Contents

Acknowledgments xi
Prologue: The Meaning of Relationships 1

Part I: Women Speaking of Relationships

One: Women's Lives and Reality 9
   A Woman's Path 9
   Understanding Women and Ourselves 11
   A Feminist Theological Perspective of Our Reality 14
   A New Conception of Sin 17
   The Sex and Nature of God 20
   Being-in-Relationship 23

Two: Introducing the Women and Their Stories 27
   Finding the Women 27
   Meeting the Women 28
   The Woman's Stories 31

Three: Views of Self 35
   Emerging Women 38
   Selves-in-Conflict 44
   Resolute Women 48
   Mystical Women 50

Four: The Interpersonal Event 54
   The Parent-Child Relationship 57
   Influencing Another 64
   Within a Group 68
   In the Company of Women 71
   A Relationship with a Ferret 73

Five: On Death and Dying 75
   Dreams and Intuitions of Death 78
   Experiences with Dying 85
Death Lessons 91
An Alternative Approach 95
Six: Views of God 98
Seeing and Feeling the Hand of God 104
In Sickness and in Health 108
Two Ways of Knowing God 113
Finding God in Nature and the Everyday 118
Seven: Stepping Back: Moving Between Relationship and Relatedness 123
Being-in-Relationship 123
Being-in-Relatedness 125
A Metaphor for Relatedness 126
A Dialogue: Relationships and Relatedness 129
The Power of our Vision 132

Part II: Portraits of Six Women

Barbara 137
A Childhood of Narcissistic Abuse 137
Early Religious Experiences: Dream Images and the Church 141
College, Seminary, and More Significant Relationships 143
After the Seminary: Marriage, Motherhood, and Ministry 149
The Philosophy of Sophia and Barbara’s Continuing Development 151

Emily 154
Early Experiences with Grandmother, Church, and God 154
Parents’ Lessons About Life 157
A Theology of the Inward Search and Acceptance 161

Beth 164
Growing Up 164
Being Baptized in the “Holy Spirit” 167
Views of God 174