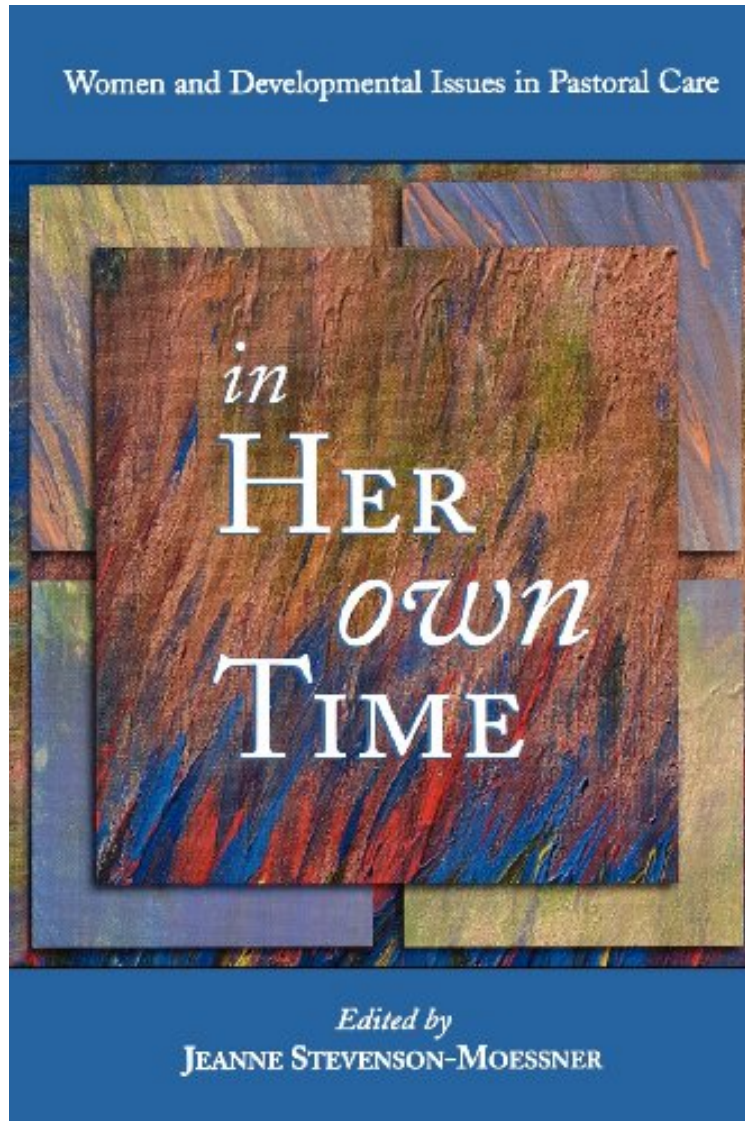


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In Her Own Time: Women and Developmental Issues in Pastoral Care

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From Brand: Augsburg Fortress Publishers : In Her Own Time: Women and Developmental Issues in Pastoral Care before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised In Her Own Time: Women and Developmental Issues in Pastoral Care:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By TonyaOwensGreat!

This new guidebook by leading pastoral theologians challenges much in contemporary developmental theory. Arguing that women's developmental stages cannot automatically be assumed to match those of men, the authors provide a fresh analysis of the rewards and challenges of women at different stages of the life cycle. Useful as a text or reference, the book sheds new light on developmental themes, passages, and issues in the lives of women from the perspective of pastoral care. From pre-adolescence to end-of-life-passages, from such diverse themes as the developmental context for intimate violence and the impact of trauma on development to issues of women's power and authority across the life-span, *In Her Own Time* provides a much-needed framework for the pastoral care of women. Designed to be used as either a textbook for students or a reference for pastors and counselors, *In Her Own Time* takes a probing theological and psychological look at the possibilities and hurdles in the life-span of today's women. Like Gail Sheehy's *Passages*, Daniel Levinson's *Seasons of a Lifetime*, or Mary Pipher's *Reviving Ophelia*, *In Her Own Time* will provide a framework-in this case, a religious and theological framework-for seeing the specific issues in the lives of today's women.

About the Author: Jeanne Stevenson Moessner is Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care at the University of Dubuque Theological Seminary, Dubuque, Iowa. An ordained minister in the Presbyterian Church (PCUSA), a former missionary, and a Doctor of Theology, she has collaborated with women in the Society for Pastoral Theology to produce two prior pioneering books in this field: *Through the Eyes of Women: Insights for Pastoral Care* (1996), and *Women in Travail and Transition: A New Pastoral Care* (1991), both highly acclaimed volumes from Fortress Press. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved.

A woman in her sixties reminisced: Divorce was a major landmark in my life's journey. In 1972 I was 34 with three children aged 12, 9, and 5 when my husband decided he did not want to be married any more. 1972 was an awful year for me. A church friend had me (and often my children) to dinner once a week all that year. Sarah and her husband took me to dinner and to concerts. She visited, she called, she loved. I said, Sarah, I can never repay you for all you are doing for me. She replied, You'll give to some one down the road. That's the way life is. My gifts of love and nurturing, the gifts I bring to the church, exist because of all the Sarahs God has given me through the years. Eighteen women come together in this volume with the gifts of our wisdom, clinical training, pastoral experience, and educational degrees. Like Sarah in the opening story, our work in this volume is an attempt to pass on these gifts. We women speak on the topic of religion and woman's life cycle in a way that is authentic, not exhaustive, to our life experience, observations, and research. We are women speaking out of order in that we challenge traditional ways of understanding development and the life spectrum. Rites of passage across the life span have heretofore been primarily described by men. Some examples of these configurations are psychosocial development (Erik Erikson), cognitive development (Jean Piaget), moral development (Lawrence Kohlberg),¹ and faith development (James Fowler).² Women have often found themselves out of order in these structured theories for the following reasons:

1. The significance of a woman's body to her growth and differentiation has not been adequately integrated into psychosocial, cognitive, moral, or faith development theories. Women develop as embodied selves; it is not feasible to talk of their seasons of maturation without including the body and the interconnectedness of the body-mind-spirit.
2. The impact of the societal and cultural context in which a girl or woman matures has been underestimated in traditional life span and stage theories. Women are often aware, even if on an unconscious level, that their development after birth occurs in the context of a society that will not be nurturing. The social construction of their gender has often resulted in feminine stereotypes, models, and paradigms that do not fit. Thus, women's progression through life will always involve mind-body-spirit- culture. Implied in this interconnection is a relational emphasis that is missing when the theoretical focus is solely cognitive or psychosocial or moral or spiritual. As women in this volume speak out of order, that is, apart from artificial stereotypes and generalizations, they offer a challenge to separative, linear notions of developmental and life span theory.
3. Relational authenticity for women calls into question the traditional actualized self or individuated self. Relational authenticity involves not only the mind-body-spirit-culture interconnectedness; relationality in context defies the cult of individualism as a woman sees herself as a self-in-relation.³
4. Complementarity in the life span occurs when the second half of life complements the first half. Whether described in terms of re-inventing one's life (Karen Scheib) or becoming an ancestor (Maxine Glaz), the nuance of balance and recapitulation leads away from a linear gestalt in the life span. Images of Passage: Traditional images that depict movement or passage in various aspects of growth have been horizontal, diagonal, or ladderlike. Even the pyramid and the spiral imply forward and ascending progression. As the contributors to this volume challenge separative, linear notions, they are revisualizing development and maturity. No one image suits us all. This fact is informative in itself: women are exploring new models of growth to maturity, and no one depiction can speak for all. It is not uncommon for the circle, concentric circles (see Pamela Cooper-White), a tapestry (Christie Neuger), or the double helix (see Jeanne Stevenson Moessner) to emerge as images. The Scriptures offer numerous portrayals of the life span that have a circular, rounded, disklike, or cyclic feature: the golden bowl, the pitcher at the fountain (water to water), the wheel at the cistern, dust to dust, breath of humankind to breath of God.⁴ On the theme of development, however, the Scriptures say little. The words used to describe the maturing of Christ are these: he grew in wisdom and in stature. Wisdom is *hochma* or *sophia*, qualities of God imaged by female characteristics.⁵ The

growth of the boy Samuel (1 Samuel 2:26) is similar: to grow both in stature and in favor with the Lord and with the people. There are no biblical women whose development is mentioned. A body of literature is beginning to develop around the image of Sarah's circle. This is a reference to the biblical Sarah, wife of Abraham and grandmother of Jacob.⁶ Although there is no biblical reference to a circle of Sarah in the book of Genesis, this configuration is a counterbalance to Jacob's ladder or Abraham's lineage, as depicted particularly in the book of Matthew. One contemporary rendering of Sarah's legacy is titled *We Are Dancing Sarah's Circle*.⁷ Whereas there is no record of her dancing, there is mention of her laughter. The various stanzas repeat the words: Here we seek and find our history. We will all do our own naming. Every round a generation. On and on the circle's moving. . . . This portrayal is an attempt to veer away from linear formation, upward trajectories, and ladderlike illustrations of maturity.