seen throughout this thesis as a primary struggle for humankind.

This oneness and separateness have been named as the communitarian love of the Trinity. This communitarian love of the Trinity is the ground of the communitarian love of humankind. The Trinity is mystery, but a mystery that is lived out in the struggle of oneness and separateness within human relationships. "...communion is the first and last word about the mystery of the Trinity. Translating this truth of faith into social terms, we can say: 'the Trinity is our true social programme'"(p.16). "...the Trinity is not a mystery of pure contemplation; it is a mystery of transformation of human lives, of the inrush of new ways of life, ever more like the life embodied in the divine Three" (pp. 102-103). ⁶

The struggle of oneness and separateness, connected to another, to community yet remaining

⁶ James R. Pollack, S.J., "Moral Theology." Chicago Studies, Vol. 28, No. 3, November 1989, 350.

autonomous, has been explained in this thesis psychologically through Murray Bowen's concept of "differentiation of self." The dynamics of differentiation have been explored through Nagy's contextual therapy. Walter Brueggemann's faith development was then examined as a differentiation process. The process of differentiation as seen in Nagy and Brueggemann was also seen phenomenologically in today's American Catholic Church.

The concept of wholeness/holiness was then explored. To be a whole and healthy individual, one must experience the process of differentiation of self, not an individualism but a tension of oneness and separateness, to reach wholeness/holiness. This process is not only within one's family of origin but with and in every individual, system or community with whom one is connected.

Pastoral counseling was looked at as helping another to move toward rejunctive relationships. The primary task of pastoral counseling was seen as healing of relationships. Trust in God as the change agent was seen to be core to pastoral counseling.

Continued study on this topic could go in several different directions. It would interest this writer to see how new developments in women psychology, particularly from the Stone Center for Developmental Services and

Studies agree and differ from Bowen's concept of differentiation of self. Do the experience and process Bowen describe fit the experience of women? Another theology to which one might connect the communitarian love of the Trinity would be a theology of Presence. How does a theology of presence affect trust? These are two areas that have come into this writer's thoughts. I would hope that the reader has been stimulated and has many of her or his own questions.

The question this writer poses to herself is: Why pastoral counseling? My answer is simple: With God's grace, help others make their journey with a little more hope and trust in the goodness of creation.

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The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Pastoral Counseling.

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