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La Salle University

School of Arts and Sciences

Graduate Program in Theology and Ministry

Dissertation

***Echoes In The Depths Of Conscience:
The Story Of Moral Injury In The Context Of War***

By

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**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree**

Doctor of Theology

2018

*Echoes In The Depths Of Conscience:
The Story Of Moral Injury In The Context Of War*

By

William T. Barbee


Approved

By

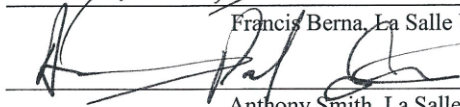
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11 April 2018

For all the men and women
who have worn the cloth of our Nation and
have borne the wounds and scars of her wars.
May they find hope, healing, and home.
For all the families who have stood beside
their soldier, sailor, marine, or airman
and held them in their hearts.

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I thank the professors, Jordan Copeland, Frank Berna, and Anthony Smith, who guided me on the journey of writing the story of moral injury. Decades ago Robert Asa of Oakland City University inspired me to take Church History seriously for it is the story of Christianity. The faculty of the United States Army War College gave me an appreciation for the importance of a strategic understanding of the military and national security. Indeed, this understanding is about the future story of our nation and her next generation.

Above all, to my wife Cindy, your love and support made this writing project possible. I can never thank you enough for your sacrifice of enduring my long absences over the years while raising two wonderful children. How well you know the story of the soldier and the soldier's family. Our children and their families now live this story.

Abstract

During the latter part of the last decade, mental health professionals working with war veterans began to realize that some of their patients were dealing with something more than complex PTSD. Awareness of a type of wound known as moral injury came from observations in the field of PTSD in war veterans and active duty personnel. In five chapters this dissertation approaches moral injury by drawing on the stories of the Christian tradition.

The first chapter tells the story of moral injury. This chapter discusses guilt, shame, suicide, and responses to moral injury. Next, it discusses the issue of identity, Chapter 2: The Story of Self. This chapter approaches the topic of killing by considering how the military trains soldiers, how Hollywood tells the story of killing in combat, and how new technologies present challenges to a soldier's identity. Chapter 3: The Story of Evil and Suffering discusses the problem of evil, moral failure, and virtue Chapter 4: The Story of Redemption, uses the sixteen panels of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica. The author suggests that one may view the panels that form four rows thematically. The last chapter tells the story of healing. It presents a retreat program, "Warrior's Path Home."

INTRODUCTION

In order to arrive there, To arrive where you are, to get from where you are not,
You must go by a way wherein there is no ecstasy.

—T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 127

War changes those who participate in it: the soldiers in combat and combat support, the civilians in the war zone, the families to which war veterans return, the societies that send soldiers off to fight, and the communities into which returning veterans reintegrate or fail to reintegrate. No one who goes to war comes home the same person. The collective human experience would affirm that a person obtains the deepest parts of wisdom on journeys, as in the epigram above, that have no ecstasy. There is no ecstasy for soldiers with moral injury from their war experience, nor is their journey to healing a road filled with ecstasy. These journeys are stories of movement and sometimes stories of the journey stuck without movement. This is a challenge of the returning warrior.

This dissertation will address the issue of moral injury by first reviewing the current understandings of moral injury in the fields of psychology and theology. The first chapter tells the story of moral injury. It will address moral injury in the context of war noting that time does not heal all wounds. This chapter will discuss guilt, shame, and suicide. It will review the Veterans Affairs' (VA) response to moral injury and its protocols of Impact of Killing in War and Adaptive Disclosure. The chapter concludes with a discussion of three organizations that strive to bring a sense of community to the healing process of moral repair: The Soul Repair Center, Soldier's Heart, and Operation Warrior RECONnect.

Next, it will address the issue of identity, Chapter 2: The Story of Self. The chapter moves from a consideration of personality to an examination of Paul Tillich's existential perspective. He offers insights into anxiety and courage. Finally, the chapter will note how moral injury

distorts identity with a special emphasis on what killing does to a soldier's identity. This last section approaches the topic of killing by considering how the military trains soldiers, how Hollywood tells the story of killing in combat, and how new technologies present challenges to a soldier's identity in the prospect of remote killing from across the globe.

Chapter 3: The Story of Evil and Suffering will discuss the problem of evil and the ability or inability of one to make a moral choice while suffering under evil. It will take up the issue of moral failure through an examination of the *My Lai* Massacre and the prisoner abuse perpetrated by members of the 800th Military Police Brigade at *Abu Ghraib*. Following the discussion on moral failure, this chapter will discuss virtue and how virtue relates to evil and suffering in war.

To tell the story of moral injury with a direction toward a hope of repair, the author includes Chapter 4: The Story of Redemption. This chapter uses the sixteen panels of the Holy Door at St. Peter's Basilica that tell the story of the journey from exile to redemption. Each panel represents a Scripture story and often an inscription that clarifies what the viewer is to understand from the story. The author suggests that one may view the panels that form four rows thematically: The Way Back From No Return, Found In The Land Of The Lost, The Promise Of Love And Forgiveness, and A Wonderful New World.

The last chapter tells the story of healing. It presents a retreat program, "Warrior's Path Home." The program is designed for groups of six to twelve veterans who encounter the story of redemption through the panels of the Holy Door, scripture narratives, journaling, and sharing stories of their experiences of returning from war. The last of the seven sessions of the retreat concludes with an invitation for the veterans to walk through the Holy Door and take up the warrior's path home.

This dissertation proposes that story is an effective approach to working with veterans who suffer moral injury. Story can change a soldier's heart.¹ This dissertation will address how moral injury and story affects the soldier's soul. The author uses the term soul to refer to the what is the most fundamental and spiritual quality of a person. The soul is the essential form of the body.² As such a soldier with a moral injury may experience anxiety, despair, and regret. Their suffering is a story of moral injury as told now in chapter one.

¹ Gregory D'Emma, a retired Army chaplain and Catholic priest says that story, *muthos*, has the ability to act as a change agent. The Hebrew people replaced the prevailing stories of angry gods contriving against each other and often at war with each other with their story of their God who in calmness creates and everything their God creates is good. "Story goes straight to the soul." Gregory D'Emma, phone conversation with author, Steelton, PA, United States, August 3, 2016.

² Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Bastible, trans. Patrick Lynch (Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 1974), 97.

CHAPTER 1: THE STORY OF MORAL INJURY

1.1 Moral Injury Defined

During the latter part of the last decade, mental health professionals within the VA began to realize that some of their patients were dealing with something more than complex PTSD. Awareness of a particular type of wound known as moral injury came from observations in the field of PTSD in war veterans and active duty personnel. Veterans who suffer moral injury suffer at the deepest part of themselves. A descriptive explanation is a starting place to conceptualize the term:

Service members are confronted with numerous moral and ethical challenges in war. They may act in ways that transgress deeply held moral beliefs or they may experience conflict about the unethical behaviors of others. Warriors may also bear witness to intense human suffering and cruelty that shakes their core beliefs about humanity. What happens to service members who are unable to contextualize or justify their actions or the actions of others and are unable to successfully accommodate various morally challenging experiences into their knowledge about themselves and the world? Are they at risk for developing long-lasting psycho-bio-social impairment? Is there a distinct syndrome of psychological, biological, behavioral, and relational problems that arises from serious and/or sustained morally injurious experiences? Or, do existing disorders, such as posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), sufficiently explain the sequelae of what we term moral injury.³

Moral injury appears not only to be an adequate term but more than that a term that more accurately describes the soldier's experience.

To determine the validity of the term researchers interviewed twenty-three health care and religious professionals. Participants included chaplains, mental health providers, academic researchers, and policymakers. Each participant had experience with military service

³ Brett T Litz, Nathan Stein, Eileen Delaney, Leslie Lebowitz, William P. Nash, Caroline Silva, and Shira Maguen, "Moral Injury and Moral Repair in War Veterans: A Preliminary Model and Intervention Strategy," *Clinical Psychology Review* 29, no. 8 (2009): 696.

personnel or war zone veterans. “The results suggest that there is consensus that there are unique morally injurious experiences in war and that these experiences create an array of psychological, spiritual, social, and behavioral problems.”⁴ Authors, psychiatrist, and psychologist have used this term in more descriptive rather than definitive applications, and their descriptions have varied somewhat, though they seem to share some themes such as broken trust and shame. As the discussion moved to the necessary moral repair, again descriptions varied, they varied mostly in the perspective of either the agent acting in the role of perpetrator or the agent as victim. In the area of human rights discourse, authors have applied the terms moral injury and moral repair to victims of gross human rights violations.⁵

This dissertation will work primarily with descriptions and definitions of moral injury and repair as the literature in the context of war applies it. The agent as perpetrator who violates his or her conscience or a deeply held belief or bears witness to violence or an atrocity is the focus in this body of literature. Shira Maguen and Brett Litz address moral injury from this perspective.⁶

Among the emotional responses to moral injury, Maguen and Litz list shame, guilt, anxiety, and anger. They identify anomie, withdrawal, self-harming, and self-handicapping behaviors as behaviors associated with moral injury. They also found that there is a strong

⁴ Kent Drescher et al., “An Exploration of the Viability and Usefulness of the Construct of Moral Injury in War Veterans,” *Traumatology* 17, no. 1 (2011): 8-13.

⁵ Margarete Walker views moral injury and repair from a human rights violation perspective where the focus is on the victim. However, she holds that all have a stake in the reparative work, and all may have a cost to pay, where moral repair, “Is the process of moving from the situation of loss and damage to a situation where some degree of stability in moral relations is regained.” For more information see, Margaret Urban Walker, *Moral Repair: Reconstructing Moral Relations After Wrongdoing* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 6.

⁶ Shira Maguen and Brett Litz, “Moral Injury in the Context of War,” PTSD: National Center for PTSD, http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/co-occurring/moral_injury_at_war.asp (accessed May 24, 2016).

association between killing in war and behavioral problems, which they hypothesize, has a link with moral injury.⁷ This dissertation will address how killing affects soldiers.

Jonathan Shay draws from Homer's *Iliad*, where he sees the narrative of Achilles as a story of moral injury.⁸ Through this lens, refracted by his patient's experiences, he sees moral injury containing the elements of, "a betrayal of what's right, by someone who holds legitimate authority (e.g., in the military—a leader) in a high stakes situation."⁹ In Shay's view, the perpetrator is a power holder. He compares his view with the view of Maguen and Litz, and describes what this kind of injury looks like.

It deteriorates their character; their ideals, ambitions, and attachments begin to change and shrink. Both flavors of moral injury impair and sometimes destroy the capacity for trust. When social trust is destroyed, it is replaced by the settled expectancy of harm, exploitation, and humiliation from others. With this expectancy, there are few options: strike first; withdraw and isolate oneself from others (e.g., Achilles); or create deceptions, distractions, false identities, and narratives to spoil the aim of what is expected (e.g., Odysseus).¹⁰

While the current descriptions of moral injury and repair have some commonality, yet differ in their conclusions, perhaps Robert Meagher is correct in his observation that, "moral injury is most clearly seen and understood in stories."¹¹

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Shay first used the term "moral injury" in 1991 calling it "moral and philosophic injury" where he connected it with shattered assumptions about self and the world and found it as part of chronic PTSD. For more information see, Jonathan Shay, "Learning About Combat Stress from Homer's *Iliad*," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 4 (1991): 563.

⁹ Jonathan Shay, "Moral Injury," *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 31, no. 2 (2014): 183.

¹⁰ Ibid, 186.

¹¹ Robert Meagher, *Killing from the Inside Out: Moral Injury and Just War* (Eugene: Cascade Books, 2014), 4.

1.2 Try To Put It Into Words

Perhaps it was only when you try to put it into words you cannot express it truly, it never sounds as you dreamed it. But then...you were asking them to die.

—Lawrence Chamberlain, *The Killer Angels*, 31-2

By Michael Shaara

Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence Chamberlain left his position as professor of rhetoric at Bowdoin College and accepted the command of the 20th Main Volunteer Infantry Regiment. History remembers him for holding a key piece of ground, Little Round Top, during the Battle of Gettysburg. During the engagement, when his men ran out of ammunition, the former professor led his men in a successful bayonet charge, for which he later received the Medal of Honor. Chamberlain did not lack courage and he inspired his men. In Michael Shaara's novel, *The Killer Angels*, Chamberlain expresses concern over asking his men to die. What he left unspoken was the necessity of asking them to kill. After the battle that day, July 2, 1863, the Main Regiment found 150 dead or wounded from the Confederate's 15th and 47th Alabama Regiments.¹² While the engagement at Little Round Top was vitally important and saved the Union Army, it involved a relatively small number of soldiers. Including officers, Chamberlain's regiment consisted of 386 men.¹³ A half a century later, armies would employ technologies that would substantially increase casualty rates.

World War I devolved into trench warfare that produced incredible casualty rates. On the first day of the Battle of Somme, the British suffered almost 60,000 casualties. The battle started on July 1, 1916, and by the time it ended in November of that year, the British Army

¹² "Little Round Top," HISTORYNET, <http://www.historynet.com/little-round-top> (accessed August 30, 2016).

¹³ Ibid.

had suffered 420,000 casualties, the French 200,000, and the Germans nearly 500,000.¹⁴ While stories of such conflicts often focus on powerful examples of sacrifice and heroic display, all battles, great or small, involve killing and dying and are thus ultimately sad stories. How do these realities of war affect those who fight the wars and how do they return home? This chapter will discuss moral injury in the context of war, the response of the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, and three community responses.

1.3 What Is Moral Injury In The Context Of War?

At a panel discussion on moral agency and strategic competency, (LTG) James Dubik stated, “The coin of war’s realm is life. It ends it, destroys it, or changes it forever [...] In war, the morally abhorrent and the morally required often coexist in the same act.”¹⁵ Former Staff Sergeant Camilo Mejia was in such a situation, where the morally abhorrent met the morally required. He tells his story of moral injury:

When I was stationed in the city of ar Ramadi, in central Iraq, one day my platoon was ordered to respond to a political protest outside the city's main government building. After a while, the protesters, who were demanding the end of the U.S. occupation, decided to start throwing grenades at the building. I was ordered to occupy a defensive position on the rooftop. A young man emerged from the crowd. He was holding a grenade. As he drew his arm back to throw it we all opened fire on him. Before I squeezed the trigger, I remember thinking that he was too far to hurt any of us. I still fired on him. I saw that young man, first alive, walking, breathing, and then on the ground, covered with blood, dead. After the incident, I went into a dark room by myself; I removed the magazine from my rifle, and I counted the bullets that were missing from it. I had fired eleven bullets at the young man. The reason I needed to count the rounds fired was that immediately after the incident, my mind erased all images of the moment of the killing. All I remembered,

¹⁴ “The Battle of the Somme,” The History Learning Site, <http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/world-war-one/battles-of-world-war-one/the-battle-of-the-somme/> (accessed August 30, 2016).

¹⁵ James Dubik, LTG U. S. Army (Ret), “Panel Discussion: Moral Agency and Strategic Competency” (lecture, United States Army War College, Carlisle, PA, May 12, 2016).

then and now, were the moments immediately before and after the young man was shot dead. That day I knew something had forever changed inside me. I felt a hole within me that had no bottom, an infinite void that could never be replenished. For weeks after the incident my mind could not shake off the images of the young man walking, and breathing, and then down on the ground, bloody, and dead. I once spoke with a therapist about this event. I described the incident, providing details, and explaining how I had felt and continue to feel about it. He told me that I shouldn't be so hard on myself. The young man had actually thrown a grenade that could have killed people from the crowd or, at a later time, he might have ended up killing other soldiers or civilians. I had also followed a lawful order, and I had not opened fire until I was convinced that he was indeed going to throw a grenade. I sat that day with that therapist, and on a certain level I had to agree with him. The problem was that as I observed that young man through the sight of my rifle, when he was still alive, there was something inside me, a voice one could say, that was telling me not to squeeze the trigger. And I knew, without a shred of doubt, that I should not disobey that voice, and that if I did, there would be serious consequences to face.¹⁶

Though, at a cognitive level, Mejia acknowledged a moral justification for taking a life, he reports that in the heat of the moment he experienced something like a contrarian voice objecting to the act. Could that voice have been an echo in the depths of his conscience? That moment, and the decision he made, would forever change his life. An analysis of what caused Mejia's wound must take into account not only what happened on the day of the event that caused the wound, but also what he believed about the world and its moral framework prior to the event. It would likewise have to account for Mejia's internal process of attaching meaning to the killing.

LTG Dubik noted that Americans hold their soldiers, sailors, airmen, and marines, as well as their leaders responsible for the decisions they make and the actions they take. This is true even in the midst of battle where they are forced to make the most difficult of moral decisions on the spot, under harsh conditions, under ambiguity, under uncertainty, and at very high risk.¹⁷

¹⁶ Camilo Mejia, "Healing Moral Injury: A Lifelong Journey, *Fellowship* 76, no. 10 (2011): 26.

¹⁷ Dubik. To illustrate Dubik's point Joshua Mantz relates the story of his April 2007, dismounted patrol in the Eastern part of Baghdad. A sniper's high velocity round ripped through Staff Sergeant Marlin Harper's left

Combat veterans know the environment of a war zone, where volatility and complexity, along with the conditions described by Dubik, form an osmotic layer over the immediacy of the individual instinct to survive, which creates the potential for making wrong decisions that may lead to moral injury. When a soldier bears witness to an atrocity or commits an honest mistake that costs the life of an innocent human being there is always the potential for such an injury. Even when a soldier makes the right decision that leads to taking a life, he is subject to moral injury.

For example, confusion at checkpoints along with limited availability of non-lethal weapons made many of these regrettable life-taking decisions possible in Iraq. It is reasonable to believe that a wider employment of non-lethal weapons would have prevented some incidents of unnecessary killing, as well as the moral injuries suffered by the soldiers who were involved.¹⁸ LTG Raymond Odierno stated to all Multi-National Corps – Iraq (MNC – I) brigade commanders and above that U.S. and coalition forces had to mitigate the loss of innocent Iraqi civilian life at vehicle control points, or the coalition risked losing credibility.¹⁹

shoulder, severed his aorta, exited his chest, and struck Mantz in his upper right thigh, severing his femoral artery. The nineteen-year-old medic arrived in seconds. The medic had to make a conscious decision, on the spot regarding who he was going to save and who he was going to let die. It would have been impossible to save both injured men. See Joshua Mantz, “Overcoming Moral Injuries,” TEDxSantoDomingo, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ORBf73HiJns> (accessed July 25, 2016).

¹⁸ The Department of Defense has a joint service program whose mission is to develop and deploy non-lethal weapons: Department of Defense Non-Lethal Weapons Program. The Department of the Army Headquarters, United States Army Training and Doctrine Command’s pamphlet on force operating capabilities has a limited discussion on non-lethal weapons. It states that the relatively reversible effects it has on personnel and material characterize non-lethal weapons. The objectives of the use of non-lethal weapons are listed as discourage, delay, or prevent hostile actions, limit escalation, take military action in situations where the use of lethal force is either not the preferred option, or is not permitted under the established ROE. It further states that non-lethal weapons better protect forces, disable equipment, facilities, and enemy personnel, engage and control people through civil affairs operations and psychological, dislodge enemy from positions without causing extensive collateral damage, separate combatants from noncombatants, and deny terrain to the enemy. See U.S. Department of Defense, *Military Operations: Force Operating Capabilities*, Pamphlet 525-66 (Ft. Monroe, VA, 2008), 87-8.

¹⁹ Robert Buran, “Beating Swords Into Plowshares” (lecture, Carlisle Barracks, Carlisle, PA, October 27, 2015).

At that time, the military gave young soldiers lethal weapons as means to stop vehicles that failed to comply with posted instructions to stop. When a vehicle approached a control point and failed to stop as instructed, the soldier assigned to that post had to decide in a moment whether this particular situation met the criteria of the Rules of Engagement (ROE) and further whether it was the best option to fire upon the vehicle which might be an insurgent with a bomb or an innocent family. Too many times soldiers killed whole families because the driver of their vehicle was confused about the instructions and failed to stop.²⁰ Private Earl Coffey, who volunteered for the Army at age seventeen, witnessed one such incident that occurred while he was deployed in Iraq. Describing the scene, Coffey says: "I saw an Abrams fire a super sabot round right through a pickup truck, and the woman who got out begged us to kill her while she watched her husband and her children burn to death." In perfect English, she's saying: 'Why? Why are you doing this? We're Christians!'"²¹

²⁰ Beyond preventing moral injury is the virtue non-lethal weapons promotes. The *jus in bello* doctrine of the Just War Theory calls for proportionality. The only ethical response is to accomplish the military mission without excessive force. A wide employment of non-lethal weapons serves justice in that civilians in zones of combat, peacekeeping and stability operations find some layer of protection from collateral damage that civilians elsewhere would expect. The availability of non-lethal weapons also encourages temperance and promotes humane action.

²¹ Billy Cox, "The Spoils of Iraq War: How a Sarasota Soldier Got Rich and Lost It All," Sarasota Herald-Tribune, May 19, 2008, <http://www.heraldtribune.com/article/20080519/NEWS/22167034/-1/newssitemap?p=1&tc=pg> (accessed December 28, 2015).

1.3.1 Does Time Heal All Wounds?

In the cases above, the old adage of time healing all wounds may not be true. As Litz and his coauthors explain,

The more time passes, the more service members will be convinced and confident that not only their actions, but *they* are unforgiveable. In other words, service members and veterans with moral injury will fail to see a path toward renewal and reconciliation; they will fail to forgive themselves and experience self-condemnation.²²

Karl Marlantes, a veteran marine lieutenant, for example, reports that he felt a certain sense of exhilaration when he killed in Vietnam; but now, forty years later, he says he feels only sadness.²³ Time alone has not healed him. After returning from war, his experience was that the society that sent him off to war, and on whose behalf he was asked to kill, provided little help in putting back together whatever was broken inside of him in the act of killing. In his book, *What It Is Like to Go to War*, Marlantes explains:

Killing someone without splitting oneself from the feelings that the act engenders requires an effort of supreme consciousness, that quite frankly, is beyond most humans. Killing is what warriors do for society. Yet when they come home, society doesn't generally acknowledge that the act it asked them to do created a deep split in their psyches, or a psychological and spiritual weight most of them will stumble beneath the rest of their lives. Warriors must learn how to integrate the experience of killing, to put the pieces of their psyches back together again. For the most part, they have been left to do this on their own.²⁴

As the experiences of Coffey, Marlantes, and many others demonstrate, beyond the risk for injury or death in a warzone, soldiers may undergo a range of morally injurious experiences (MIEs) that may well factor prominently in the etiology of mental health problems.²⁵ These

²² Litz, 702.

²³ Karl Marlantes, *What It Is Like to Go to War* (New York: Grove Press, 2011), 26-7.

²⁴ Ibid, 26.

²⁵ As noted above, PTSD and moral injury, while sharing similar characteristics nevertheless are distinct. PTSD develops from a threat (especially a life threat), a trauma, or a deep fear. Moral injury does not necessarily

stressors arise from harmful acts perpetrated by the soldier or her comrades, or witnessing human suffering as the consequence of injustice and/or violence.

A number of important studies have been developed to better understand MIEs. Joseph Currier, Jason Holland, and Jesse Malott, for example, used the Moral Injury Questionnaire–Military Version (MIQ-M) and the Integration of Stressful Life Events Scale (ISLES) to assess 131 Iraq and/or Afghanistan Veterans who were recruited between 2011 and 2013. The participants were all from a large community college on the West Coast. The researchers found statistical support for their two hypotheses: first, that a significant link would emerge between the accumulation of MIEs and less meaning attributed to possible traumas among these veterans, and, second, that the meaning attributed would at least partly account for the probable link between exposure to MIEs and veterans’ mental health status at the time of the study.²⁶ Another study, conducted with data from 2,797 U.S. soldiers returning from Operation Iraqi Freedom (OFI) as part of a post deployment screening program at a large Army medical facility found that 40% of soldiers reported killing or being responsible for killing during their deployment. After controlling for combat exposure, the researchers found that killing was a significant predictor of posttraumatic disorder (PTSD) symptoms, alcohol abuse, anger, and relationship problems. They concluded that military personnel returning from

involve threat or trauma. Brain studies show that the location of the seat of survival instincts is the limbic system that includes, among other regions, the hippocampus and the amygdala regions. The proper functioning of these two regions is necessary to process life events. Fear and trauma cause the body to secrete abnormally large amounts of cortisol, which suppresses hippocampal activity. The author hypothesizes that brain processing is different in the case of moral injury. For more information on trauma and brain function see, Babette Rothschild, *The Body Remembers: The Psychophysiology of Trauma and Trauma Treatment* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), 20-1.

²⁶ Joseph Currier, Jason Holland, and Jesse Malott, “Moral Injury, Meaning Making, and Mental Health in Returning Veterans,” *Journal Of Clinical Psychology*, 71, no. 3 (2015): 229-40.

modern deployments are at risk of adverse mental health conditions and related psychosocial functioning related to killing in war, and that mental health assessment and treatment should address reactions to killing to optimize readjustment following deployment.²⁷ The adverse mental health conditions that such screenings can identify include depression and suicidal thinking and behavior.

In 2008, the military experienced the highest rate of suicide in twenty-eight years among its active duty soldiers. A study drawing data from 2854 returning OIF soldiers found that those who endorsed depression symptoms were at greatest risk of suicidal thinking; and that those endorsing PTSD symptoms were at greatest risk for the desire for self-harm. They also found a mediated relationship between killing and suicidal ideation.²⁸ Symptoms of PTSD can also predict social problems in the life of the veteran. Another study found a link between killing, PTSD, and domestic violence. Elizabeth Van Winkle and Martin Safer found that active participation in combat trauma increased reports of PTSD symptoms over passive witnessing of trauma. They used archival data from 376 U.S. soldiers who took part in the family interview component of the 1988 National Vietnam Veteran Readjustment Study (NVVRS). They found that soldiers who likely killed enemy soldiers in combat reported elevated levels of PTSD symptoms. Further, they discovered that a soldier who reported killing enemy combatants was more likely to have a spouse report physical domestic violence in the year prior to the study.²⁹

²⁷ Shira Maguen et al., "The Impact of Reported Direct and Indirect Killing On Mental Health Symptoms in Iraq War Veterans," *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 23, no. 1 (2010): 86.

²⁸ Shira Maguena et al., "Killing in Combat, Mental Health Symptoms, and Suicidal Ideation in Iraq War Veterans," *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* 25 (2011): 567.

²⁹ Elizabeth P. Van Winkle and Martin A. Safer, "Killing Versus Witnessing in Combat Trauma and Reports of PTSD Symptoms and Domestic Violence," *Journal of Traumatic Stress* 24, no. 1 (2011): 107-10.

1.3.2 Blood Stained Hands

The studies above highlight the profound effects that the taking of human life has on a person and, consequently, the need for the nation as a whole to acknowledge and address this reality. Beyond the reality of these symptoms, there are deeper issues. Larry Dewey, a psychiatrist for the VA, states, “Thus for the majority of combatants, it is not the basic problem of traditional PTSD that trouble them most (as bad as those are), but the problems of “having bloodstained hands” from various kinds of war killing and living with the deep grief engendered by the traumatic loss of men who were as close as brothers.”³⁰ A deeper and more meaningful encounter with the physical, psychological, and moral suffering of these soldiers reveals to us a pain that resonates in the depths of conscience—a pain articulated by the World War I poet, Wilfred Owen, to wish they could somehow let go of conscience and let their veins run cold.³¹

Those who have gone cold find one of the best approaches to foster moral repair is in some form of a community. Community can hear, process, and affirm the story and storyteller. Dan McAdams observes, “Stories live to be told to others. Life stories, therefore, are continually made and remade in social relationships and in the overall social context provided by culture.”³² If retelling one’s story is a way to re-author one’s story, then it might be

³⁰ Larry Dewey, *War and Redemption: Treatment and Recovery in Combat-Related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* (Burlington: Ashgate, 2004), 14.

³¹ “Happy are men who yet before they are killed / Can let their veins run cold. Whom no compassion fleers / And some cease feeling / Even themselves or for themselves” See Wilfred Owen, “Insensibility.” Englishverse.com. Internet. Available from <http://www.englishverse.com/poems/insensibility>, accessed (August 6, 2015).

³² Dan P. McAdams, “The Psychology of Life Stories,” *Review of General Psychology* 5, no. 2 (2001): 118.

significant who becomes a part of the retelling process. One form of community is therapeutic support groups. Outside of the group, a therapeutic process known as “working through” takes place. In working through, people find a deeper understanding of life-events as well as an appreciation for how those events are currently affecting them. For some it is the first time they experience an opportunity for soul repair. Dewey describes how this process works in a therapeutic community,

Working through is part of why reunions heal, as the men process their memories together and gain deeper insight into what happened to them in the war and how it affects them now in their maturity. It occurs in successful individual and couples therapy as those involved refine and practice what they are discovering in the course of therapy.³³

Dewey finds three reasons that inhibit his veterans from telling their stories of moral injury. First, many of them become overwhelmed with emotion and stop after the first word. The second block to discussing their issues is feelings of guilt and abhorrence about things they did. The third barrier to telling their story is a belief that no one would tolerate hearing their story or understand.³⁴

One example of why such stories are so difficult to tell comes from Dewey’s patient Dave who, after patient persuasion over a long period, finally attended a group. He unsheathed a Samurai sword and passed it around the group for all to examine, and disclosed to the group, in detail, of the atrocities he suffered and witnessed at the hands of Japanese guards as a prisoner of war. Dave described in more detail what two men, one a guard and the other a factory boss, he detested the most had done. After the Emperor had given the surrender speech, Dave was able to get the sword from the guard he despised. He then proceeded to inform the guard of all

³³ Dewey, 149.

³⁴ Ibid, 155-9.

the crimes of which he was guilty and then hacked him to death with the sword. Heading to the factory, he found the boss, and killed him with the sword. Dave closed with these words:

Both men's blood are on this sword. I never got it off. I never tried. Their blood is on me too, and I don't know how I can face God. They deserved everything I did to them, but even though the cease-fire hadn't been signed the war was really over, and I had no right to do it. God forgive me I pray, but I don't see how He can.³⁵

Dave's words point to something beyond the need for psychosocial healing. They point to the reality of a wounded soul in need of spiritual healing. Edward Tick notes that war is about killing and is therefore a profoundly irreligious affair. He writes, "We break divine commandments and appropriate divine responsibilities, taking life when we cannot give it back."³⁶ Dave's story inspires one to consider the irreversible effects of war.

Dave's story starts with his suffering and desire to gain justice, but it ended with a desire for a loving community to hear and understand his story. While not writing from a therapeutic stance, the Christian philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich address the relationship of justice and love where a love that listens is the first step to justice, writing,

The relation of justice to love in personal encounter can adequately be described through three functions of creative justice, namely, listening, giving, forgiving. In none of them does love do more than justice demands, but in each of them love recognizes what justice demands. In order to know what is just in a person-to-person encounter, love listens. It is its first task to listen. No human relation, especially no intimate one, is possible without mutual listening. Reproaches, reactions, defenses may be justified in terms of proportional justice. But perhaps they would prove to be unjust if there were more mutual listening. All things and all men, so to speak, call on us with small or loud voices. They want us to listen, they want us to understand their intrinsic claims, their justice of being. They want justice from us. But we can give it to them only through the love which listens.³⁷

³⁵ Ibid, 88.

³⁶ Edward Tick, *Warrior's Return: Restoring the Soul After the* (Boulder: Sounds True, 2014), 193.

³⁷ Paul Tillich, *Love, Power, and Justice: Ontological Analyses and Ethical Application* (London: Oxford University Press, 1954), 84.

Because moral injury involves some need of repairing an injustice, the communities, such as the one Dave joined, may prove most effective as a confluence of justice, love, and the power of listening. These groups, or communities, may well be the place that provides space for spiritual conversations, space where even the topic of sin can be a part of the conversation. Beyond these groups, there is a need for a wider audience. There is a need for society, the community that sent these veterans to war, to hear and listen to these stories.

1.3.3 Moral Injury And Moral Law

According to Christian theology, sin diminishes or destroys the virtuous life and thereby the happy life. Thus, sin offends God, not because God is injured, but because it is destructive and harmful to what God created, namely, self. This self-contradicting harm is a view held by Thomas Aquinas and has implications for understanding moral injury. Jean Porter, professor of moral theology, notes, “Hence, it would seem that Aquinas holds that there is something intrinsically self-destructive in violating the moral law, over and above the sort of harm that an act of that kind normally brings about, and for that reason there are some kinds of actions that are not permissible, even in those abnormal circumstances in which they would not be harmful in the ordinary way.”³⁸ While Aquinas held that in the abstract moral law could not be blotted out of the heart, he did contend that it could be blotted out in particulars in that certain acts hinders reason (I-II, 94, 6).³⁹ The pain of moral injury would suggest that the moral law still

³⁸Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster / John Knox Press, 1990), 147.

³⁹ As to those general principles, the natural law, in the abstract, can nowise be blotted out from men's hearts. But it is blotted out in the case of a particular action, in so far as reason is hindered from applying the general

exists in the heart of the sufferer even though the experience of war may forever leave a mark.

Pope Francis made this point specifically regarding the inner wounding war experiences can have on soldiers. In an address to military chaplains on October 27, 2015, he said:

Indeed, war disfigures the bonds between brothers and between nations; it also disfigures those who witness such atrocities. Many soldiers return home with real inner wounds after military operations or peace-keeping missions. War can leave an indelible mark on them. In fact war always leaves an indelible mark. I recently heard the accounts of numerous bishops who receive in their dioceses soldiers who have gone to war and returned with these inner wounds.⁴⁰

One can hear these wounds described by Pope Francis in the words of Tyler Boudreau in the retelling of his homecoming after war, “They say war is hell, but I say it’s the foyer to hell. I say coming home is hell, and hell ain’t got no coordinates.”⁴¹ A dedicated marine officer, Boudreau resigned his commission after twelve years. He recognized the depth of his story, “Hell is no place at all, so when you are there, you’re nowhere – you’re lost. The narrative, that’s your chart, your own story.”⁴²

principle to a particular point of practice, on account of concupiscence or some other passion, as stated above (Question 77, Article 2). See Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province, (I-II, 94, 6), [http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1225-1274,_Thomas_Aquinas,_Summa_Theologiae_\[1\],_EN.pdf](http://www.documentacatholicaomnia.eu/03d/1225-1274,_Thomas_Aquinas,_Summa_Theologiae_[1],_EN.pdf) (accessed July 27, 2016).

⁴⁰ “Address of His Holiness Pope Francis in the Fourth Course for the Formation of Military Chaplains On International Humanitarian Law Promoted by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,” Libreria Editrice Vaticana, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151026_cappellani-militari.html (accessed December 26, 2015).

⁴¹ Tyler E. Boudreau, *Packing Inferno: The Unmaking of a Marine* (Port Townsend, WA: Feral House, 2008), 148.

⁴² Ibid.

1.3.4 Guilt And Shame

Charting such a story Chaplain (Colonel Ret.) Herman Keizer relates his own journey home after war. That journey, like many war journeys, had its moral anguish. Keizer served the Army as an enlisted soldier and later as a Chaplain totaling over forty years of active duty. The Army drafted him 1962. He served his time and returned to civilian life as a student. In 1968, Chaplain Keizer volunteered and returned to active duty as a chaplain and the Army soon gave him orders for Vietnam. About coming home, he writes,

The moral anguish of the war in Vietnam presented a new challenge to those who fought. Many found that there was NO EXIT. Even after coming home, the war stayed in our heads, in our hearts, in our horrific dreams, in our loss of sensitivity, and in our difficulties in interpersonal relationships. Untreated post-traumatic shock became an enduring disorder. The hidden wounds still linger in the lives of many veterans.⁴³

Part of what makes coming home unbearable, at least for some, is their profound sense of guilt or shame. It is important to note that while guilt and shame are used interchangeably, as Mia Silfer and her co-authors point out, some scholars view guilt and shame as two related but distinctive issues, and it is possible to experience either one or both at the same time. It is also possible for a person to experience either shame or guilt when no transgression has occurred. Shame is more distressing than guilt.⁴⁴

If guilt and shame are different, what makes them different? According to Silfer shame is a global negative emotional evaluation of self.⁴⁵ The evaluation leads to a negative assessment where one evaluates himself or herself as worthless, bad, and possibly evil. The person with

⁴³ Herman Keizer quoted in Rita Nakashima and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury After War* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2012), 55.

⁴⁴ Mia Silfver, Klaus Helkama, Jan-Erik Lönnqvist, and Markku Verkasalo, "The Relation Between Value Priorities and Proneness to Guilt, Shame, and Empathy," *Motivation and Emotion* 32, no. 2 (2008): 71.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

this self-perception also projects this view on to others where in the imagination they believed that others also make these judgments. They believe, “Others see me as a bad person.” With shame comes the feeling of despair and a desire to hide or cover up.⁴⁶

In contrast to shame, guilt manifests as the result of a bad act. The person believes that he or she committed an act that was bad rather than seeing himself or herself as bad. Feelings associated with guilt are remorse and regret. There is often the urge to make amends or set things right associated with these feelings. A sense of guilt is less painful than shame because the person with guilt does not see the act as a fundamental characteristic of his or her character.⁴⁷ To illustrate this point, John who is honest, one day tells his boss that he was late to work because his car would not start, when in fact he overslept. His sense of guilt, “I did a bad act,” eventually leads John to tell his boss the truth regarding his tardiness.

According to Martha Nussbaum, beyond the distinction between guilt and shame, there is another distinction between shame and embarrassment. She explains that shame is inward and can be felt alone whereas embarrassment requires an external observer and it is possible to feel both shame and embarrassment at the same time. The nature of the audience makes embarrassment socially dependent. A runner might not feel any embarrassment at urinating in public during a marathon race where the audience is fellow runners, where under other circumstances and with a different audience she or he would never think of doing such a thing.⁴⁸ A soldier who commits a war crime in secret may experience shame whereas if the

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Martha C. Nussbaum, *Hiding from Humanity: Disgust, Shame, and the Law* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2004), 205.

media discovers and makes her crime public she may also experience embarrassment.

Nussbaum understands humiliation to be the public face of shame. She writes, “To humiliate someone is to expose them to shame; and to shame someone is, in most cases, to humiliate them (at least if the shaming is severe enough).”⁴⁹ The author describes what she calls primitive shame, which is connected to an unwillingness to accept neediness and the infantile demand for omnipotence. It is, in Nussbaum’s assessment, an irrational attempt to hide from humanity, and while most people are capable of transcending its more primitive manifestations, shame remains with us in some form throughout our lives.⁵⁰

Niels Gregersen maintains that phenomenology’s function is to relocate the symbol of judgement in situations as observed from a first-person perspective. In theology, guilt has displaced the socially oriented framework of shame. In this, symbols articulate, develop, and evaluate common experiences with specific meaning, and the aspect of judgement presupposes law, temptation, sin, heaven and hell. Gregersen writes,

We also note that symbols and images afford an opportunity to recode more or less shared human conditions. As we shall observe, the symbol of divine judgement is able to recode shame: you will be ashamed in a context where, socially, you usually aren’t (for example in your gluttony); but you needn’t be ashamed in a context where you often are (for example in your failed attempts to achieve recognition). The use of the cross as a symbol of the resurrection of Christ and his followers is an example of such radical recoding of phenomenological expectations.⁵¹

Shame and guilt often serve as moral motivators. Shame motivates the self to conceal the transgression where guilt motivates the self to confess the transgression. Shame leads to

⁴⁹ Ibid, 203.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 15.

⁵¹ Niels Gregersen, “Guilt, Shame, and Rehabilitation: The Pedagogy of Divine Judgement,” *Dialog: A Journal of Theology* 39, no. 2 (2000): 105-18.

hopelessness; however, guilt maintains a hope in a new beginning. Raúl López-Pérez notes that shame is associated with feelings of inferiority but guilt is not. He also observed that shame is more intense than guilt.⁵² If López-Pérez is correct, this would indicate that shame leads one to focus on the past whereas guilt can open the door to future repair.

The overwhelming feeling of shame causes some to believe that forgiveness is unattainable as exemplified in the stories of soldiers discussed in chapter four, *The Story of Redemption*. There the discussion will address the theology of shame more fully, but note that in the biblical story of Adam and Eve it is shame that causes them to hide in the garden and attempt to cover their nakedness rather than seeking forgiveness.⁵³ This sense of being unforgivable can lead to further despair and depression. Left unattended, the darkness of shame, which resides deep within the soul, can lead some to have thoughts of suicide, the ultimate hiding, and those thoughts may lead to a completed suicide.

⁵² Raúl López-Pérez, "Guilt and Shame: An Axiomatic Analysis," *Theory and Decision* 69, no. 4 (2010): 581.

⁵³ Augustine felt great shame in the things he had done in life, yet he finally came to conversion. He would affirm there is a place for repentance. "Good God! What takes place in man that he should rejoice at the salvation of a soul despaired of, and freed from great peril, than if there had always been hope of him or the danger had been less? *For so Thou also, merciful Father, dost more rejoice over one penitent than over ninety-nine just persons that need no repentance.* See Augustine, *The Confessions of St. Augustine*, trans. Edward P. Pusey The Harvard Classics 7 (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1937), 122.

1.3.5 Suicide And Veterans

The link between shame and suicide, a putative outcome stemming from moral injury, is also an important area of inquiry. J. D. Bremner and his associates highlighted how different trauma types can lead to diverse mental health and functional outcomes. They found that being the target of killing or injuring in war was associated with PTSD and being the agent of killing or failing to prevent death or injury was associated with general psychological distress and suicide attempts.⁵⁴ The VA released the findings of a study that used data from 2014, the most recent data available at the time of the study. It found that an average of 20 veterans a day committed suicide in 2014, which is 21% higher than the average U. S. civilian adult population. Most of these suicides, 65%, were from veterans fifty and older, which means most were veterans who did not serve in Iraq or Afghanistan.⁵⁵

Being the agent of killing and its relationship to suicide attempts are sadly true for too many veterans. Recalling the intensity of the narrative from Staff Sergeant Mejia, one may observe that guilt and or shame often creates a myopic view of self. This view has a negative self-selection bias, which causes one to see only the bad in oneself. It appears that the act of taking life is a morally injurious event that radically redefines the self, and for some it is no longer a self with which they wish to continue living. In light of this, it is important to consider how the VA approaches care for veterans with the devastating emotions and issues surrounding moral injury.

⁵⁴ J. D. Bremner et al., "Dissociation and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Vietnam Combat Veterans," *The American Journal of Psychiatry* 149, no. 3 (1992): 328.

⁵⁵ "VA Suicide Prevention Program Facts About Veteran Suicide July 2016," Veterans Affairs, http://www.va.gov/opa/publications/factsheets/Suicide_Prevention_FactSheet_New_VA_Stats_070616_1400.pdf (accessed August 15, 2016).

1.4 The Veterans Affairs Responds To Moral Injury

Ladies and Gentlemen: I appear to say but a word. This extraordinary war in which we are engaged falls heavily upon all classes of people, but the most heavily upon the soldier. For it has been said, all that a man hath will he give for his life; and while all contribute of their substance the soldier puts his life at stake, and often yields it up in his country's cause. The highest merit, then is due to the soldier.

—Abraham Lincoln, Remarks at Sanitary Fair,
Washington, D.C., March 18, 1864

The mission of the VA is, “To fulfill President Lincoln's promise ‘To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan by serving and honoring the men and women who are America’s Veterans.’”⁵⁶ It devotes considerable time and resources to provide care for veterans with PTSD or moral injury.⁵⁷ The organization maintains the National Center for PTSD. That center provides useful information on moral injury. First, they provide a description of moral injury.

Like psychological trauma, moral injury is a construct that describes extreme and unprecedented life experience including the harmful aftermath of exposure to such events. Events are considered morally injurious if they “transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations.” Thus, the key precondition for moral injury is an act of transgression, which shatters moral and ethical expectations that are rooted in religious or spiritual beliefs, or culture-based, organizational, and group-based rules about fairness, the value of life, and so forth.⁵⁸

The VA uses evidence-based treatments (EBTs) for PTSD: Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE) and Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT). It uses these EBTs to target life-threat or danger-based posttraumatic memories and beliefs among victims of trauma. Therefore, they contend

⁵⁶ “About VA,” U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, http://www.va.gov/about_va/mission.asp (accessed August 10, 2016).

⁵⁷ In Fiscal Year 2011, 476,515 Veterans with primary or secondary diagnosis of PTSD received treatment at Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers and clinics. See “Veterans Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD),” U. S. Department of Veterans Affairs, <http://www.va.gov/opa/issues/ptsd.asp> (accessed July 26, 2016).

⁵⁸ Shira Maguen and Brett Litz, “Moral Injury in the Context of War,” PTSD: National Center for PTSD, http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/co-occurring/moral_injury_at_war.asp (accessed May 24, 2016).

that these therapies may not be sufficient for service members and veterans who suffer from the moral injuries of war and killing-based transgressions. For moral injury specific measures, its counselors employs the Moral Injury Events Scale.⁵⁹

1.4.1 Impact Of Killing In War And Adaptive Disclosure

The VA is currently testing two approaches for treatment of moral injury. They are modifications and augmentations of approved EBTs for PTSD. They address, in a more specific manner, the issue of moral transgression and moral repair. The first of these new treatment models is Impact of Killing in war (IOK). This treatment model consists of six sessions using the framework of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT). These sessions provide education that informs the patient about how the biopsychosocial processing of a grievous transgression may result in inner conflict and moral injury. The process involves identifying elements of meaning and cognitions as they relate to killing and, ultimately, working toward the individual's self-forgiveness. For some this goal includes a spiritual component. In addition to finding meaning, identifying cognitions and accepting self-forgiveness, it encourages finding the means to making amends.⁶⁰ The veteran working on making amends may have to use creativity and symbolism due to factors such as death and the impossibility of returning to a war zone to literally make amends. This could take the form of donations to

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid.

charitable organizations that work with international victims of war or even direct volunteer work with orphans or other victims of war.

Adaptive Disclosure (AD) is the second treatment with goals that include helping the patient learn that she: can approach psychologically troubling material without losing control; do not have to define herself by what she did or saw; can share guilt-inducing material without rejection or diminishment; can navigate vulnerability; and can reclaim the better parts of herself. That is, the therapist helps the patient to repair, reclaim, recover, and rehabilitate.⁶¹ Brett Litz and his coauthors note, “The proximal and most important aim of adaptive disclosure is to promote accommodation and adaptive meaning making of the worst or most pressing combat and operational trauma or experience.”⁶² Guided by the belief that regrettable or even reprehensible actions of the past need not define destiny, AD exposes the veteran to corrective learning. Litz states, “One of the main change agents in adaptive disclosure to redress moral injury is an evocative imaginal ‘confession’ and dialogue with a compassionate and forgiving moral authority in order to begin to challenge and address the shame and self-handicapping that accompany such experiences.”⁶³ This dialogue may be real or imagined. The veteran’s counselor should help him in wisely choosing the person with whom he may want to discuss the most intimate details of his life.

AD consists of eight sessions of experiential and exposure based therapies, employing different sets of exposures dependent upon the type of trauma the patient has experienced. For

⁶¹ Brett Litz et al., *Adaptive Disclosure: A New Treatment for Military Trauma, Loss, and Moral Injury* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2016), 45-6.

⁶² Ibid, 46.

⁶³ Ibid. 8.

those with moral injury the exposure is a dialogue about the transgression, but with an imagined compassionate and forgiving moral authority. This is an adaptation of the empty chair technique of Gestalt therapy wherein the patient is encouraged to hold a conversation with some imagined person of significance in the patient's life. Through this process, the therapist guides the patient in the exposure to corrective information about his war experience and affords the patient the opportunity to embrace the concept of forgiveness.⁶⁴

The first of the eight sessions of AD consists of the clinician providing education regarding what AD is, what will be required of the patient, and what the clinician will be doing. The clinician provides the patient with *The Meaning and Implication of Key Events Form*, gives instructions on how to fill it out and assigns the completion of the form as homework, which the patient will bring back for session two.⁶⁵ Sessions two through seven are the active treatment sessions, and they are the heart of AD. The clinician takes experiential strategies that provide a way to new meanings through corrective experience. Particular circumstances may manifest a variety of different emotions in different soldiers or veterans. Loss may result in Prolonged Grief Problems (PGP). In this case, the clinician's goal would be to help the patient through disclosures to reattach, form new attachments, and reengage in pleasurable activities. The procedure includes the clinician encouraging the patient to have a dialogue with the deceased, perhaps imagining the deceased in the room in an empty chair, and includes receiving feedback from the deceased. The clinician ends each session with homework.⁶⁶ The eighth and final session focuses on ending treatment and making plans for

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 181.

⁶⁶ Ibid. 98-108.

the future. The therapist spends time reviewing what positive change the patient made and how he can see his personal struggle in the larger context of family and community. The therapist promotes continued self-care, and appraises and normalize incomplete healing.⁶⁷

Moral injury involving perpetration (e.g. torture or sadistic killing, intentional or accidental killing of noncombatants) may result in self-loathing with feelings of disgust, shame, and guilt. The person may believe that he deserves unending punishment, and that his transgression has forever negated any good he ever did. “It is easy to imagine that the increasing suicide rate among combat veterans is related to this maladaptive way of coping with morally injurious events.”⁶⁸ Some veterans only feel the guilt after returning home as perhaps was the case with T. E. Lawrence, who explains,

Some of the evil of my tale may have been inherent in our circumstances. For years we lived anyhow with one another in the naked desert, under the indifferent heaven. By day the hot sun fermented us; and we were dizzied by the beating wind.... The everlasting battle stripped from us care of our own lives or of others'.... Gusts of cruelty, perversions, lusts ran lightly over the surface without troubling us; for the moral laws which had seemed to hedge about these silly accidents must be yet fainter words. We had learned that there were pangs too sharp, griefs too deep, ecstasies too high for our finite selves to register. When emotion reached this pitch the mind choked; and memory went white till the circumstances were humdrum once more.⁶⁹

Regardless of the accuracy of Lawrence’s observation, for therapeutic concerns, AD assumes that the nature of the transgression is irrelevant, because the fact that the person is experiencing guilt and shame points to a premorbid moral core and goodness. Staying stuck in guilt does nothing to rebalance the past, which may be impossible to set right. Making amends is a way

⁶⁷ Ibid. 140-2.

⁶⁸ Ibid. 117-8.

⁶⁹ T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (Blacksburg, VA: Wilder Publications, 2011), 11-2.

to set a boundary between then and now. In addition, the clinician may employ the empty chair, which allows the patient to tell the victim how the event affected him or her and what changes he or she has made.⁷⁰

1.4.2 Forgiveness And Reconnecting

The VA could draw from the many Christian Churches (Catholic, Orthodox, Anglican, and Lutheran) that provide for private confession of sin, with absolution given by the priest or pastor. The priest assigns an act of penance to the penitent. Here is where the penitent finds a restored life by true conversion. The Roman Catholic ritual, *The Rite of Penance*, makes a helpful observation when it says,

True conversion is completed by acts of penance or satisfaction for the sins committed, by amendment of conduct, and also by the reparation of injury.... Thus the penitent, “forgetting the things which are behind him” (Philippians 3:13), again becomes part of the mystery of salvation and turns himself toward the future.⁷¹

Betrayal-based moral injuries call for a dialog similar to those induced by a perpetrator.

However, the focus of this dialog is to report the violation of another, perhaps a leader, to an imagined caring and wise person who offers feedback. The feedback allows the person to hear how he or she can remain a positive person despite the terrible experience. As with the other types of moral injury, the therapist assigns homework that will encourage further reflection.⁷²

⁷⁰ Brett Litz *et al.*, 121-30.

⁷¹ *Rite of Penance* (New York: Catholic Book Publishing Company, 1975), 15.

⁷² Brett Litz *et al.*, 130-1.

Litz and his colleagues found that when one forgives an offending party it leads to a greater capacity for self-forgiveness.⁷³ This approach to forgiveness is reminiscent of how Jesus taught his disciples to pray: “and forgive us the wrong we have done as we forgive those who wrong us (Matt 6:12).”⁷⁴ This liberating statement acknowledges that the door of forgiveness swings both ways. As forgiveness flows *out*, it opens the door for forgiveness to flow *into* the life of the forgiver. The Greek word *aphesis*, is defined as release from captivity.⁷⁵ One might imagine two people chained together—when one releases the other, both are set free.

Both IOK and AD treatment plans attempt to break through the emotional numbing of shame, guilt, anxiety, and anger. They also address behavioral issues of *anomie*, withdrawal, self-harming behaviors, and self-handicapping behaviors. In both models, forgiveness work is important. In both treatment plans, if the therapist feels uncomfortable in the area of spiritual issues, the therapist may refer the patient to a clergy person or other spiritual leaders.

Paul Harig serves as the team leader for the PTSD Clinical Team at the VA Medical Center located in Lebanon, PA. He has worked with patients who carry moral wounds. He described how the treatment plans used by the VA help the patient move from reliving the events that caused their wounding to simply recalling the events. The treatment plans move the patient toward this goal through narrative in that if patients remain unable to tell their story

⁷³ Litz *et al*, 700.

⁷⁴ New American Bible, Revised Edition. Subsequent scripture quotations will use this translation and edition.

⁷⁵ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, 2nd ed., trans. William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 125.

then the risk of the story telling itself in a negative behavior escalates. When they retell their story, the therapist can help them contextualize their actions. Harig comments,

There is a difference between the jungle and a zoo. When a person hears a lion roaring in the jungle, they had better run, but there is no danger of a roaring lion in the zoo. War is a special kind of context.⁷⁶

Reconnecting to values and contributing to society have potential reciprocal restorative properties. The more patients are committed to a value system the more likely they will be inclined to be an active member of society. The more they contribute to society the more they will be committed to the values of that society. How is the American society responding to moral injury? Several responses have come from various communities.

⁷⁶ Paul Harig, phone conversation with author, Steelton, PA, United States, August 3, 2016.

1.5 The Community Responds To Moral Injury

When veterans return to our communities after war, we owe it to them and to ourselves to do our best to support their recovery. To do so, however, we must be willing to engage the same intense moral questions that veterans undertake about our own responsibility as a society for having sent them to war.

—Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini
Soul Repair, xvi

Three community efforts, Soul Repair, The Soldiers Heart, and The Roever Foundation, represent but a few of the many efforts across the country that reach out to help integrate veterans back into their communities and to live with a sense of wholeness and dignity. They highlight the need for social and community outreach to veterans that goes beyond the institutional help available through the VA. They all emphasize the spiritual aspect of moral wounding and offer spiritual approaches to healing.

1.5.1 The Soul Repair Center

In 2012, a small group of counselors established, *The Soul Repair Center*, located at Bright Divinity School, Fort Worth, TX. The center supports research regarding moral injury and provides resources and education for the public by organizing a network of specialized and regional programs that train congregations and seminaries on how they can welcome veterans into their communities and serve their spiritual needs. In addition, the center promotes welcoming veterans home through re-entry and reintegration processes that support long-term recovery and success throughout life, as well as non-polarizing, complex, and engaged conversations about the moral questions that govern the conduct of war and other forms of socially sanctioned violence.

In 2014, the center established a think tank of senior scholars in pastoral theology and pastoral counseling. The hope is that their research will become the basis for curriculum materials, new religious resources, and training programs. The center encourages the integration of Clinical Pastoral Education requirements, spiritual formation programs, continuing education programs, liturgical studies, and lay and chaplain training. Through an interdisciplinary approach, it is involved in further understanding the relationship of neuroscience to ritual studies, spiritual and moral formation, as well as theological meaning making. It creates interfaith resources, such as books, articles, and syllabi, for teaching about moral injury, with particular attention to the training of religious leaders.⁷⁷

Rita Nakashima Brock, Herman Keizer, and Gabriella Lettini, from the center, use the term soul repair. They believe that soul repair requires the reconstruction of a meaning system within the context of a caring, nonjudgmental community that can provide a way for veterans to learn to forgive themselves. They write,

We care, and we believe our whole society bears responsibility for addressing moral injury. Whether or not we supported the wars, they do not end when soldiers come home. Instead, they continue in the souls of those who fought and in their families and communities when they return to civilian life. That is why we believe one right response of moral conscience to military and veteran suicides is to study and address moral injury as a hidden wound of war.⁷⁸

⁷⁷ “Soul Repair Center,” Brite Divinity School, <https://www.brite.edu/programs/soul-repair/> (accessed July 26, 2016).

⁷⁸ Rita Nakashima Brock, Herman Keizer, and Gabriella Lettini, “Moral Injury: The Crucial Missing Piece in Understanding Soldier Suicides,” http://www.huffingtonpost.com/rita-nakashima-brock-ph-d/moral-injury-the-crucial-missing-piece-in-understanding-soldier-suicides_b_1686674.html (accessed July 26, 2016).

1.5.2 Soldiers Heart

Edward Tick and Kate Dahlstedt, like those at the Soul Repair Center, believe that society bears responsibility for those who carry hidden wounds of war. In 2006, they founded the *Soldier's Heart*. Their mission is to tend to invisible wounds of PTSD and moral injury resulting from war and military service.

Soldier's Heart believes that these "soul wounds" are sacred and, properly tended, can lead to wisdom and transformation. We offer genuine homecoming and a path for post-traumatic growth to troops, veterans, families, and communities. Our mission focuses on veterans and their families but transcends their wounding to include the entire society.⁷⁹

Soldier's Heart provides an approach to contending with the experience of soldiers that draws from many cultures, both past and present. They see the warrior as a foundational archetype built into the spiritual, psychological, cultural, historical, and social lives. They show modern warriors that PTSD and moral injury are normal and natural responses to the battle experience. They believe that these responses are not a pathology or a disease to be treated, but rather one part of a larger path that a warrior follows. They help soldiers follow that path of a warrior, and they view following that path as a sacred calling.

Soldier's Heart uses the model the Native Americans of the Western Plains learned from the buffalo. These Native Americans observed that the buffalo never gave up, but continued moving against threats and adversity. When danger threatened the herd, the cows would push the calves to the center, forming a protective ring around them. The bulls would form a protective ring around the cows, and the older bulls would move to make a protective ring around the younger bulls. These Native Americans saw this as the warrior model of protecting

⁷⁹ Edward Tick, "Soldier's Heart," <http://www.soldiersheart.net/> (accessed July 28, 2016).

the family and tribe. Soldier's Heart believes that after war these concentric circles should reversed with the community forming a protective circle around its warriors.⁸⁰

Soldier's Heart conducts three-day retreats where they bring veterans (male and female), family members, helping professionals, clergy, students and other interested community members together. There, in an environment of community they incorporate the components that are most essential to healing from the war experience. The retreats typically include an altar with military memorabilia, guided meditation, and a rope circle experience. In the circle experience, the group holds a rope. Those who went to war leave the circle but form an outer circle around those who remained home. Between the two circles are military members who stayed state side. The circle experience includes soldiers who went to war, civilians who stayed home and worried about their loved ones who went to war, and those who protested war. All are encouraged to share their story. Tick writes, "The important ingredient is the act of storytelling; storytelling in a sacred environment that invites our hearts to open and implies that we all have a piece of the larger ""story.""⁸¹

Over the days, they share more stories, each veteran telling his or her story of war. At the end, all participants share in a ceremony of forgiveness and each vows to carry the stories of the others. On their last morning together, the veterans take the Warriorhood Vows. After a memorial service and a blessing ceremony, the veterans in the group each vow one thing they are going to do as an act of restoration and restitution to counteract the destruction in which they participated.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

Soldier's Heart conducts Warrior Study and Reconciliation Journeys. They have journeyed to Vietnam, Greece, and various places in the United States. Their journeys to Vietnam included powerful experiences of healing, acceptance, and forgiveness. Edward Tick describes how the group met with *Nguyen Tam Ho*, also known as Mr. Tiger, a former *Viet Minh* and *Viet Cong*. Mr. Tiger, ninety-two years old at the time of the meeting, spent twenty-five years of his life fighting invaders, including the Japanese, French, and Americans. As the group talked on Mr. Tiger's porch, one American veteran expressed bewilderment. As a helicopter door gunner during the war, the man would shoot the livestock of poor farmers for sport. He was perplexed at the fact that while he was in Vietnam for only four months the war had wrecked his whole life; Mr. Tiger spent all those years at war and was able to sleep like a baby. Tick conveys Mr. Tiger's response to the group,

As far as I understand there is no PTSD for the veterans in Vietnam, no psychological wounds. This is because we were never invaders. We only fought to protect our families, homes, and country.' His hands spread to embrace our group. 'During the war I never thought of you as Americans,' he explained. 'I have always respected America.... I was only fighting invaders.'⁸²

Mr. Tiger's wisdom of resisting an adversary yet respecting them was for him a way to survive long years of war and maintain his psychological health and integrity.

Soldier's Heart offer specialized programs beyond the Reconciliation Journeys. Soldier's Heart offers special outreach and programs for female military who are victims of Military Sexual Trauma (MST), families, and adult children of veterans. They offer training retreats for those who work with soldiers and veterans. The goal of these training retreats is for the

⁸² Tick, *Warriors Return*, 70.

participants to learn the Soldier's Heart model of transformation of moving from veteran to spiritual warrior.⁸³

1.5.3 Operation Warrior RECONnect

Other individuals are trying to reach the veterans who carry the hidden wounds of war. One individual is able to reach these veterans primarily through his own story. In 1968, Dave Roever enlisted in the Navy. He served as a riverboat gunner in the elite Brown Water Black Beret in Vietnam. Eight months into his tour of duty in Vietnam, Roever received a terrible wound that, by all reasonable accounts, should have killed him. The wounding included a large burn area that left him beyond recognition when a phosphorous grenade he was poised to throw exploded in his hand, six inches from the right side of his face.⁸⁴ The ordeal left him hospitalized for fourteen months. He remains horribly disfigured and scared.

Roever relates, however, that his real wounding did not happen on the battlefield. He said it happened while he was a patient in the intensive care burn unit at Brook Army Medical Center in San Antonio, Texas. More specifically, he was in the section that treated patients the doctors did not expect to live. The wound he describes was the result of witnessing the wife of the patient beside him coming into the room, looking at her husband, and throwing her wedding ring at him. As she left the room, Roever heard her tell the man that he disgusted her. That man later died.

⁸³ Tick, "Soldier's Heart."

⁸⁴ The M34 White Phosphorous Grenade burns at 5,000 degrees Fahrenheit. Department of the Army, *Field Manual 3-23.30: Grenades and Pyrotechnic Signals* (Washington: Department of the Army, 2000), E-8.

When Roever witnessed the wife's reaction of recoil and revulsion, he began to devise a suicide plan because his own wife would soon arrive for her first visit. He could not bear the thought of his wife reacting in a similar way. However, his wife, Brenda, age nineteen at the time, arrived before he could follow through on his plan. To his surprise, when she saw him, she reached down, kissed him, and said, "I just want you to know that I love you Davie. Welcome home."⁸⁵ This was a turning point for him.

Today, Roever is an inspirational speaker, preacher, and author. He offers a message of hope, especially to the active duty military community. Through his Roever Foundation, he provides medical and educational equipment as well as other materials to Vietnam and other counties. His Operation Warrior RECONnect is dedicated to rebuilding self-esteem, confidence, financial freedom, and family relationships in the wounded by providing a one-week program that includes mentoring, educational opportunities and tools for overcoming physical injury and posttraumatic stress. He runs additional retreats for the wounded at his Eagle Summit Ranches in Texas and Colorado.⁸⁶ The Roever Foundation conducts all of its programs from a Christian perspective. They center on a message of hope and forgiveness. Dave believes that recovery from war injuries, not just moral injury, is a spiritual journey. Unique to the foundation's work is the Military School of Ministry. This school provides spiritual discipleship and training in preparation for ministry for military personnel, their families, and veterans. This school is an extension of Colorado State University and South

⁸⁵ Dave Roever, phone conversation with author, Steelton, PA, United States, June 9, 2016.

⁸⁶ Dave Roever, "Restoring the Wounded," <http://roeverfoundation.org/index.php> (accessed July 31, 2016).

Western Seminary.⁸⁷ This educational effort produces ministers equipped to provide compassionate ministry to those living with war wounds on their souls.

These three community efforts, Soldier's Heart, Soul Repair Center, and The Roever Foundation, reach places unreachable by the VA and the techniques they employ. As valuable those techniques are, they have their limitations. Ultimately Warran Kinghorn sees the issue of moral injury as containing dimensions that psychology by its own standards is not prepared to address. He writes,

Psychological theories of moral injury such as that of Litz and colleagues can be insightful and clinically useful, but on their own terms they cannot treat moral injury as anything other than an immanent, psychological phenomenon involving not a fragmentation of a teleological whole but transgression of a soldier's own internalized rules and assumptions. Because their empirical suppositions do not allow them to pass moral judgment on these rules and assumptions or to speak directly about teleology, they are unable to distinguish between meaningful and nonmeaningful moral suffering, so reduction of self-described suffering, measured empirically, becomes the primary goal of the clinical encounter.⁸⁸

If the limit of psychology is to ever search for a technique that has a better evidential bases to indicate a reduction in suffering, then it will miss the meaning of moral suffering. The three community programs outlined above address the issue of suffering with an awareness of a moral teleological whole. Chapter three will address the meaning of suffering.

Beyond these efforts is the deeper moral issue of larger societal engagement between civilian citizens and the military. One of the dangers of an all-volunteer military is the development of a gap between those who serve and the society they serve. Andrew Bacevich makes this point writing,

⁸⁷ Dave Roever, phone conversation with author, Steelton, PA, United States, June 9, 2016.

⁸⁸ Warren Kinghorn, "Combat Trauma and Moral Fragmentation: A Theological Account of Moral Injury," *Journal of the Society Of Christian Ethics* 32, no. 2 (2012): 67.

When the state does go to war, however, so, too, should the nation. Since the end of the Cold War, the prevailing practice in the United States has been otherwise, reflecting expectations that a superpower should be able to wage distant campaigns while life on the home front proceeds unaffected. During the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq—the longest in U.S. history—the vast majority of Americans heeded Bush’s post-9/11 urging to “enjoy life, the way we want it to be enjoyed.” The we-shop-while-they-fight contract implicit in this arrangement has undermined U.S. military effectiveness and underwritten political irresponsibility. The next administration will inherit a deeply flawed civil-military relationship that dates back to the Vietnam War. Nearly half a century ago, disenchantment with that conflict led Americans to abandon the citizen-soldier tradition that until then had formed the foundation of the U.S. military system. By rescinding their prior acceptance of conscription, the American people effectively opted out of war, which became the exclusive purview of regulars—the “standing army” that the founders had warned of.⁸⁹

These “regulars” Bacevich refers to volunteered donned the cloth of their nation, and those who suffered physical, psychological, or spiritual wounds for doing so need above all the understanding and acceptance of their nation.

To understand the nature of spiritual wounding incurred in moral injury one has to understand how personality develops and how events or processes distort it. These understandings open the possibility of further understanding how healing may occur. The next chapter will investigate these issues.

⁸⁹ Andrew J. Bacevich, “Ending Endless War: A Pragmatic Military Strategy,” *Foreign Affairs* 95, no. 5 (2016): 40.

CHAPTER 2: THE STORY OF SELF

For it is thou, O Lord, who judgest me. For although no man “knows the things of a man, save the spirit of the man which is in him,” yet there is something of man which “the spirit of the man which is in him” does not know itself. But thou, O Lord, who madest him, knowest him completely.

—St. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, 163

In his Gospel, John records the story of a man who was born blind and healed by Jesus (John 9).⁹⁰ The way the man, with newfound vision, sees Jesus indicates he had an evolving spiritual depth perception. He first refers to Jesus as a man, later as a prophet, and finally as Lord. This miracle also gave the man’s community a chance to change their perception of the man born blind. They had the opportunity to see with fresh vision, through the formally blind man, but they chose to close their eyes to the possibilities to which this event pointed. Not least of all the man could now physically see himself for the first time, and inwardly, much as St. Augustine in the epigram above, he could reflect on himself in a new way. This event changed his life story and gave him a new identity. Moral injury alters the way veterans see themselves and often the way family and friends see them too. In the story of moral injury, as in the story of the man born blind, there are opportunities for the injured to see with spiritual eyes that perceives the story of self in a new way that can lead to healing.

Dan McAdams’ life story model, discussed in chapter one, views identity as taking the form of a story and includes themes, plots, characters, and scenes. He writes, “Life stories are psychosocial constructions, coauthored by the person himself or herself and the cultural context within which that person's life is embedded and given meaning.”⁹¹ This model is

⁹⁰ Ancients believed that blindness, and other maladies, was the result of sin. The only question here was whose sin caused the blindness: the man or his parents.

⁹¹ McAdams, 101.

informative for the development of the major themes of this chapter. This chapter addresses moral injury from the perspective of identity. It will discuss how identity develops with its psychological and moral aspects, approach identity from an existential prospective employing Paul Tillich and his ontological model, and how moral injury distorts identity especial noting the effects of training to kill and killing. The last section on identity distortion will utilize illustrations from the history of killing in combat as well as popular stories from the cinema.

2:1 Identity Development

Character and conscience are integral parts of a person's identity and are formed at an early age.⁹² A well-formed conscience requires training, development, and information.⁹³ If successful, this process of developing and educating one's conscience can lead to the cultivation of virtue and a happy (i.e. flourishing) life.⁹⁴ Religion is an ideological source

⁹² Long before modern theories of personality development, Plato recognized that both identity and character are formed at an early age. He wrote, "You know also that the beginning is the most important part of any work, especially in the case of a young and tender thing; for that is the time at which the character is being formed and the desired impression is more readily taken." See, Plato, *Plato's Republic*, trans. B Jowett (New York: Modern Library, 1982), 72.

⁹³ *The Catechism Of The Catholic Church* states, "The education of the conscience is a lifelong task. From the earliest years, it awakens the child to the knowledge and practice of the interior law recognized by conscience. Prudent education teaches virtue; it prevents or cures fear, selfishness and pride, resentment arising from guilt, and feelings of complacency, born of human weakness and faults. The education of the conscience guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart." (CCC, 1784) This lifelong task of developing conscience encounters some unique undertakings during the critical period of adolescence. See, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 2nd ed., (United States Catholic Conference) (Vatican City: Libreria Editrice Vaticana, 2000), 440.

⁹⁴ Peter Kreeft comments, "St. Thomas does not commit what G. E. Moore calls "the naturalistic fallacy" of deducing "ought" conclusions from "is" premises only. Rather, he holds that we naturally know self-evident first principles in both the theoretical ("is") and practical ("ought") orders, and we use these to judge conclusions in both orders. "Synderesis" is the habit of both (1) knowing first practical principles and of (2) inciting to good and "murmuring" against evil. It is the *habit* that corresponds to "conscience" as the *act*. The modern meaning of "conscience", when full, embraces both. (When empty, it means blind feeling.)" See Kreeft's editorial footnote in, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa of the Summa*, ed. Peter Kreeft (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 282.

relevant to identity development. Religious traditions provide values and beliefs embedded within social relations that encourage a sense of purpose and belonging.⁹⁵ Paul Lichterman, using a sample of urban public high school students, found that youth endorsing self-descriptors indicating a religious identity are more likely to report that they hold a meaning framework that provides direction and fulfillment in life and they are more likely to endorse prosocial concerns.⁹⁶ These meaning frameworks are positive influences on the development of a healthy identity and understanding of the dignity of being human.

Ultimately, what is the human spiritual identity? Together, the theology of Creation, Incarnation, and Trinity present a positive view of human identity that emphasizes the goodness and dignity of the human being. First, the question approached from the account of creation reveals human dignity. Genesis records these words, “God created man in his image: in the divine image he created him; male and female he created them (Gen 1:27).” According to this account, humanity is the living image of God and is fundamentally good. Second, the question approached from the Incarnation indicates a continuation of the purpose of the creation of humanity. Saint Athanasius observed,

For as when a figure painted on wood has been soiled by dirt from outside, it is necessary for him whose figure it is to come again, so that the image can be renewed on the same material – because of his portrait even the material on which it is painted is not cast aside, but the portrait is reinscribed on it.⁹⁷

⁹⁵ Participant-observation research shows how people also use religion to define the boundaries of group identities and relationships, especially in regards to civic issues. The religious identity may lead some to decide who does not belong to their group, even when they both agree on civic issues. See Paul Lichterman, “Religion and the Construction of Civic Identity,” *American Sociological Review* 73, no. 1 (2008): 83-104.

⁹⁶ James L Furrow, Pamela King, and Krystal White, “Religion and Positive Youth Development: Identity, Meaning, and Prosocial Concerns,” *Applied Developmental Science* 8, no. 1 (2004): 17-26.

⁹⁷ Athanasius, *On the Incarnation*, trans. John Behr Popular Patristics Series (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2011), 79.

Thus, the Incarnation opens the possibility of a restored identity. Third, the question seen through the lens of Trinitarian love indicates a deep relationship. The foundational relationship, found in the Trinity, is love. Elizabeth Johnson's view of this love is as, "dynamic Love encompassing the universe who acts to save."⁹⁸ The theology of Creation, Incarnation, and Trinity draws from Revelation truths about human identity, but contemporary personality theories have also made significant contributions of how to understand identity.

2.1.1 Personality

The term personality comes from the Latin *persona*, which originally referred to the mask worn by actors in Greek dramas. Later the term came to refer to the role the actor played. Tertullian coined the term Trinity and used the word person to describe it, thus changing the meaning of person from mask to an individual's true inner self.⁹⁹ Today the term, in psychology, refers to something enduring and essential to a person. While many psychological theories attempt to account for personality development, Erik Erikson left an enduring model.

Erikson's principle work was the development of a model that is commonly referred to as the eight stages of man. Each of these stages evolve by the governance of the epigenetic principle of maturation where there is in the individual a readiness to interact with an expanding social radius and a society that encourages the proper sequence and rate of the

⁹⁸ Elizabeth Johnson, *Quest for the Living God: Mapping Frontiers in the Theology of God* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 203.

⁹⁹ James Hitchcock, *History of the Catholic Church: From the Apostolic Age to the Third Millennium* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2012), 82.

process.¹⁰⁰ Erikson's fifth stage, adolescence, focuses on ego identity versus role confusion as its task. During this stage, it is necessary to consolidate the knowledge of self.

As mentioned above, for Erickson, adolescence is important in the development of ego identity over role confusion. Kate McLean, in a more recent study, looked at the importance of autobiographical memories of late adolescence. She looked at how narrative construction of identity as a life story operates using the autobiographical memories functions as a social component of identity development. Her findings indicate that in sharing autobiographical memories, *late adolescents* tend to use peers as their audience and *early adolescents* are more likely to use their parents.¹⁰¹ Not surprisingly, these are potentially dramatic influences on a young life story. McLean's findings fit well with McAdams' psychology of life stories. For McAdams the emerging adult begins to do the work of integration, and weave together a culturally meaningful story. This work requires cognitive tools that are unavailable until adolescence.¹⁰² Worth noting is that it is during late adolescence when teenagers are eligible to enlist in the military and males are required to register for the draft. The military places recruits into units where they receive training, not as an individual but as a part of a unit. Peer pressure is high in these units where no one wants to let their unit (peers) down. When the nation sends young soldiers to fight a war, they are sent as part of a unit where peer pressure is intensified. One can speculate that the late adolescent soldier who encounters a moral injury

¹⁰⁰ Larry A. Hjelle and Daniel J. Ziegler, *Personality Theories: Basic Assumptions, Research, and Applications* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1976), 63.

¹⁰¹ Kate C. McLean, "Late Adolescent Identity Development: Narrative Meaning Making and Memory Telling," *Developmental Psychology* 41, no. 4 (2005): 683-91.

¹⁰² McAdams, 103.

event in the context of war can find repair through peers more so than experts. This is an area that researchers need to investigate: the relationship between age, peers, and moral injury.

An important integration process of adolescents is moral development. Erikson writes,

The adolescent mind is essentially a mind of the moratorium, a psychosocial stage between childhood and adulthood, and between the morality learned by the child, and the ethics to be developed by the adult.... It is the ideological outlook of a society that speaks most clearly to the adolescent who is eager to be affirmed by his peers, and is ready to be confirmed by rituals, creeds, and programs which at the same time define what is evil, uncanny, and inimical.¹⁰³

Interestingly, Military Basic Training is intended to provide a young man or woman with all of the developmental assets listed above. The soldier finds comradery and affirmation with peers who live like he or she lives, have similar goals, and wears the exact same clothes. The soldier and her or his peers participate in many rituals including standing in formation and saluting the flag during Revelry in the morning and Retreat in the late afternoon. The soldier memorizes and recites *The Soldier's Creed* and learns a code through briefings on the *Uniform Code of Military Justice*. These are powerful influences on a young soldier's moral development and the ability to make moral judgments.

¹⁰³ Erick Erickson found in Donald Capps, *The Decades of Life: A Guide to Human Development* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2008), 87.

2.1.2 Moral Judgment

Intention is an important aspect of moral injury as seen in chapter one with Larry Dewey's patient Dave's blood-stained sword which he used to kill two of his guards. In telling his story he acknowledged that he intentionally killed the guards but that he had no right to kill them. Unlike Dave, Sergeant Mejia's recounts in his story how he shot his weapon with the intention of stopping a man from throwing a grenade, but he also recalls that the moment he squeezed the trigger he was thinking the man was too far away to do any damage to the soldiers. Chapter four will discuss the issue of intention in the lives and actions of four Marines and the moral injuries they suffered. Beyond intention the environment and condition of an individual affects moral judgement.

While sitting at a desk as a subject contemplates a moral dilemma and the best answer to resolve it may provide accurate data on moral decision making, what if the subject were placed in an uncomfortable environment that simulates a combat theater, would the researchers find different results? One common combat condition is sleep deprivation.¹⁰⁴ Olav Kjellekvold Olsen and his colleagues used seventy-one Norwegian army and naval officers to find what effects sleep deprivation has on moral decision making. In a combination of classroom and field exercises they found that in comparison to a rested state the officers' ability to conduct mature and principally oriented moral reasoning was severely impaired. They also found that their subjects became more rules-oriented in the sleep deprived condition.¹⁰⁵ It is interesting that these officers became more reliant on rules to make a moral decision in a sleep deprived

¹⁰⁴ On one training rotation to the National Training Center in 1992, the author went more than two days without sleep and after just a few hours of sleep went more than twenty-four hours before sleeping again.

¹⁰⁵ Olav Kjellekvold Olsen, Ståle Pallesen, and Jarle Eid, "The Impact Of Partial Sleep Deprivation On Moral Reasoning In Military Officers," *Sleep* 33, no. 8 (2010): 1086-90.

state. In a combat environment, the military insists that leaders and soldiers know and implement the Rules of Engagement (ROE). These rules address who may be considered combatants, who the soldier may engage, and what level of lethality the soldier may employ.

Sleep deprivation may or may not have been a factor in the cases above of Dave from a prisoner of war camp of World War II and Sergeant Mejia on a rooftop in Iraq. But the chronic harsh conditions of a prisoner of war camp, including malnutrition, would be a factor in Dave's ability to make moral judgements. Likewise, Mejia's experience of an escalating situation turning into a crowd set to use deadly violence on him and his fellow soldiers would put him in a position where his body would naturally secrete adrenaline and cortisol which would override the hesitation ponder the morality of what he was about to do. His situation required him to fire on the grenade throwing Iraqi regardless of distance, but his inner defenses erased all images of the moment of the killing.¹⁰⁶

Moral injury arises from an act, event or situation that caused a violation of an individual's conscience or deeply held belief. From this kind of violation veterans' experience existential anxiety that challenges their identity. The issues of existential anxieties coupled with the justifications behind making moral choices in a harsh environment such as war, provides a provocative position to view meaning from the margins of conscience where terror meets moral choice in the environment described by Dubik, the environment where the morally abhorrent and the morally necessity intersect. This assumes a moral universe where the gap between good and evil (morally abhorrent and moral necessity) is not always clear, for the fog

¹⁰⁶ These hormones suppress hippocampal (higher brain activity such as reasoning) function of the human brain while leaving the amygdala (survival part of the brain) unaffected. This would explain how Mejia could report that his brain erased the scene of the killing. See, Babette Rothschild, *The Body Remembers* (New York: Norton, 2000), 21.

of war is not in the imagination, and a reality where both agents and actions matter. The “I” matters and the actions of the “I” matters, and when the “I” is aware of this, it can give rise to existential anxiety when a moral decision violates the decision maker’s conscience.

2.2 Existentialism And Tillich

This section discusses existential anxiety and Tillich’s ontological model. Existentialism exerted an influence in Europe after World War II in novels, essays, and plays. Existentialism with its general emphasis on freedom, choice, paradox, and a subjective approach to truth examined the human experience of anxiety, guilt, and despair in a way that opened up new possibilities. Theology took note of these developments and possibilities to which it pointed. Existentialism provided the framework for Paul Tillich to develop his ontological work.¹⁰⁷ Tillich's theology is rooted in the foundational symbols of God as ‘Ground of Being’ and God as ‘Depth of Reason’. He uses the symbol of ‘ground’, which dates at least back to medieval mysticism, to express that every existent participates in the being of God where the divine and the human life share a point of intersection. While it is an awareness of the divine, it is an awareness of the divine from whom it is estranged yet never cut off in existence. John Dourley observes, “The experience of such existential estrangement itself feeds the drive to recover that from which the individual is estranged, namely, one's essential truth, which for Tillich is

¹⁰⁷ Tillich’s exposition on symbols is useful for anyone who wishes to understand what religious and other symbols are, how they function, and what they are not. He was influential in making psychoanalysis a vital part of theological education. See Curtis W. Hart, “Paul Tillich and Psychoanalysis,” *Journal of Religion and Health* 50, no. 3 (2011): 646-55.

eternally expressed in the Trinitarian current of divine life.”¹⁰⁸ The drive to recover one’s essential self is humanity’s ultimate concern. This experience of essential self through the divinely grounded always remains ambiguous in existence. Tillich conceives of a teleology of the ‘essential self’ that is never completed in existence.¹⁰⁹ One may make the connection between this deep sense of existential estrangement from an individual’s essential truth and moral injury. Beyond fear veterans with moral injury experience anxiety about who they are or what they have become.

2.2.1 Ontological Anxiety

Tillich drew a distinction between anxiety and fear. The determinate element of anxiety was the fear of death. He believed under every fear was the anxiety of the inability to preserve one’s own being. To him this kind of deep anxiety is a basic human element that is resistant to courage. He writes,

This situation drives the anxious subject to establish objects of fear. Anxiety strives to become fear, because courage can help harness fear. It is impossible for a finite being to stand naked anxiety for more than a flash of time [...] The human mind is not only, as Calvin has said, a permanent factory of idols, it is also a permanent factory of fears – the first in order to escape God, the second in order to escape anxiety; and there is a relation between the two.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ John Dourley, “Conspiracies of Immanence: Paul Tillich, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and C.g. Jung,” *Journal of Analytical Psychology* 60, no. 1 (2015): 79.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), 39.

In his discussion on types of anxieties and human nature, Tillich began by observing, “Nonbeing is dependent on the being it negates [....] There could be no negation if there were no preceding affirmation to be negated.”¹¹¹ Tillich then went on to identify three specific anxieties that corresponded to three ways in which non-being threatened being. He saw these anxieties as resulting from non-being’s threat to ontic self-affirmation, spiritual self-affirmation, and moral self-affirmation.¹¹²

Daniel Sullivan and his coauthors provide an interpretation of Tillich’s three types of self-affirmation. They describe ontic self-affirmation as a reference to biological existence and spiritual self-affirmation as a description of cultural affirmation. Finally, they see moral self-affirmation as a description of a comprehensive personal value affirmation that leads to a legacy.¹¹³ These descriptive interpretations may prove helpful not only in formulating categories but in discovering their interrelatedness and interdependencies. Anxieties about physical existence may carry cultural and value oriented implications affecting the meaning of a legacy.

Tillich saw the types of anxiety as possessing both a temporary and ultimate aspect. He identified the anxiety of fate as a temporary threat to ontic self-affirmation and the anxiety of death as an ultimate threat to ontic self-affirmation. The anxiety of emptiness stood as a temporary threat to spiritual affirmation, and the anxiety of meaninglessness as its ultimate threat. The anxiety of guilt became a temporary threat to moral self-affirmation, and

¹¹¹ Ibid, 40.

¹¹² Ibid, 41.

¹¹³ Daniel Sullivan, Aaron C. Kay, and Mark J. Landau. “Toward a Comprehensive Understanding of Existential Threat: Insights from Paul Tillich.” *Social Cognition* 30, no. 6 (2012): 741.

the anxiety of condemnation as its ultimate threat.¹¹⁴ This view of existential anxiety provides a perspective on moral injury.

2.2.2 Moral Injury And Existential Anxiety

Moral injury is both a temporary and ultimate challenge to ontic self-affirmation, spiritual self-affirmation, and moral self-affirmation. One can hear both the temporary (fate) and ultimate (death) anxiety threatening ontic self-affirmation in the words of Sergeant Camilo Mejia,

I had also followed a lawful order, and I had not opened fire until I was convinced that he was indeed going to throw a grenade [...] The problem was that as I observed that young man through the sight of my rifle, when he was still alive, there was something inside me, a voice one could say, that was telling me not to squeeze the trigger. And I knew, without a shred of doubt, that I should not disobey that voice, and that if I did, there would be serious consequences to face.¹¹⁵

Following lawful orders had put him in a position of having to take a life (fate), and violating his inner voice telling him not to take the life, and it carried serious consequences for the person he shot (death) and himself (facing the ultimate threat to his ontic self-affirmation). That day he knew something had forever changed inside him.

One can find the temporary (emptiness) and ultimate (meaninglessness) anxiety threatening spiritual self-affirmation in the deep spiritual splitting or disintegration of those returning from war as described by Karl Marlantes,

Killing someone without splitting oneself from the feelings that the act engenders requires an effort of supreme consciousness, that quite frankly, is beyond most humans. Killing is what warriors do for society. Yet when they come home, society doesn't generally acknowledge that the act it asked them to do created a deep split in their psyches, or a

¹¹⁴ Paul Tillich, *The Courage to Be*, 41.

¹¹⁵ Mejia, 26.

psychological and spiritual weight most of them will stumble beneath the rest of their lives. Warriors must learn how to integrate the experience of killing, to put the pieces of their psyches back together again. For the most part, they have been left to do this on their own.¹¹⁶

Part of the spiritual weight he refers to is the emptiness and meaningless one experiences and one must resolve after taking the life of another human being. Chapter four will illustrate this sense of meaninglessness in the life of a young Marine, Kenny Toone.

Dave from chapter one expresses both the temporary (guilt) and ultimate (condemnation) threat to moral self-affirmation, saying,

Both men's blood are on this sword. I never got it off. I never tried. Their blood is on me too, and I don't know how I can face God. They deserved everything I did to them, but even though the cease-fire hadn't been signed the war was really over, and I had no right to do it. God forgive me I pray, but I don't see how He can.¹¹⁷

For decades Dave carried the guilt and sense of facing a God who would not forgive him but condemn him for killing two Japanese guards. His deep existential anxiety threatened his ability to maintain any sense of moral self-affirmation. Like the physician who has the intellectual capacity to know she has a potentially fatal disease, yet lacks the strength to cure herself, Camilo, Karl, and Dave knew their wounds threatened all the domains of self and their inability to heal themselves. Tillich did offer an answer to existential anxiety: courage.

¹¹⁶ Marlantes, 26.

¹¹⁷ Dewey, 88.

2.2.3 Courage And Anxiety

Tillich believed courage is the answer to existential anxiety. For him despair is being without hope. Here his encouragement is to face despair with courage. Shumaker observed, “To feel, one had to be [...] The experience of negative emotions such as anxiety, guilt, and despair was seen as a necessary and beautiful part of the human existence.”¹¹⁸ This approach is fundamentally in opposition to the assumptions of CBT. Rather than viewing inaccurate schemas as a root cause that provides the cognitive structure leading to maladaptive beliefs, Tillich’s courage calls for an acceptance of despair and the experience of negative emotions as an essential part of existence. From this stance, the courage to embrace the possibility of choices and the responsibilities that accompany them along with living intentionally and creatively is the highest level of being through self-affirmation.¹¹⁹ Courage is a function of vitality. Tillich lamented the intellectualization of the spiritual life that led to the replacement of the vocabulary of spirit by the vocabulary of mind. He also saw a vital holistic unity of body and spirit and from that, he came full circle in the Greek concept of *arête* (excellence or virtue). He combined his concepts of being, meaning, strength, and value to form a spiritual vitality of virtue.¹²⁰

How does this virtue of courage apply to moral injury? For Camilo Mejia, Karl Marlantes, and Dave it would allow them to acknowledge what they did in combat and the temporary and ultimate existential anxiety that followed. This courage would have them face their

¹¹⁸ David Shumaker, “An Existential–Integrative Treatment of Anxious and Depressed Adolescents.” *Journal of Humanistic Psychology* 52, no. 4 (2012): 381.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

¹²⁰ Tillich, *Courage*, 82-3.

estrangement from their essential truth and move toward recovery. They discover that this drive to recover their essential self is itself humanity's ultimate concern and that it is continuous process that is never fully completed.

Existentialism is a lens through which one may understand identity and how anxiety affects identity. In addition to understanding how existential anxiety affects an individual's identity, there is also a way to approach the existential anxiety of moral injury through culture and community. As Tillich viewed the recovery of the essential self as ultimately expressed in the Trinitarian (community) current of divine life so too the veteran's involvement in a wider community becomes essential for her or his recovery.

2.2.4 Existential Perspective, Identity And Community

Returning veterans often experience a cultural shift, and this exacerbates the existential anxiety associated with moral injury. The military has a unique culture, and in war soldiers learn to trust and rely on each other, their lives depend on it. The civilian culture they return to is not like the tribe they left (platoon, company, or battalion). Contemporary American society can be hard on the human psyche with its increasing structural, economic, and political divisions. Sebastian Junger sees this danger as it relates to soldiers returning from war, claiming,

And we keep focusing on trauma, PTSD. But for a lot of these people, maybe it's not trauma. I mean, certainly, soldiers are traumatized and the ones who are have to be treated for that. But a lot of them -- maybe what's bothering them is actually a kind of alienation. I mean, maybe we just have the wrong word for some of it, and just changing our language, our understanding, would help a little bit. "Post-deployment alienation disorder." Maybe even just calling it that for some of these people would allow them to stop imagining -- trying to imagine a trauma that didn't really happen in order to explain a

feeling that really is happening. And in fact, it's an extremely dangerous feeling. That alienation and depression can lead to suicide. These people are in danger. It's very important to understand why.¹²¹

Junger's observation calls for new thinking with new categories and relooking the importance of community for returning veterans. The three community efforts, Soldier's Heart, Soul Repair Center, and The Roever Foundation discussed in chapter one all form communities of veterans seeking healing of moral injury. Here the veteran finds a place among peers, and as the developmental theory based on Erikson's work indicates the late adolescent finds identity among his or her peers. These communities are a place where distorted identities are restored through the existential work of subjective story telling. The following discussion will examine how moral wounding distorts identity in the context of existential anxiety and culture. These distortions not only have a negative effect on the individual, they also have a negative effect on those individual's families, and at times, their communities.

2.3 Identity Distortion Through Moral Injury

At that he began cursing, and swore, "I do not even know the man!" Just then a cock began to crow and Peter remembered the prediction Jesus had made: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." He went out and began to weep bitterly (Mat 26:74, 75).

Moral injury viewed theologically as any wounding of the conscience or self that mars or distorts the self-image, which is the image made in the likeness of God, is ontological. Ultimately, one may view it as a wound that betrays the true self-identity. Peter was a morally

¹²¹ Sebastian Junger, "Our Lonely Society Makes It Hard to Come Home from War," TEDx, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o9DNWK6WfQw> (accessed August 23, 2016).

wounded person in his denial of Christ (John 18), and his restored identity, or moral healing, may be seen in Jesus' question to Peter about his love and Jesus' command to feed his sheep (John 21). Chapter four will further examine Peter's story, and chapter five will utilize his story in a healing model that in part restores distorted identities. War extends many possible ways for soldiers to betray her or his self-identity.

In a military context, the issues of betrayal and moral injury go beyond the cognitive realm of intellectualizing and justifying actions taken on the battlefield. It even goes beyond the emotional sensing and feeling. It goes to the ontological depth of intuition about the fundamental truth of self, being, and the relationship between self, others, and community. To address moral injury adequately requires more than a psycho-bio-social approach as represented in the current modalities of treatment. In addition to the psycho-bio-social accounting, a comprehensive approach would address philosophical and theological concerns, and it would consult the wealth of material regarding the wounding and restoring of the soul mediated through the great stories as well as the veterans' own narratives. For some veterans their narrative involves the taking of life.

2.3.1 On Killing

While killing is not the only action taken on the battlefield that may result in moral injury, it is the most dramatic, and it provides a context to examine issues of identity. Regardless of any military ethic or *jus bellum iustum*, taking the life of another human being, or even being prepared to take a life, fundamentally affects self-perception and changes one's sense of identity. The idea that even the universe has turned its back to oneself can become pervasive.

Homer captured the sense of this in the words Aeolus spoke to Odysseus:

Get thee forth from the island straightway, thou that art the most reprobate of living men. Far be it from me to help or to further that man whom the blessed gods abhor! Get thee forth, for lo, thy coming marks thee hated by the deathless gods.¹²²

Similarly, in the biblical account, Cain having shed his brother Abel's blood became a fugitive who wandered the earth, and even the earth that received Abel's blood refused to yield its strength to Cain (Gen 4).

At times soldiers have received orders to kill their fellow soldiers. Little known today, in the American Civil War some soldiers served as what the military referred to as "file closers." At that time, army units deployed in file formation. The file closers walked behind the formation and were responsible to ensure the lines were tight and straight. On February 22, 1865, during the siege of Petersburg, Robert E. Lee issued *General Orders No. 4*. In that order, he required the file closers to cut down or shoot deserters or those who refused to move forward and fight.¹²³ The Civil War was not just brother fighting brother as in the Union and

¹²² Homer, *The Odyssey of Homer*, ed. Charles W. Eliot, trans. S. H. Butcher and A. Lang The Harvard Classics (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Corporation, 1937), 132.

¹²³ Webb Garrison, *Unknown Civil War* (Nashville: Cumberland House, 2000), 194-6.

Confederacy, at times it was soldiers facing the intersection of the morally abhorrent and the morally required, shooting down their fellow soldier.

Dave Grossman points to how profound the resistance is to take the life of another human being. Noting that it is rare for any species to kill its own kind, he goes on to do a statistical analysis of the kill rates of Civil War battles concluding that the actual killing was far under what the firing capabilities would predict. He surmises that many soldiers aimed high, firing over the heads of their enemy. Others simply did not fire at all. At the battle of Gettysburg, historians recovered 27,574 muskets. Almost ninety percent were still loaded with 12,000 of them loaded with multiple rounds. In other words, the soldier did not fire but went through the drill of reloading repeatedly.¹²⁴

These findings were consistent with later findings during World War II that disproved the assumption that the average soldier would kill in combat because his leaders and his country told him to kill. Grossman points to the findings of a U. S. Army historian in the Pacific theater writing,

Army Brigadier General S. L. A. Marshall asked these average soldiers what it was that they did in battle. His singularly unexpected discovery was that, of every hundred men along the line of fire during the period of an encounter, an average of only 15 to 20 “would take any part with their weapons.” This was consistently true “whether the action was spread over a day, or two days or three.”¹²⁵

Marshall also conducted a study in Korea and found the firing rate of that action to be fifty-five percent. Later Michael Scott conducted a similar study in Vietnam and found the firing rate to

¹²⁴ Dave Grossman, *On Killing: The Psychological Cost of Learning to Kill in War and Society* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1996), 5-22.

¹²⁵ Ibid, 3.

had risen to over ninety percent.¹²⁶ Grossman accounts for this dramatic increase in firing rates through a review of training methods. These methods came of age in the Vietnam era and are dependent on classical and operant conditioning that utilize desensitization, conditioning, and denial defense mechanisms.

2.3.2 Trained Killers

The chants, commonly referred to as Jody calls, which recruits sing out during physical training, are not just hyperbole.¹²⁷ They speak of the joys of killing and serve as a means to desensitize a recruit to the idea of taking a life. Grossman observes, “Authors such as Dyer and Holmes have traced the development of this boot-camp deification of killing as having been almost unheard of in World War I, rare in World War II, increasingly present in Korea, and thoroughly institutionalized in Vietnam.”¹²⁸ Another layer of desensitization ensues by never referring to the enemy in human terms rather employing dehumanized derogative terms.¹²⁹ Added to the desensitization is conditioning. Rifle training during World War II had the recruit lie prone and leisurely shoot at a static, round shaped bull’s-eye target. The

¹²⁶ Ibid, 35.

¹²⁷ Jody is a mythical character that steals a recruit’s girlfriend or wife while he is away at basic training. This author was present at a bayonet training session in 1988 at Ft. Leonard Wood when a drill sergeant had the trainees close their eyes and imagine they were back home walking to the backdoor of their girlfriend’s house. He went on to describe the noises coming from the bedroom where mentally they discovered Jody. He then yelled for the trainees to open their eyes, and he screamed, “Kill – Kill – Kill,” as the trainees plunged their bayonets into life like training models. This is an example of desensitizing a recruit to killing while playing on one of his darker fears.

¹²⁸ Grossman, 252.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

Vietnam era recruit as well as today's recruit stands in a fox hole with full gear on and engages forty separate human shaped targets that pop up at different distances for only a few seconds, requiring the shooter to take immediate action without thought. When the shooter successfully engages a target, she or he receives immediate feedback as the target falls backward to the ground in imitation of a person falling after taking a hit.¹³⁰

Grossman refers to the unconscious defense mechanisms that help soldiers cope with the violent act of killing. The rehearsal of repeatedly shooting a life-like silhouetted target allows soldiers to tell themselves, at some level, that they did not take a life; they only took down another target. Taking a life is a traumatic experience made more acceptable by the denial obtained through this type of defense mechanism.¹³¹ Beyond training that conditions the mind to shoot and kill without hesitation, the age of the average military recruit raises some developmental issues.

Assuming Erickson's model accurately reflects when the issue of identity arises, then, it would generally coincide with age of a young military recruit in her late adolescence or very early adulthood. Here the overwhelming effects of desensitization, conditioning, and denial defense mechanisms can change the heart or identity of a young person. What also influences young people is what they see others doing, which could have negative consequences.¹³²

¹³⁰ Ibid, 253.

¹³¹ Ibid, 255.

¹³² Researchers found significant evidence that mass killings involving firearms are incited by similar events in the immediate past. This temporary increase in probability, on average lasts thirteen days, and each incident incites at least 0.30 new incidents. Sherry Towers et al., "Contagion in Mass Killings and School Shootings," Plos (2015): 1, <http://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0117259> (accessed August 3, 2016).

2.3.3 The Story Of Killing By Hollywood

The process of conditioning young recruits to become killers is not lost on the film industry. Stanley Kubrick rewrote Gustav Hasford's novel *The Short Timers* into the screenplay *Full Metal Jacket*. The film portrayed the desensitization, conditioning, and denial defense mechanisms discussed above in the setting of a Marine Boot Camp training unit. The result was the transformation of average young men into men prepared to kill. The film has the audience see the story unfold through the eyes of the character Private J. T. Davis who takes on the nickname Joker. Private Joker is conflicted about his identity. While being trained in the art of killing, he knows his true calling and military occupational skill is as a reporter. After Boot Camp, he carries the pen more than the rifle.¹³³ This conflict, presented in the movie poster that advertised the film, is graphic. The poster centers on a combat helmet with the words "Born To Kill" boldly written across it and a peace symbol drawn just to the side of the writing. In the film, various superiors repeatedly instructed Private Davis to take the peace symbol pin off his uniform, which he never did. The peace symbol is part of Joker's effort to hold on to his identity as a simple reporter rather than a killer.

Near the end of the film, Joker finds himself in combat with the unit on which his commanding officer sent him to write an article. The unit takes significant casualties from a sniper. The sniper, a female Vietcong, receives a mortal wound but is still alive. Joker stands over her as the remaining men join him. The men have to make a moral decision as to whether they should leave her for the rats to eat or shoot her. After pondering for some time, Joker shoots her. As the men are walking away, they are singing, not a horrific Jody call but the

¹³³ Stanley Kubrick, Michael Herr, and Gustav Hasford, *Full Metal Jacket*, DVD, directed by Stanley Kubrick (Burbank, CA: Warner Bros., 1987).

Mickey Mouse Song. In a voice over, Joker despairs, “I am in a world of shit. Yes, but I am alive, and I am not afraid.”¹³⁴ Joker had become a killer. The Marines, war, and his participation in combat had given him a new and disturbing identity.

Another novel rewritten into a movie is *The Hunger Games*. The story depicts twenty-four children between ages twelve and eighteen chosen randomly to compete in the game, though a child may volunteer to represent their district in the televised match to the death that leaves only one survivor. One male and one female represent their particular district out of a twelve-district system. As the recruits discussed above, the children participate in a rigorous training program to turn them into killers. Again, the ages represented in this movie correspond exactly to Erikson’s developmental age interval for the task of ego identity versus role confusion with the virtue being fidelity. Realizing their identities are at stake, the two main characters have the following discussion.

Katniss Everdeen: Listen to them. / Peeta Mellark: Yeah. I just don't want them to change me. / Katniss: How will they change you? / Peeta: I don't know. Turn me into something I'm not. I-I-I just don't want to be another piece in their game, you know? / Katniss: You mean you won't kill anyone? / Peeta: No... I mean, you know, I'm sure I would just like anybody else when the time came, but I just keep wishing I could think of a way to show them that they don't own me. You know, if I'm gonna die, I wanna still be me. Does that make any sense? / Katniss: Yeah. I just can't afford to think like that. I have my sister. / Peeta: Yeah, I know.¹³⁵

Peeta’s existential realization of something worse than death, not being one’s self in death, was a real possibility. Katniss also realized that her sister depended on her and that necessitated her survival, which would mean others would die and die at her hands. She could not allow herself

¹³⁴ Ibid.

¹³⁵ Suzanne Collins, Gary Ross, and Billy Ray, *The Hunger Games*, DVD, directed by Gary Ross (Santa Monica, CA: Lions Gate Entertainment, 2012).

to think the thoughts Peeta was thinking. Shutting out these kinds of thoughts not only comes with a psychological price, there is also a moral cost of conscience a loss of the essential truth of self.

In fact, they did come to see themselves as killers. In the second installment of the story, Katniss has the following engagement with her manager, Effie Trinket.

Effie: All you need to do is give a few speeches, wave to the crowds, and enjoy your time in the spotlight. You've earned it. / Katniss: What did you say? Effie: Katniss. I said, "Enjoy it, Katniss, you've earned it." / Katniss: By killing people.¹³⁶

This change in identity came at a very high cost. Katniss was haunted with nightmares and relived her taking life through recurring intrusive thoughts. She, like Joker, was now a killer.

In the third installment of the story, game commentator Caesar Flickerman, in a broadcast interview had the following exchange with Peeta.

Caesar: Now, so set the stage for us. Talk us through what really happened on that final and controversial night. / Peeta: Well, first off, you have to understand that when you're in the Games - you only get one wish. It's very costly. You're alive. / Caesar: It costs your life. / Peeta: I think it costs more than your life. / Caesar: How do you mean? What's more than your life? / Peeta: I mean to murder innocent people, that costs everything that you are.¹³⁷

Peeta echoes the existential anxiety and despair of soldiers who have taken life. He had entered Joker's world. Existential terror comes for soldiers not only in thoughts and actions regarding killing and dying but in thoughts about who they have now become.

¹³⁶ Suzanne Collins, Michael Arndt, and Simon Beaufoy, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, DVD, directed by Francis Lawrence (Santa Monica, CA: Lions Gate Entertainment, 2013).

¹³⁷ Suzanne Collins, Peter Craig, and Danny Strong, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1*, DVD, directed by Francis Lawrence (Santa Monica, CA: Lions Gate Entertainment, 2014).

2.3.4 Killing And Dying

Unlike Hollywood, the battlefield holds the possibility of death and the possibility of a leader or a soldier making a moral decision to take the life of an enemy. At the panel discussion on moral agency and strategic competency cited in chapter one, Don Snider addressed the audience comprised of senior military leaders saying war is a moral endeavor in that it strives to establish a moral peace, and that the human cost of war is the lives of innocents as well as combatants. He told the leaders their four stark tasks are to prepare those they lead to kill, then under proper authority to kill, and because they are in the killing business, they are also in the dying business, therefore their third task is to prepare those they lead to die, and when necessary for mission accomplishment, to die.¹³⁸ Killing and dying has been the lot of soldiers and a major part of the story of war down through the ages. In combat, leaders make decisions and give orders that require their soldiers to take life and jeopardize their own life. Regarding E Company, 506th Regiment, 101st Airborne Division, Stephen Ambrose, author of *Band of Brothers*, later turned into an HBO mini-series, writes, “Within Easy Company they had made the best of friends they had ever had, or ever would have. They were prepared to die for each other; more important they were prepared to kill for each other.”¹³⁹ This raises the question, is it easier to prepare to die for a fellow soldier than to kill for a fellow soldier, and which of the four stark task Snider proposes (preparing to kill, killing, preparing to die, and dying) is the most difficult? Grossman’s analysis suggests that preparing

¹³⁸ Don Snider, “Panel Discussion: Moral Agency and Strategic Competency” (lecture, United States Army War College, Carlisle, PA, May 12, 2016).

¹³⁹ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Band of Brothers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992), 61.

to kill and killing are the more difficult tasks. The military invests a great amount of training time on preparing soldiers to kill and almost none on preparing to die.

2.3.5 New Challenges

The challenges of contemporary warfare confronts policy makers with new moral issues that prior generations might not have ever conceived possible. What are the moral implications of the conduct of warfare at a remote location with the technologies of robotics and the capabilities of cyber warfare, and what are moral costs to those who conduct it? Through the use of Remotely Piloted Aircraft (RPA) or Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV) a person can be a member of a team located somewhere safely in the United States with the mission of killing a person on the other side of the globe.

A real possibility exists for a father or a mother to leave home in the morning, and after a short drive to his or her worksite receive the latest intelligence and analysis of an ongoing mission to track and kill an individual identified as an enemy target. He or she may also receive a mission briefing that further identifies what the team must do that day. Later in the day, the situation develops and the opportunity to “take out the target” presents itself. Whether the soldier is the one providing the intelligence, the one giving the command, or the one who pushes the button that fires the missile, the whole team is responsible for the kill. After successfully engaging the target, the soldier sees on a screen the deadly effects of the team’s work and knows someone just died. The soldier may even watch as family members of the target recover the body. At the same time their superior officer may congratulate the team on a job well done and perhaps even some high-fives may be shared. Two hours later, after the shift

is over, the soldier picks his or her children up and drives them to their soccer game. Does being a member of a killing team and a soccer parent all in the same day present any possibility of a moral identity crisis? This becomes a greater possibility considering the team may have been tracking the enemy for several months, and they may have observed him in several social settings, including attending his children's soccer games. Immature or insensitive people sometimes ask soldiers who have served in combat, "Did you kill anyone over there?" For those who have killed, it is a very intimate issue for them. Now those who fight using technology from a base within the United States, go home to their families every day and sleep securely in their own home are facing the same issues of knowing they took a life. They killed someone over there, but they did it from over here.

Those who serve in the military deserve the best training and equipment that will help them survive the battlefield. However, their service and survival may come at heavy personal cost. Psychology needs to engage the issue of moral injury with research, but perhaps more than the engagement of psychological research is the need for theological reflection, for ultimately only by going to the ontological depths of moral injury will an understanding of such an intimate issue be fully achieved. It is only at this level of recognizing the moral domain, accounting for law and conscience, that the enterprise of finding help for the morally wounded has any hope. Peter Kreeft writes, "Conscience is (1) an awareness of the whole moral dimension, of the meaning of "good and evil", (2) knowledge of what kinds of things are good (e.g., justice, charity, mercy) and what kinds of things are evil, and (3) a pressure of inducement or feeling of duty or obligation that moves us to do good and avoid evil."¹⁴⁰

¹⁴⁰ Peter Kreeft, *Practical Theology: Spiritual Direction from Saint Thomas Aquinas* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2014), 128.

Kreeft's first point on the definition of conscience fits with what this dissertation has identified as moral injury. Chapter three will address the moral dimension of good and evil. Killing, moral injury, and even training for combat changes one's identity, story, and conscience.

As with the blind man, in the Gospel according to John that introduced this chapter, identity has the power to change one's life story for ill or for the good. Returning to McAdam's model of life story, one may view moral injury as that which radically alters an actor's identity and story through a violation of conscience. Existentialism, with its influence in philosophy, psychology, and theology offers an approach to understanding moral identity and anxiety that goes beyond current modalities of healing at the VA. This chapter looked at identity: how events and processes form and deform it. The next chapter will address the challenge evil and suffering presents to one's identity and moral wellbeing.

CHAPTER 3: THE STORY OF EVIL AND SUFFERING

The more deeply immersed I became in the thinking of the prophets, the more powerfully it became clear to me what the lives of the Prophets sought to convey: that morally speaking, there is no limit to the concern one must feel for the suffering of human beings, that indifference to evil is worse than evil itself, that in a free society, some are guilty, but all are responsible.

—Rabbi Abraham Heschel,
No Religion Is An Island, 34

The preceding chapter ended with a discussion on how preparing for war, going to war, and acts of violence, especially killing, changes one's identity. The following chapter will address the topic of the Redemption, but first this chapter will explore the implications of good, evil, and suffering in the context of moral theology, and propose virtue theory as a lens from which to view suffering with the hypothesis that virtue theory can offer significant insights into the human experience of suffering and serve as prevention of moral failure.

The words of Rabbi Heschel in the epigram above were not about evil and suffering in general, they reflect his views in opposing the American war in Vietnam. Any comprehensive reflection on war must inevitably include considerations of evil and suffering. This is especially the case when considering moral injury in the context of war. Is it possible for those who experience moral injury connected to evil to find any meaning in their suffering? Suffering is a universal phenomenon that manifests itself in many ways, taking on physical, mental, and/or spiritual forms. Hildegard of Bingen, who personally knew harsh physical suffering, asked,

Within each form of suffering endured by man, and at the same time at the basis of the whole world of suffering, there inevitably arises *the question: why?* It is a question about the cause, the reason, and equally, about the purpose of suffering, and, in brief, a question about its meaning. Not only does it accompany human suffering, but it seems even to determine its human content, what makes suffering precisely human suffering.¹⁴¹

Down through the ages, philosophy and theology have asked Hildegard's question regarding the possible causes and meaning of human suffering and its connection to evil.

3.1 What Is Evil

If evil exists, what is it? John Hick sees value in describing evil outside of any theological theory in order to be more descriptive about its nature. He sets forth this description, "It refers to physical pain, mental suffering, and moral wickedness. The last is one of the causes of the first two, for an enormous amount of human pain arises from mankind's inhumanity."¹⁴² He goes on to acknowledge that while there is an enormous amount of suffering brought about by moral evil, that there is also great amount of suffering caused by natural evil such as storms and earthquakes.¹⁴³ Of the two types of evil, moral evil presents a more serious problem for contemporary theology. There are many ways to formulate the argument concerning the problem of evil. Most arguments center on four propositions of which only three can be true: God is omnipotent, God is omniscient, God is morally perfect or wills only the good, and evil

¹⁴¹ Hildegard of Bingen, *Scivias*, trans. Mother Columba Hart and Jane Bishop (New York: Paulist Press, 1990), 9.

¹⁴² John Hick, *Philosophy of Religion*, 3rd ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1983), 40.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

exists. According to the argument, if there is evil, then God is deficient in one of the first three propositions and therefore either the definition of God is in error or God does not exist.

Through natural disasters, diseases new and old, and misery inflicted out of human imagination with human hands, suffering remains a permanent part of the human condition. Reflections about suffering and the problem of evil are more pervasive than the philosophy lecture or the occasional sermon one might hear. Television and internet media bring immediate access to these reflections into homes and work places across the country. The enterprise of war is an area that draws human interest and often speculation about the meaning of the suffering that follows in its wake. The news media is never busier nor more profitable than during times of war. After victory in North Africa and Sicily, George S. Patton became an American star through the work of war reporters and photographers.¹⁴⁴ Patton's flair for the dramatic and at times his unpredictability drew the attention of the press.¹⁴⁵ Not all of this attention was favorable.¹⁴⁶ Watching war, made possible in the contemporary era by twenty-four hour news coverage, can draw in audiences that seem unable to turn off the images and stories before them.¹⁴⁷ Is it sadism within the human heart, a curiosity to be the first to know,

¹⁴⁴ Martin Blumenson, *Patton: The Man Behind the Legend* (New York: Berkley Books, 1987), 206.

¹⁴⁵ An example of his dramatic flair and unpredictability took place in North Africa. As U. S. II Corps Commander, Patton visited the First Division. He asked the Division Commander, Terry Allen, where his foxhole was located. Allen indicated a slit trench next to his tent. Patton proceeded to urinate in his foxhole showing his contempt for passive defense. Rick Atkinson, *An Army at Dawn: The War in North Africa, 1942-1943* (New York: Owl Books, 2002), 402.

¹⁴⁶ On two separate occasions, August 3 and 10, 1943, during the Sicily Campaign, Patton slapped soldiers suffering from battle fatigue, today's Combat Stress. General Eisenhower, after hearing about the incidences, had Patton apologize. Though initially covered up, Eisenhower filed no report with the Chief of Staff of the Army, the story broke state side in late November. See, Stanley P. Hirshson, *General Patton: A Soldier's Life* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 2002), 389-403.

¹⁴⁷ Mike Wells, "Addiction to War Watching," *Southeast Missourian*, <http://www.semissourian.com/story/104960.html> (accessed October 17, 2016).

or is it a desire to find and know something more true about our species in order to make it more noble that makes bad news, especially war news rife with stories of suffering and pain, profitable?

In the preface to his book on pain, C. S. Lewis begins with these words,

No one can say "He jests at scars who never felt a wound" for I have never for one moment been in a state of mind to which even the imagination of serious pain was less than intolerable. If any man is safe from the danger of under-estimating this adversary, I am that man. I must add, too, that the only purpose of the book is to solve the intellectual problem raised by suffering; for the far higher task of teaching fortitude and patience I was never fool enough to suppose myself qualified, nor have I anything to offer my readers except my conviction that when pain is to be borne, a little courage helps more than much knowledge, a little human sympathy more than much courage, and the least tincture of the love of God more than all.¹⁴⁸

Intellectual enquiry alone is inadequate to plumb the depths of subjects such as pain, suffering, and evil. These challenge the core of the human heart. As Lewis suggests nothing is more vital than the love of God in facing pain in general, it is even more necessary when one faces the pain of moral injury. The existence of evil and the reality of human suffering have historically presented theology with its most challenging questions. Yet, according to the Christian account it was through the worst suffering brought on by the worst evil that Christ accomplished the Redemption (*Salvifici Doloris*, 18).

¹⁴⁸ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), 1.

3.2 The Problem Of Evil

It was not, then, right that He should appear in a manner manifestly divine, and completely capable of convincing all men; but it was also not right that He should come in so hidden a manner that He could not be known by those who should sincerely seek Him. He has willed to make himself quite recognizable by those; and thus, willing to appear openly to those who seek Him with all their heart, and to be hidden from those who flee from Him with all their heart, He so regulates the knowledge of Himself that He has given signs of Himself, visible to those who seek Him, and not to those who seek Him not. There is enough light for those who only desire to see, and enough obscurity for those who have a contrary disposition.

—Blaise Pascal, *Pensées*, 68

The problem of evil is one of theology's greatest challenges because it presents enough obscurity for those who hold in Pascal's phrase, "a contrary disposition" to remain in unbelief. For many, the existence of evil and suffering have served as evidence against the existence of an omniscient, omnipotent, and benevolent God. The existence of evil and suffering, for some, negates or makes ambiguous the existence and nature of God. Early in his *Summa Theologica* (*ST*), Aquinas takes up the question of the existence of God. Aquinas intended his *ST* for the beginning student and he laid it out in argumentative form. Each argument has five structural parts. The first part is a question in the form that requires a yes or no answer. The second part poses objections.¹⁴⁹ In his question about the existence of God, he provides only two objections. This is unusual because he always provides at least three objections, except here, as if to say the history of intellectual thought has provided only two worthy objections to the

¹⁴⁹ The first part of each article, formulated as a question, begins with "Whether" (*Utrum*). The second part contains the objections and begins with "It seems that" (*Oportet*). The third part is a statement from either Scripture or the Church Fathers and begins with "On the contrary" (*Sed contra*). The fourth part is Thomas' thoughts and begins with "I answer that" (*Respondeo dicens*), and the fifth part returns to the objections explaining how they went wrong. For a full discussion of the structure of the *ST* see Peter Kreeft, ed., *Summa of the Summa* (San Francisco: Ignatius, 1990), 14-22.

existence of God. These objections, however, are two of the strongest arguments against the existence of God. The first objection Aquinas presents is the problem of evil.¹⁵⁰

Augustine articulates what would become the classical theological response to the problem of evil.¹⁵¹ Aquinas follows his argument and uses it in his reply to the first objection to the existence of God, noted above, the existence of evil. He writes,

As Augustine says (*Enchiridion* xi): *Since God is the highest good, He would not allow any evil to exist in His works, unless His omnipotence and goodness were such as to bring good out of evil.* This is part of the infinite goodness of God, that He should allow evil to exist, and out of it produce good. [*ST* I,2,3]

Aquinas sees evil as parasitic and dependent upon the good. Aquinas explains, “For it was shown above that every being, as such, is good, and that evil can exist only in good as its subject [*ST* I, 49,3].” In the same article, he argues that the highest principle of the good is the highest good but that it is impossible to ever have a supreme evil because evil simply lessens the good and if there ever were a supreme evil, it would destroy itself. Here good is non-contingent but evil is contingent on the good. However, humanity can learn from evil. Gerald Myers, a survivor of Auschwitz, writes with experiential authority when he explains,

We are obliged not to avert our eyes from monumental evil but rather to see what we can, however much it surmounts our understanding, in the hope that partial vision is more effective than total blindness for the triumph of humanity over bestiality.¹⁵²

¹⁵⁰ The second objection, consistent with “Ockham’s Razor” in seeking the simplest hypothesis, points to the apparent adequacy of the natural sciences to explain everything without God. The first objection is more directly related to the topic of this dissertation.

¹⁵¹ Process theology offers an alternative to the classic response to the problem of evil. The framework of this theodicy begins with a God who is not self-limited but is necessarily limited by the laws of the universe. Here God is simply part of an uncreated process. Therefore, the existence of evil is a consequence of God’s will foiled. This removes the omnipotent attribute of God thus allowing the other three aspects of the classical equation: God exists, God desires only the good, and evil exists. It also requires a mutable God ever in the process of becoming. While process theology offers a way to account for evil, its success ostensibly depends upon placing certain limitations on God, which renders the argument unsatisfactory for many theologians. See, Hick, 51.

¹⁵² Gerald E. Myers, “The Psychology Of Man After Auschwitz,” in *Echoes from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections On a Dark Time*, ed. Alan Rosenberg and Gerald E. Myers (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 307.

However, such an intense observation as imminently important as it is, should not denigrate the need for acknowledging the good. While the history of war tells many stories of evil and suffering also hidden in its pages are stories of compassion and good.¹⁵³

3.2.1 Good And Evil

Evil, as was said above is the privation of the good, which chiefly and of itself consists in perfection and act [actuality] [...] But because good in itself is the object of the will, evil, which is the privation of the good, is found in a special way in rational creatures which have a will.

—Thomas Aquinas, [ST I,48,5]

Jean Porter analyzes Aquinas' general theory of goodness.¹⁵⁴ She understands his view of goodness as convertible with being because he sees being or existence as good. In this line of

¹⁵³ Florence Nightingale and her work of training and managing nurses during the Crimean War became an icon of compassion in action. See, George Castledine, "The Relevance of Nightingale Today," *British Journal of Nursing* 20, no. 9 (2011): 595.

¹⁵⁴ G. K. Chesterton conveys the anecdote of Aquinas dining at a great banquet table with several other guests and his host, the King of France, St. Louis IX. Thomas, having in his youth gained the moniker "The Dumb Ox" in reference to his quiet demeanor and magnitude of size, was hardly noticed over the dinner conversation. Then an explosion happened that immediately stopped all other activity and drew all eyes to Aquinas. Aquinas had brought down his massive fist so hard that it shook the table and in his strongest voice announced, "And that will settle the Manichees!" Manichaeism teaches a dualistic cosmology where the spiritual good struggles against the material evil. While Jean-Pierre Torrell questions the veracity of this story, for there is only one eyewitness record of it, the story does serve an important purpose. No doubt, Thomas spent much of his intellectual capital thinking about the relationship between good and evil. Manichaeism's view of evil would be something he would have been eager to correct. It had seduced his spiritual ancestor Augustine, in his early years, as it seemed to answer his two objections to Christianity. Augustine's first objection was that the Bible seemed to be an inelegant series of writings when compared to what he found in his field of rhetoric. His second objection regarded the origin of evil. Augustine had learned from his mother, Monica, that there is only one God. This second objection centered on the issues of the problem of evil, discussed above, which acknowledged evil and at the same time acknowledged one all loving and all-powerful God. Manichaeism offered answers to both his questions. It asserted that the Bible was not the Word of the eternal principle of light and that the principle of darkness was its opposite. See, G. K. Chesterton, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Dumb Ox* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1980), 43-4.; Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: The Person and His Work*, trans. Robert Royal (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2005), 1:288.; and Justo L. Gonzalez, *The Story of Christianity: The Early Church to the Dawn of the Reformation*, rev. ed. (New York: HarperCollins, 2010), 1:242-4.

thought she identifies two views of goodness. First, goodness can apply to perfected being. For example, a harp is good when it is in tune and capable of making a pleasant sound. For it to be good without qualification is for it to be perfect. Second, goodness can apply to anything that exists because simply existing is a degree of perfection.¹⁵⁵ Thomistic theology expresses the relationship between good and evil in these terms: all things that exist have some goodness, evil's central quality is deficiency and, thus, nothing that exists can be wholly evil. Aquinas finds the idea that creatures tend to maintain themselves in existence because, at least for the creature, its own existence is good. Here she sees Aquinas in agreement with the notion that existence precedes essence.¹⁵⁶

Aquinas sees a hierarchical relationship within existence with an orientation toward the good. Not only do living creatures tend to maintain their existence and mature, they tend to reproduce themselves. Further, according to Aquinas, there seems to be a hierarchy of being that involves goodness and intelligence.¹⁵⁷ Dirt exists, it has being, but the grass that grows in the dirt is a higher being than the dirt, the cow that eats the grass is a higher being than the grass, and the farmer who milks the cow is a higher being than the cow. This order of goodness extends to the interrelatedness of creatures. Humans appear oriented toward their own good and the good of others in community. However, people do harm themselves, but Aquinas would see even this as an attempt to obtain a benefit, real or imagined as Porter notes, "Even suicides act in order to attain some benefit, for example release from anxiety or pain,

¹⁵⁵ Jean Porter, *The Recovery of Virtue: The Relevance of Aquinas for Christian Ethics* (Louisville: Westminster / Knox Press, 1990), 37.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid, 38-9.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 42.

even though in doing so, they foolishly prefer what is objectively a greater evil to an objectively lesser evil.”¹⁵⁸ The same applies to other maladaptive behaviors and abusive relationships where one maintains the *status quo* believing it to be for their own good. The implication this has to moral injury is that veterans who take their own lives or persist in lives of self isolation, do so out of a belief that it is their best option at the moment. For them, though safe at home, their war is not over. Meagher writes, “Warriors bring their war home with them, not like a tan acquired on holiday but like a secret they wish they hadn’t been told.”¹⁵⁹ Holding this secret makes their own existence abhorrent to them.

3.2.2 Human Goodness

Beyond the general theory of goodness is the idea of human goodness in terms of *eudaimonia*. Aristotle asked a foundational question and supplied an enduring answer regarding the good when he wrote, “It must be the ultimate end or object of human life: something that is in itself completely satisfying. Happiness fits this description.”¹⁶⁰ This directly influences Aquinas’ development of his moral theology. Porter highlights this finding in Aquinas when she writes,

Every human action is aimed, directly or indirectly, at the attainment or preservation of some one good which the agent believes will perfect him as a human being, that is render him happy; and there is in fact one end, and one only, in which human happiness truly can be found.¹⁶¹

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 50.

¹⁵⁹ Meagher, 14.

¹⁶⁰ Aristotle, *The Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. J. A. K. Thomson (London: Penguin Books, 1953), 13.

¹⁶¹ Porter, 72.

It is upon these foundations of general goodness and human goodness that Aquinas will build his moral theory of virtue.

If these foundations are true and hold no matter the given situation, then one must ask where morally inferior choices come from. Augustine proclaimed, “Seek what ye seek; but it is not there where ye seek. Ye seek a blessed life in the land of death; it is not there.”¹⁶² It was the knowledge of good and evil that presented the first temptation in the Genesis account (Gen 3:1-7). The first parents did not resist the temptation, but as presented in the discussion above, reasoning they were acting for their own good exchanged trusting God for an objectively identifiable evil. Traditionally, theology has identified envy as the root of this account of evil (Wis 2:24). Like envy, pride is only possible when irrational thought reigns. John Bowlin described the nature of pride.

Like all sin, pride has two parts: a turn toward some mutable good and a turn away from the immutable. Yet, pride distinguishes itself from all other sins insofar as it turns the sinner away from God for no intelligible reason, for the sake of no other good.¹⁶³

Often, humanity neglects this understanding of the nature of good, evil, happiness and the evidence that the morally superior choice will lead to happiness. However, this view provides a base to understand encounters with evil itself. Just as there is a hierarchy of being, there seems to be a moral gradation of evil.

¹⁶² Augustine, *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*, trans. Edward B. Pusey The Harvard Classics 7 (New York: P. F. Collier & Son Corporation, 1937), 55.

¹⁶³ John R Bowlin, “Psychology and Theodicy in Aquinas,” *Medieval Philosophy and Theology* 7, no. 2 (1998): 129-56.

3.3 A Witness To Evil

The man who ranges in No Man's Land
Is dogged by the shadows on either hand

—James H. Knight-Adkin, *No Man's Land*

No Man's Land was the space between the trenches of the opposing forces in World War I, and it was a dangerous place where soldiers from both sides died in attempts to cross it. Metaphorically, "No Man's Land," where one is likely to encounter evil and death, can exist anywhere and at any time in history. The experience of bearing witness to evil takes many forms across the globe. In North Korea, the authorities separate a family as they enter Camp 22, a concentration camp where they will die.¹⁶⁴ Regrettably, the world is bearing witness by means of video, to beheadings that strike terror in the heart and evoke a range of emotion. In recent years, the moral level of degradation reached new depths with the cage burning of a Jordanian pilot by the self-proclaimed Islamic State (ISIS).¹⁶⁵ ISIS now routinely uses children to execute its prisoners.¹⁶⁶ These examples are not hypothetical.

This section will examine the effects of evil on the human soul. Daniel Goldhagen, who writes about genocide and eliminationism, refers to recent history as an age of suffering and slaughter.¹⁶⁷ Campaigns to destroy an entire people often employ armies for much of the

¹⁶⁴ Joshua Stanton and Sung-Yoon Lee, "World Must Awaken to North Korea's Camps of Horror," *CNN*, February 17, 2014, <http://www.cnn.com/2013/12/07/opinion/lee-stanton-north-korea/> (accessed February 4, 2015).

¹⁶⁵ Paul Adams, "Jordan Pilot Hostage Moaz Al-Kasasbeh 'burned Alive'," *BBC (London)*, February 3, 2015, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-middle-east-31121160> (accessed February 4, 2015).

¹⁶⁶ These children are the age or approaching the age identified by Erikson as the period of identity formation. This particular kind of atrocity raises questions about moral injury or building an immunity to it. See, "Watch: Isis Foreign Children Executing Kurdish Fighters," Zero Censorship, <https://www.zerocensorship.com/uncensored/isis/foreign-children-executing-kurdish-fighters-other-handgun-beheading-executions-syria-graphic-video-314801> (accessed October 18, 2016).

¹⁶⁷ Daniel Jonan Goldhagen, *Worse Than War: Genocide, Eliminationism and the Ongoing Assault On Humanity* (New York: Public Affairs, 2009), 33-6.

gruesome work, which places soldiers in the position being the agents of slaughter and violating their conscience or heroically violating orders. Explaining the similarity between distant past and recent past wars to eliminate populations, Goldhagen writes,

This mass annihilation that inaugurated our time's eliminationist campaigns was characteristic of earlier times: imperialist Europeans' acting without moral restraint to secure non-Europeans' lands. As a rule, previous centuries' colonizers – Americans as they spanned their continent, Belgians in Congo, British, French, Portuguese, and Spanish in Asia, Africa, and the Americas – despoiled, enslaved, or killed people of color who resisted or were deemed obstacles to Europeans' occupation or exploitation of their lands. Europeans regularly employed murderous methods against non-European peoples that they did not use against their conventional European enemies. Racism and impunity explain the difference.¹⁶⁸

When people resist the evil of oppression, war is often the inevitable consequence. The history of the United States alone provides an unsettling and tragic collection of examples, including the countless atrocities committed against Native Americans. The premeditated purpose of these wars was the elimination of an entire people, which speaks to lack of moral restraint referred to by Goldhagen.

While wars are not the only place intellectual inquiry may mine the data of evil, they do provide an abundant source of individuals who witness evil acts, those who commit abhorrent crimes, and at times those whom tribunals and other established authorities hold accountable for offenses against humanity. What reflections do such people have on their experience? How have their experiences changed the way they and others perceive the world in which they live? The answers are as varied as the people who face the reality of their own evil acts. The following discussion provides data for moral reflection, insight into the human conscience, and the role of choice in midst of horrible persecution and suffering.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid, 36.

3.3.1 Evil And Choice

The mother was the most amazing one of them all, and she deserves a special place in our memory. Although she saw her seven sons die in a single day, she endured it with great courage because she trusted in the Lord. She combined womanly emotion with manly courage and spoke words of encouragement to each of her sons in their native language. (2 Mac 7: 20-21)

In the midst of evil and suffering are there choices? The mother from the Maccabean account serves as a hero, virtuously encouraging faithfulness to the Jewish traditions as she witnessed her seven sons, one by one, tortured and butchered. Her reaction to the evil that resulted in the suffering and death of her children was a choice, and at last, she suffered martyrdom as well. This story has been the source of religious encouragement because she chose to suffer evil rather than participate in evil. However, is there a different way of viewing such experiences? In the last century, the Nazis developed and executed the evil attempt to eliminate the Jewish race. Killing efficiently became one of their deepest concerns. At first, the German army participated in the mass murder, utilizing rifles and machine guns. The Nazis developed the technology of death camps and gas chambers not just to save labor and bullets, but also to save the moral toll on those who did the killing. Those who were tasked with the hands-on job of killing could evade the moral question of what they were doing for only so long but in the end, many experienced a crisis of conscience. To diminish the effects of killing on the consciences of those tasked with killing needed a technical solution if the enterprise of elimination was to succeed. George Kern observed,

These massive killings took their toll among the killers, with some having difficulties coping [...] There were psychic costs – nightmares, nervous breakdowns, at least one suicide, and an increasing reluctance on the part of the commanders to continue.¹⁶⁹

¹⁶⁹ George M. Kern, “The Holocaust as History,” in *Echoes from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections On a Dark Time*, ed. Alan Rosenberg and Gerald E. Myers (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 26.

Yet, many did comply with orders and continued to participate in the grim project. What of the ones who willingly participated in mass murder with an easy conscience?

Witnessing the results of the atrocities of the death camps challenged the conscience and faith of American soldiers who helped liberate the camps. Speaking to a group of veterans Edward Tick made the comment that there are no atheists in foxholes. The reaction of three older veterans who were camp liberators shocked him. He records that one man hung his head, another turned red, and a third stood and began to shout. Tick writes,

“That proverb is meant to soothe all you who don’t know,” the standing man blurted. Were any of you in the camps? Did you ever see what human beings do to each other? It’s worse than combat. No God would allow that! No atheists? Bullshit! The foxhole creates atheists!”¹⁷⁰

These men bore witness to evil and suffering at a level most people will never encounter, and it affected them for the rest of their lives. They suffered a moral injury from what they saw yet others participated in the atrocity as a daily routine with no pain of conscience.

Martin Golding and other philosophers have asked how so many were willing participants in the vast mechanism required for large-scale murder with seemingly no qualms.¹⁷¹ Was it their deep sense of obedience to authority as the Milgram experiment might suggest?¹⁷² His

¹⁷⁰ Tick, *Warrior’s Return*, 76.

¹⁷¹ Martin P. Golding, “On The Idea of Moral Pathology,” in *Echoes from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections On a Dark Time*, ed. Alan Rosenberg and Gerald E. Myers (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 144-7.

¹⁷² Stanley Milgram conducted several experiments with variations on a basic procedure. In experiment number five, conducted in 1974, an experimenter told a participant and a confederate the study concerned the effects of punishment on learning. In the experiment, the real subject was the person following the instruction and delivering what they believed was painful electric shocks for wrong answers to the confederate whom they believed to be the subject of the experiment. Though the confederate fringed pain and extreme anxiety, most subjects would increase the voltage and deliver the shock at the encouragement of the experimenter who was the authority figure. It was a fake setup. It delivered no real shock, and the only pain experienced was the anguish most of the compliant subjects fought through to deliver nonexistent shock. In this experiment, 65% of the

experiment demonstrated the willingness of many to inflict pain on another human being because an authority figure, a man in a white lab coat with a clipboard, told them to do so. General Alfred Jodl, hanged at Nuremberg, when asked how all the generals could continue, with unquestioning loyalty, to serve a murderer, replied that it was, “not the task of a soldier to act as judge over his supreme commander. Let history do that or God in heaven.”¹⁷³ Here Jodl is disingenuous in his claim that as a soldier he had no judgement on his supreme commander, that his obedience had no limit. If the supreme commander, Hitler, had commanded him to kill his own family, no doubt Jodl would have found a limit and resisted. This choice of life or death of a family member became real in Auschwitz.

In Auschwitz, the guards often put victims in situations where they had to make terrible choices. Lawrence Langer contends that the word choice is not sufficient to describe these occasions preferring to view them as a reality of non-choice. He used an account relayed by a nurse, Judith Sternberg Newman, who witnessed the drowning of a baby. After giving birth, the midwife told the mother that she would take care of her baby. By chance, Newman stumbled upon the midwife as she was drowning the baby. Newman was appalled and visibly showed it. The woman explained to Newman that she had to drown the baby to save the mother because otherwise the Nazis would have taken the mother with the baby to the gas chamber. Regarding this and similar situations in the camp, Langer judges,

They illuminate a version of survival less flattering to the human creature than more traditional accounts [...] Moreover this complementary vision may enable us to comprehend better how little discredit falls to these victims, who were plunged into a

participants continued to administer shocks all the way to the end of the 450-volt range. See, Jerry M. Burger, “Replicating Milgram: Would People Still Obey Today?,” *American Psychologist* 64, no. 1 (2009): 1-11.

¹⁷³ Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report On the Banality of Evil* (New York: Penguin Books, 1963), 149.

crisis of what one might call “choiceless choice” where critical decisions did not reflect options between life and death, but between one form of “abnormal” response and another, both imposed by a situation that was in no way of the victim’s own choosing.¹⁷⁴

This is a stark look at a harsh reality. Some inmates chose to participate in the very evil the Nazi policies inflicted upon them, others did not. Did the inmates have a “real” choice?

Viktor Frankl sees the possibility of the inmates having a choice containing potentialities, despite the cruel realities of the death camps. However, Langer disagrees and offers a framework of understanding that does not hold responsible those who had no real choice in the atrocities in which they were forced to participate.¹⁷⁵ In other words, he believes that people who are victims of such violent violations of their personhood should be offered broader moral latitude. Langer observes, “The relation between deed and motive, fate and intent (so vital to familiar moral discourse) collapsed so often in the deathcamps that it ceased to represent an ethical bulwark for the victims.”¹⁷⁶ Such situations force victims on to a moral high wire with no safety net. They must walk it with no comfort or reassurances from any normal ethical support system. David Hume drew a similar conclusion about justice writing,

Suppose a society to fall into such want of all common necessities, that the utmost frugality and industry cannot preserve the greater number from perishing, and the whole from extreme misery; it will readily, I believe, be admitted, that the strict laws of justice are suspended, in such a pressing emergence, and give place to the stronger motives of necessity and self-preservation. Is it any crime, after a shipwreck, to seize whatever means or instrument of safety one can lay hold of, without regard to former limitations of property? Or if a city besieged were perishing with hunger; can we imagine, that men will see any means of preservation before them, and lose their lives, from a scrupulous regard to what, in other situations, would be the rules of equity and justice?¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁴ Lawrence L. Langer, “The Dilemma Of Choice In The Death Camps,” in *Echos from the Holocaust: Philosophical Reflections On a Dark Time*, ed. Alan Rosenberg and Gerald E. Myers (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1988), 120.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid, 119-20.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid, 124.

¹⁷⁷ David Hume, *The Philosophical Works of David Hume* (Edinburgh: Black and Tait, 1826), 4:256-7.

The Holocaust became a dark laboratory where individuals tested Hume's hypothetical in life and death choices or life and death choiceless choices. Those with some authority within the community found themselves placed in a double bind (damned if you do, damned if you don't) where acting against their community became the only means they thought possible to preserve their community. When evil takes the form of "choiceless choice," it is most maniacal to its victim in that it may seem like a swift current that drags them along toward fatal fall leaving them powerless to stop it, and just as disturbing, there is no one to rescue them. History also contains stories of individuals who made self-sacrificing choices in the midst of atrocities.

3.3.2 Father Kolbe's Choice

Contrary to the position of choiceless choice, others hold that choice is always available and options for justice never cease. Andre Comte-Sponville is of this opinion writing,

Drawing on the testimony of survivors, Tzvetan Todorov shows that “even inside the camps, in that most extreme situation, it was still possible to choose between good and evil” and that though the just were “few in number” we must not forget them – lest we finish the work of their executioners. In the camps, as elsewhere, individual differences included ethical differences.¹⁷⁸

A case from Auschwitz tells this story of choice: Prisoner Maximilian Kolbe, a Polish Franciscan priest. Though he suffered from violent beatings and threats, he continued to conduct priestly duties. In July, after three prisoners escaped Fritzch, the deputy camp commander picked ten men to for starvation, making them an example for the rest of the prisoners. One of the chosen was Franciszek Gajowniczek who cried out about his wife and children prompting Kolbe to volunteer to take his place. The command allowed the substitution. The guards housed the ten prisoners together in a small cell. Each time the guards checked on Kolbe he was standing or kneeling in a calm manner. He led the other condemned prisoners in prayer for two weeks until he was the last one living. Finally, the guards gave him an injection of carbolic acid to hasten his death, freeing the cell for other purposes. On October 10, 1982, Pope St. John Paull II canonized Father Kolbe as a saint.¹⁷⁹

Kolbe chose to take the place of a prisoner condemned to die leaving this world as an example of suffering love. Those who witnessed this act had to react. The prisoners gained encouragement from his sacrifice, especially those Kolbe prayed with in their death cell.

¹⁷⁸ Andre Comte-Sponville, *A Small Treatise On the Great Virtues* (New York: Metropolitan/Owl Book, 1996), 78.

¹⁷⁹ Elaine Murry Stone, *Maximilian Kolbe: Saint of Auschwitz* (Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), 74-104.

Franciszek Gajowniczek survived the death camp and lived to age 94. Kolbe's sacrifice and his action stands as a model of virtue. Kolbe made a difficult choice in the context of some of the most horrible conditions in life. On the battlefield soldiers make choices that have life or death consequence, in split seconds, and under harsh conditions. Like Kolbe, their choices may be to sacrifice their lives for the lives of their fellow soldiers, or their choice may involve the taking of life. When their choice is to take a life, they are open to moral injury regardless of the virtue behind their choice. Edward Tick writes,

The "warrior soul" is that part of us that wishes to serve with high honor and moral purpose. When trained or used in illegitimate, abusive, disproportionate, or immoral ways, it is wounded. When used in moral ways for immoral ends, it is in anguish. When alone and unseen in its willingness to sacrifice life, when its pain is neglected, it falls into despair.¹⁸⁰

When they or their leaders disregard virtue in their choices and decisions, the probability of moral failure on the battlefield increases. Here there is a direct link between choice, moral failure, and moral injury.

¹⁸⁰ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 14.

3.4 Moral Failure

Grossman recounts listening to a group of soldiers who had just completed a prisoner of war training exercises. The conversation turned to the question of what to do with prisoners of war. One soldier suggested using nerve gas on them, another claymore mines, and the conversation continued with more abhorrent suggestions. The discussion turned when a chaplain, who happened to be standing nearby, interrupted them and began to address the moral issue.¹⁸¹ The chaplain was a corrective agent for soldiers, who though speaking hypothetically, were talking themselves into a position of moral failure. Though history records many cases of moral failure, two cases, the *My Lai* massacre and failure of the leadership of the 800th Military Police Brigade illustrate this point.

3.4.1 The Case Of The *My Lai* Massacre

Having received from W01 Thompson serious allegations of improper conduct by elements of TF Barker, he failed to report the matter to his commanding officer (Division Artillery Commander) or to the SJA, or the IG. After he reported the matter to CH Lewis and received no satisfactory response, he took no effective action to insure that a proper investigation would be conducted.

The epigram above is a statement from an official investigation regarding the failure of division artillery Chaplain Francis R. Lewis and his superior Chaplain Carl E. Creswell to ensure proper reporting of information regarding the *My Lai* massacre.¹⁸² One of the darkest moments in the history of the United States Army occurred on March 16, 1968 in the

¹⁸¹ Grossman, 203.

¹⁸² U.S. The Department Of The Army Of The Preliminary Investigations Into The My Lai Incident, *Report Of The Department Of The Army Review Volume I*, open-file report, U.S. Geological Survey (Washington, DC, 1970), Chapter 12 page 27.

Vietnamese village *My Lai*. American soldiers killed as many as 500 civilians, mostly women and children and a few elderly men. Moreover, some soldiers raped and otherwise sexually assaulted many of the women, and they tortured and mutilated many others.¹⁸³ The story of the *My Lai* massacre is a story of utter moral failure and moral injury following in its wake.

The American unit attacked an unarmed civilian village that offered no resistance. The only American casualty that day was Herbert Carter who shot himself in the foot.¹⁸⁴ Crimes committed by the Americans that day included assault, rape, and murder.¹⁸⁵ At the center of the atrocity was a platoon led by Lieutenant William Calley. Evidence pointed to war crimes committed by others including his company commander, Captain Medina, and a cover up from officers above him, but military courts only convicted Calley of crimes. His charges included the deliberate shooting of 109 Vietnamese civilians with six specifications of murder.¹⁸⁶ In 1971, the courts convicted him of murdering “no less than 22 Vietnamese civilians of undetermined age and sex and assault with intent to murder one Vietnamese child,”¹⁸⁷ which led to a life sentence. However, in 1974, President Richard Nixon reduced his sentence with a

¹⁸³ Claude Cookman, “An American Atrocity: The My Lai Massacre Concretized in a Victim's Face,” *The Journal of American History* 94, no. 1 (2007): 155-7.

¹⁸⁴ U.S. The Department Of The Army Of The Preliminary Investigations Into The My Lai Incident, Chapter 6 page 16.

¹⁸⁵ Embedded in this story of dark moral failure are a few lights of moral courage. Warrant Officer Hugh Thompson saw what was happening on the ground and landed his helicopter between a group of Vietnamese and Calley's soldiers. He requested help from Calley to evacuate people from a bunker, but Calley told him he would only help with a grenade. Hearing this response, Thompson told his door gunner to put his weapon on the American soldiers and to shoot anyone who tried to interfere as he removed the Vietnamese from the bunker. He then radioed for a large helicopter to transport the villagers to safety. His assessment of the situation and response saved innocent Vietnamese's lives. See, Cookman, 157.

¹⁸⁶ Kendrick Oliver, “Atrocity, Authenticity and American Exceptionalism: (Ir)rationalising the Massacre at My Lai,” *Journal of American Studies* 37, no. 2 (2003): 247-68.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

presidential pardon giving Calley his freedom, having spent all but three months of his sentence under a generous house arrest. In 2009, Calley made his first public apology, but maintained that he was following orders.¹⁸⁸

In 1970, about two years after the *My Lai* massacre, Seymour Hersh published a compressive account of the atrocity and its aftermath. At that point, he reported that while very few soldiers appeared total unmoved, many found ways to justify, in their minds, what took place that day. However, he also found some soldiers had remorse for what took place at *My Lai*, though their part may have only been as a witness. Hersh reported on the transcript of Gregory Olsen's interview with criminal investigators where Olsen told them, "Even if I was not involved in the killing, I still have a feeling of guilt for not stopping it or not reporting it to Colonel Barker."¹⁸⁹

Leadership's moral failure on the battlefield led to Olsen's moral injury as a witness to the war crime. To Hersh's point that the soldiers who reported feelings of remorse were primarily from witnesses of the atrocity and Olsen's report of feelings of guilt support the connection between moral failure on the battlefield and moral injury. Olsen reported to investigators who are more interested in facts than feelings not therapists who can nuance the difference between guilt and shame. As noted earlier guilt motivates a person to resolve a problem or injustice whereas shame leads one to withdraw and hide. Very few made any attempt to stop the atrocity, rather, they stood frozen by what they witnessed. As Maguen and Litz held in their

¹⁸⁸ Robert Mackey, "An Apology for My Lai, Four Decades Later," New York Times, August 25, 2009, http://thelede.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/08/24/an-apology-for-my-lai-four-decades-later/?_r=0 (accessed September 22, 2015).

¹⁸⁹ Seymour Hersh, *My Lai 4: A Report On the Massacre and Its Aftermath* (New York: Random House, 1970), 184.

definition of moral injury those subject to moral injury are not only the agents as perpetrators who violate their conscience or a deeply held belief but also those who bear witness to violence or an atrocity. Calley, Medina, and those who actively participated in the massacre may not have had well-formed consciences thus lacking the criteria for a moral injury, but the witnesses, including the people of *My Lai* did meet the criteria. Calley's moral failure not only resulted in the unjust loss of life and heinous human violations, but it also set the conditions for moral injury of both soldiers and civilians who would live with the memories of what they saw that day.

Edward Tick leads Vietnam veterans on return journeys where veterans engage with the people of their former combat zone. He observes,

The Vietnamese affirm the power of making amends and the peace such actions can bring [...] Vietnamese monks with beaming eyes and smiles tell American veterans on our return journeys, "If you feel badly, then open your hearts and do good. Change your karma through compassionate action. Love everyone."¹⁹⁰

Doug Johnson, who served in the *My Lai* area prior to the massacre, returned to Vietnam in 2002, and visited the memorial dedicated to the *My Lai* massacre. Among the displays, he observed letters from former American soldiers who had participated in the massacre, apologizing for what they had done.¹⁹¹ Though the letters were sincere and a recognition of the damage done and the need for repair, they were letters from individuals. The larger issue is how the American military must work to prevent such war crimes and how the American public must ensure that their government and military do not simply dismiss such atrocities.

¹⁹⁰ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 213.

¹⁹¹ Doug Johnson, interview with author, Carlisle, PA, September 25, 2015. Dr. Johnson, Captain Johnson in 1967, was the Deputy Fire support Coordination Officer for the Thirty-Fifth Infantry, Third Brigade.

Thirty-five years later photographs would surface and challenge the moral sensibilities of the American people much as photographs of *My Lai* did in 1969.

3.4.2 A Case Study Of The 800th Military Police Brigade

As the photographs from Abu Ghraib make clear, these detentions have had enormous consequences: for the imprisoned civilian Iraqis, many of whom had nothing to do with the growing insurgency; for the integrity of the Army; and for the United States' reputation in the world.¹⁹²

Members of the United States military forces in Iraq and Afghanistan have committed war crimes.¹⁹³ The most publicized war crime to date was the *Abu Ghraib* prisoner of war abuse. On January 13, 2004, a soldier from the 372nd MP Company at *Abu Ghraib* reported prisoner abuse, launching an Army investigation. The AR 15-6 investigation, later known as the

¹⁹² Seymour Hersh, "Torture at Abu Ghraib; Annals of National Security," *The New Yorker*, May 10, 2004, 42.

¹⁹³ In March 2006 Steven D. Green, Jesse Spielman, Paul Cortex, and James Baker entered the home of the al-Janabi family near the checkpoint where they were stationed, about twenty miles south of Baghdad. Green killed the five-year-old daughter, the father, and the mother. He then raped and killed the fourteen-year-old daughter, and set her body on fire. Green committed suicide in Federal Prison in 2014. The other three are serving lengthy sentences in military prison. "Convicted US War Criminal Steven Green Dead in 'suicide'," BBC News, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-26265798> (accessed December 28, 2015). The court gave Robert Bales a life sentence for murdering sixteen Afghan civilians in their homes in the Kandahar Province in 2012. Jack Healy, "Soldier Sentenced to Life Without Parole for Killing 16 Afghans," *New York Times*, August 23, 2013, http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/24/us/soldier-gets-life-without-parole-in-deaths-of-afghan-civilians.html?_r=0 (accessed December 28, 2015).

Taguba Report, found grave prisoner abuse.¹⁹⁴ The report listed acts of violence and sadistic perversion by United States soldiers.¹⁹⁵

The crimes at *Abu Ghraib* brings the credibility of the American military into question. The government court martialled and convicted nine soldiers for crimes committed at *Abu Ghraib*.¹⁹⁶ While the number of soldiers tried and convicted of crimes at *Abu Ghraib* are meager, the Army served more sentences for the *Abu Ghraib* crimes than for the *My Lai* crimes. The scandal raises questions beyond the loss of trust the Army suffered in Iraq and the damage the United States faced with relationships in the world community. On the ground, the effect was the opposite of the observation Dave Grossman made that World War I German veterans advised their younger relatives at the outbreak of World War II to surrender to the

¹⁹⁴ U.S. Department of the Army, Third United States Army, *Article 15-6: Investigation of the 800th Military Police Brigade*, by MG Antonio M. Taguba, open-file report, U.S. Geological Survey (Washington, DC, 2004), 16. (This report has been declassified by CENTCOM). The report stated, “That between October and December 2003, at the Abu Ghraib Confinement Facility (BCCF), numerous incidents of sadistic, blatant, and wanton criminal abuses were inflicted on several detainees. This systemic and illegal abuse of detainees was intentionally perpetrated by several members of the military police guard force (372nd Military Police Company, 320th Military Police Battalion, 800th MP Brigade), in Tier (section) 1-A of the Abu Ghraib Prison (BCCF). The allegations of abuse were substantiated by detailed witness statements (ANNEX 26) and the discovery of extremely graphic photographic evidence [...] In addition to the aforementioned crimes, there were also abuses committed by members of the 325th MI Battalion, 205th MI Brigade, and Joint Interrogation and Debriefing Center (JIDC). Specifically, on 24 November 2003, [name redacted], 205th MI Brigade, sought to degrade a detainee by having him strip and returned to cell naked. (ANNEXES 26 and 53).”

¹⁹⁵ Ibid, 16-7. The report found that the intentional abuse of detainees by military police personnel included the following acts: punching and slapping; videotaping and photographing naked male and female detainees; forcibly arranging detainees in various sexually explicit positions; keeping detainees naked for several days at a time; forcing naked male detainees to wear women’s underwear; forcing groups of male detainees to masturbate themselves while being photographed; placing a dog chain or strap around a naked detainee’s neck and having a female Soldier pose for a picture holding the chain; a guard having sex with a female detainee; using military working dogs (without muzzles) to intimidate detainees, and in at least one case biting and severely injuring a detainee; and taking photographs of dead Iraqi detainees.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁶ Mark Follman and Tracy Clark-Flory, “Prosecutions and convictions: A look at accountability to date for abuses at Abu Ghraib and in the broader 'war on terror.',” Solon, http://www.salon.com/2006/03/14/prosecutions_convictions/ (accessed December 29, 2015).

first American soldier they saw.¹⁹⁷ The effect was to reinforce the resolve of the insurgents and deepen their animosity toward America.

George R. Mastroianni offers a perspective on what went wrong at *Abu Ghraib*. First, he believes the soldiers committed their heinous crimes for their own sadistic pleasure. Second, he acknowledges that there was leadership failure at *Abu Ghraib* and levels above the facility. The levels above either knew or should have known about the dysfunctional leadership at *Abu Ghraib*. Third, he contends that the administration insisted on changing a long-standing position on interrogation and torture, more or less making it up as the war progressed, which created confusion at all levels regarding what was acceptable and what was unacceptable.¹⁹⁸ Jonathan Shay drawing from Homer's *Iliad*, sees the narrative of Achilles as a story of moral injury and that moral injury contains the elements of, "a betrayal of what's right, by someone who holds legitimate authority (e.g., in the military—a leader) in a high stakes situation."¹⁹⁹ In Shay's view, the perpetrator is a power holder. In the case of *Abu Ghraib* that betrayal started at the highest levels of policy makers where the stakes were very high. It was a betrayal of the soldiers and interrogators on the ground in that the confusion caused by changing long standing policies on torture left them to draw their own lines of what constitutes torture and unacceptable treatment of prisoners. The result was American soldiers committed heinous crimes which harmed prisoners and opened the door for the possibility of moral injury to the soldiers who witnessed what was done by their comrades.

¹⁹⁷ Grossman, 205.

¹⁹⁸ George R. Mastroianni, "Looking Back: Understanding Abu Ghraib," *Parameters* 43, no. 2 (2013): 63-4.

¹⁹⁹ Jonathan Shay, "Moral Injury," *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 31, no. 2 (2014): 183.

An important question: where was the chaplain when the abuse was occurring? The chaplain for *Abu Ghraib*, was Chaplain (First Lieutenant) Ann Tang of the 320th MP Battalion. She had just completed the Chaplain Officer Basic Course, and she had not originally been part of the MP unit but had transferred into the unit well after the Brigade assumed the mission.²⁰⁰ In many ways, she was an outsider. Further, senior officers had told her to stay out of the way. They had insisted she remain in her quarters and let the soldiers seek her out when they had needs. The chaplain complied with the order.²⁰¹ This was exactly the wrong use of a unit chaplain. If military chaplains are to be a moral influence, they must be with their soldiers. The chaplain serves as a special staff officers with direct access to the commander and by regulation is expected to provide advice on ethical, moral, and humanitarian implications of operational decisions as well as the spiritual, ethical, and moral health of the command.²⁰² An isolated chaplain cannot provide advice on the health of the command. Only a chaplain who engages soldiers where they live, eat, and perform their duties is in a position to assess the health of the command. If the chaplain had a ministry of presence (being where the guards work) her presence alone would have been a deterrence to bad behavior on the part of soldiers and she would have been in a position to advise the command regarding ethical concerns surrounding prisoner treatment. The ethical bridge between soldier and command she could have provided would have been a preventative measure of the type of moral injury identified by Jonathan Shay.

²⁰⁰ Michael Cannon, *Abu Ghraib: Reflections in the Looking Glass* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2005), 63-64.

²⁰¹ Stephen Mansfield, *The Faith of the American Soldier* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher / Penguin, 2005), 154-6.

²⁰² U.S. Department of the Army, *Army Chaplain Corps Activities*, Army Regulation 165-1 (Headquarters Washington, 2009), 12.

The moral failure by members of the 800th MP Brigade within the walls of *Abu Ghraib*, and its consequences points to the dire need to prevent, as far as possible, moral failure on the battlefield. Could an inclination formed by the cultivation of the virtues in the lives of the guards have resulted in humane and fair treatment of the prisoners? What recommendations can virtue ethics provide the military? Father Kolbe at Auschwitz and WO1 Thompson at *My Lai* under different circumstances displayed moral fortitude and heroic virtue in the face evil and suffering. How is this kind of virtue possible in the face of evil and suffering? Does this kind of virtue make a real difference in a world that knows significant evil and suffering? The next section will examine the issue of virtue in the context of evil and suffering.

3.5 Evil, Suffering And Virtue

The discussion that follows will focus on virtue. What is virtue and what would be the virtuous responses to issues of evil and suffering in the context of moral injury? Virtue theory is informed by practical wisdom/prudence and attends to the particulars of a given situation to determine the appropriate responses focusing on the agent's character, thoughts, feelings and actions. Thus, virtue theory recognizes that there is rarely one uniform response that would apply in every case, including cases of suffering or experiencing evil.

3.5.1 Virtue In Virtue Theory

Porter, while acknowledging the need for guidelines for a true human good life, sees virtue as beyond guidelines. Guidelines, like a recipe would indicate correct determined action, things one must do or abstain from doing, for a given situation while the humanly good life seeks to maintain correct activity over the course of a lifetime. To illustrate the difference between discrete action and a course of activity she compares two activities. The first activity is one of baking a cake, which requires defined steps, and conditions (e.g. preheat the oven to 400 degrees, mix one cup of milk with contents from the box). If one follows all the steps required to bake a cake the result should be a nice cake. Her second illustration, writing a book has no step-by-step instructions. A person cannot easily break down into discrete actions what it takes to write a book. The effort to live a humanly good life is more like the second illustration and consists of sustaining a course of activity rather than performing an activity.²⁰³ This distinction is important in understanding that if the military focuses on developing character in its personnel it will equip them to sustain a course of activity consistent with the humanly good life. That in turn will make honorable service more likely. If these efforts are successful, they will prevent, at least to some extent, the kinds of moral failures discussed previously. Preventing moral failure on the battlefield will reduce the moral injuries associated with moral failure.

Aquinas embraced a morality of rules as well as a morality of virtue. In making a distinction, Porter noted, “For a gentle act alone does not a gentle person make.”²⁰⁴ She

²⁰³ Porter, 100-2.

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 107.

identified four elements that make up a particular virtue. First, it includes an identifiable action that is a part of the nature of the virtue and includes a context. Second, it identifies actions that it can characterize as failures. Third, it includes what it would mean for a person to engage this correct action over an extensive amount of time. Finally, it possesses higher principles from which it can draw guidelines to determine true virtue. She concludes that Aquinas, from his explicit statements and treatment of particular virtues, had a theory of virtue that contained these four elements.²⁰⁵ One can return to the soldiers at *Abu Ghraib* to understand how her description of a virtue would have them treat prisoners humanly and with respect (identifiable action), failure of the virtue would result in abuse (identifiable failure), soldiers would conduct themselves in this manner at all times (extensive amount of time), and soldiers would base their conduct on the seven Army values (possesses higher principles). The seven Army values are loyalty, duty, respect, selfless service, honor, integrity, and personal courage. Soldiers practicing these values point back to Aquinas' view of virtue as a habit principled in good acts ordered toward the good.²⁰⁶ Four virtues stand as cardinal: prudence, temperance, fortitude, and justice.

²⁰⁵ Ibid, 109-10.

²⁰⁶ Ibid, 110.

3.5.2 Cardinal Virtues

Porter connects fortitude and temperance as affective virtues and views the former as responsible for maintaining a firm grasp of one's good in the face of great danger or death. Fortitude has less self-reference than temperance. For example, some self-reference is required when one tries to overcome a phobia. It may take fortitude for Samantha to board a plane to go and take care of her sick mother in Cincinnati while Sam, standing next to her, traveling for the same reason has no fortitude because he has no phobia. The smoker who decides to quit, exercising temperance, will require a period of self-referencing, and for some it may be a lifetime.²⁰⁷ To conduct themselves with honor on and off the battlefield, soldiers require both fortitude embedded in the value of personal courage and temperance associated with all seven Army values. When telling the truth hurts, soldiers need fortitude then as they do when told to clear a building held by the enemy, and they need temperance in their off-duty recreation as well as in their reaction to the death of a fellow soldier on the battlefield.

While temperance and fortitude seek the wellbeing of the agent, Aquinas maintains that justice addresses the relationship between individuals or an individual and the larger community. Discussions of Aquinas' views on justice generally follow the rationale of distributive justice and its regulative function of the distribution of goods among the community. Porter's analysis of Aquinas' views on justice follows the norms of fairness and non-maleficence.²⁰⁸ The moral failures of *My Lai* and *Abu Ghraib* were crimes that violated the relationship between the soldier and the community as well as the relationship between the

²⁰⁷ Ibid, 117.

²⁰⁸ Ibid, 124-7.

soldier and the individuals harmed. These unjust actions point to the need to cultivate virtue in the American military services.

Prudence determines specific actions that finds the mean of a particular virtue in a particular circumstance. This concept is significant for understanding moral injury in that the occasion of the injury in the context of war, at least in those who have violated their conscience, is an imprudent act compromising virtue. This is so even though the process of making a decision may have been as much or more from instinct as from rational thought, and took place in a split second (flash to bang so to speak) under harsh conditions, which may include sleep deprivation. Under circumstances where soldiers and leaders have time for deliberate rational thought, they often find the right mean. In June 2005, in the remote *Hindu-Kush* Mountains of Afghanistan, SEAL Team 10, led by Lieutenant Michael Murphy, made the decision to let three shepherds go rather than kill them to prevent them from alerting the Taliban of the team's location. Because of their decision to follow the Rules Of Engagement, the Taliban soon attacked them with an overwhelming force. After a fierce firefight and failed attempts to rescue the team, only one of the four-man team survived: Hospital Corpsman First Class, Marcus Luttrell.²⁰⁹

SEAL Team 10 made not just a virtuous decision, but also a heroic decision, putting their lives in jeopardy to maintain the moral high ground. With fortitude, they maintained justice but beyond that they displayed the virtue of charity. While their action led to their deaths, they avoided the violation of their moral integrity.

²⁰⁹ Marcus Luttrell, *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of Seal Team 10* (Little, Brown and Company: New York, 2013), 1-446.

Moral injury as well as all suffering are part of the human condition. The virtues do not offer a way to transcend or sidestep suffering, but they do offer a way to endure suffering, discover a higher meaning regarding the suffering, and transform the suffering beyond its normal presentation. The problem of evil and the suffering it produces is in the end unsolvable but it is conquerable. It is unsolvable because it is more a mystery than a problem.²¹⁰ It is conquerable because of its very nature as mystery, which demands involvement. Beyond the cardinal virtues, faith, hope, and charity provide the way to participate in life's deepest and even darkest mysteries. For the Apostle Paul, the greatest of these is charity (1 Cor 13). For Lewis, as quoted earlier, courage is more helpful than knowledge, sympathy more than courage and the love of God more than all others. The next three segments will discuss the theological virtues of faith, hope, and love. God infuses these virtues as habits of the will, after which the individual must attend to and cultivate them.

²¹⁰ A math or science problem can be objectified and the problem solved by reason. A mystery has the nature of personal involvement and therefore one cannot solve it as they would a problem. See Gabriel Marcel, *Being and Having*, trans. Katharine Farrer. (London: Dacre Press Westminster, 1949), 117.

3.6 Faith: A Voice From The Garbage Heap

As for me, I know that my vindicator lives, / and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust. / This will happen when my skin has been stripped off, / and from my flesh I will see God: / I will see for myself, / my own eyes, not another's, will behold him: / my inmost being is consumed with longing. (Job 19:25-27)

Faith is the first theological virtue, which goes beyond the cardinal virtues. Aquinas drew a distinction between order of generation and order of perfection assigning faith as first in generation but charity as first in perfection. The intellect apprehends hope and charity thus faith is the first in generation, but charity quickens faith and hope and is therefore first in perfection. He stated, "Charity is the mother and root of all the virtues, in as much as it is the form of them all. [ST I-II, 62,4]." Nevertheless, faith opens the way for the journey toward finding meaning, and to some the journey involves suffering. Does the virtue of faith offer any solace on this journey?²¹¹

Difficult circumstances that arise in life present a challenge to the virtues, especially faith. The author of *The Book of Job* addresses the possibility of faith in the midst of misery and directs his readers in the discovery of not only new theological insights, but a redirection in relationship. The character Job is an intense study of suffering and faith. Antonio Negri recorded Job's case as beyond stoicism.

Job lacks one fundamental element of stoicism: the separation of the ethical from the ontological, the conviction that ethics takes place despite the vicissitudes of being. And

²¹¹ The drama, *The Seventh Seal*, approaches this question from a different perspective. During the Black Pelage, a knight plays chess with death seeking answers regarding faith, God, life, and death. Antonius Block (Knight): "Is it so terribly inconceivable to comprehend God with one's senses? Why does he hide in a cloud of half-promises and unseen miracles? How can we believe in the faithful when we lack faith? What will happen to us who want to believe, but can not? What about those who neither want to nor can believe? Why can't I kill God in me? Why does He live on in me in a humiliating way - despite my wanting to evict Him from my heart? Why is He, despite all, a mocking reality I can't be rid of?" Ingmar Bergman, *The Seventh Seal*, DVD, directed by Ingmar Bergman (Sweden: Svensk Filmindustri, 1957).

with this we have reached the crucial point: *for Job ethics is being*; the relationship of man with being is divine.²¹²

Job's experience of life's vicissitudes indeed sent him spiraling downward in a rapid decent and his condition presented an ontological challenge. His friends tried unsuccessfully to persuade him that he had committed some great sin that has now resulted in his punishment. They string together coherent intellectual arguments with sound consecutions based on a view of temporal retribution that seeks justice. However, in the end their thoughts leave no room for one essential aspect of theology: mystery.

Job, his friends, and the consensus of their culture assumed their world operated under a rule of temporal retribution. As God pulled back the curtain of the cosmos, the reader of Job finds that God is gracious and loving even in the midst of suffering. The universal answer from the land of *Uz* was that God is beyond justification and the response to suffering is faith that allows for an abandonment to God's embrace and a capacity for compassion. This faith is beyond a theodicy as Emmanuel Lévinas observed,

Must not humanity now, in a faith more difficult than ever, in a faith without theodicy, continue Sacred History; a history which now demands even more of the resources of the self in each one, and appeals to its suffering inspired by the suffering of the other person, to its compassion which is a non-useless suffering (or love), which is no longer suffering "for nothing", and which straightaway has a meaning?²¹³

Suffering has meaning, but the suffering person only discovers it through the hermeneutic of a transformational faith. This faith resists the retributive justice where the good are rewarded and the wicked are punished.

²¹² Antonio Negri, *The Labor of Job: The Biblical Text as a Parable of Human Labor* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009) 25.

²¹³ Emmanuel Lévinas, "Useless Suffering," in *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the-other*, trans. Richard Cohen (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 164.

Job was a suffering believer who took his complaint to God. Navid Kermani relates an incident of rabbis holding a council in a hut in Auschwitz where they put God on trial for the terror the Jews were suffering. At dawn, they pronounced the verdict that they would banish God from the community, after which one of the rabbis suggested that it was now time to go and pray.²¹⁴ This kind of faith, a faith that would vote God out of the community and then retire to prayer, is the kind of faith that is paradoxical. Simone Weil, a Christian convert with mystical leanings, saw the paradoxical nature of this kind of faith and hope created in the crucible of great suffering. She reflects,

By redemptive suffering, God is present in extreme evil. For the absence of God is the mode of divine presence which corresponds to evil—absence which is felt. He who has not God within himself cannot feel his absence.²¹⁵

The redemptive suffering where God is present in extreme evil includes places such as Auschwitz, Aleppo, and the contemporary battlefields where moral injuries happen on all sides, even for those who wish not to have a side. This view of redemptive suffering goes beyond the clinical approach to moral injury. The fully rational approach to suffering leaves little or no room for mystery and the idea of redemptive suffering, even in the experience of abandonment as Weil proposed. In an Apostolic Letter, Pope John Paul II wrote, “In the messianic programme of Christ, which is at the same time the programme *of the Kingdom of God*, suffering is present in the world in order to release love, in order to give birth to works of love towards neighbour, in order to transform the whole of human civilization into a “civilization of love” (*SD*, 30).” This perspective embraces the suffering of a deeply violated

²¹⁴ Navid Kermani, *The Terror of God: Attar, Job and the Metaphysical Revolt*, trans. Wieland Hoban (Malden: Polity Press, 2011), 211.

²¹⁵ Simone Weil, *Gravity and Grace*, trans. Emma Crawford and Mario von der Ruhr (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2003), 27.

conscience and its ontological anxiety as an opportunity for the awakening of a new understanding of self that leads to forgiveness and repair. Here this perspective on suffering is at the same time supernatural and deeply human, as John Paul II writes, “It is *supernatural* because it is rooted in the divine mystery of the Redemption of the world, and it is likewise deeply *human*, because in it the person discovers himself, his own humanity, his own dignity, his own mission (SD 31).” It is a faith that interprets suffering as an invitation to discover the deeper truths of existence and serves as midwife to the birth of hope.

3.7 Hope: The Child Of Suffering

The hero cannot, by his own efforts, prevail in the struggle against evil. The forces arrayed against him, as well as the weakness within him, made victory impossible. The tragic nature of his quest begins to dawn on him, to oppress him, until the moment when failure seems inevitable.

—Joseph Loconte
A Hobbit A Wardrobe And A Great War, 189

In the epigram above Loconte acknowledges that the hero’s efforts are not enough to prevail against evil. He differentiates between the contemporary superheroes that always win through sheer will, intelligence, and a great amount of firepower with the heroes of C. S. Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien. The heroes Lewis and Tolkien created in their stories could only succeed in their quests with a hope in something beyond their own capacities.²¹⁶ These stories connect suffering and hope. Loconte notes the similarities between the World War I battlefields of Belgium and France where the stench of filth and death filled the air and the Dead Marshes

²¹⁶ Joseph. Loconte, *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe, and a Great War: How J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis Rediscovered Faith, Friendship, and Heroism in the Cataclysm of 1914-1918* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2015), 188-9.

Sam and Frodo crossed in *The Lord of the Rings*. The characters Merry and Pippin suffered cruelty, torment, and a haunting fear of death. Loconte concludes, “Here is why Tolkien’s work has been called a modern story, a “descent into hell” in its description of the sufferings of war.”²¹⁷ In their story, the early Christians received instruction on how to approach the suffering they experienced as a result of their faith.

The Apostle Paul knew affliction in his life, and as with the heroes of Lewis and Tolkien, he was able to learn from suffering. He did not let his suffering lead him into despair, but he embraced it as a pedagogy of hope. To the Christians in Rome he wrote,

Through whom we have gained access [by faith] to this grace in which we stand, and we boast in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us (Rom 5:2-5).

This concept of afflictions leading to endurance, then to character, and finally hope, is transformative. Through hope the early Christians transformed the cross, a symbol of extreme suffering, into a symbol of hope. What the Romans intended as a sign of shame became the central sign of a community that included all and endured all.

There is a long tradition of contextualizing current suffering within the suffering that Christ bore on the cross. One example is from Alfons Maria Wachsmann, a Catholic priest. The Nazis arrested him on June 23, 1943, and on February 21, 1944, they executed him. Writing to his sister in October 1943, he said,

Recently I have become much calmer. I have placed my fate completely and absolutely in the hand of God. As a matter of fact I had done this from the beginning, but it was only in

²¹⁷ Ibid, 167.

the school of the Cross that I received the grace to do it not only through words of prayer but through a total commitment of my life [....]²¹⁸

Wachsmann's phrase "school of the cross" indicates he was able to learn and grow through suffering. Where does one find this kind of hope formed in the school of the cross?

Dominic Doyle examined the Christian understanding of hope.²¹⁹ He found that in Aquinas, hope is a secure disposition and is the source of good acts that lead to happiness. Aquinas sees hope as a desire for a future good, where the path may be difficult but still possible. It is virtuous because it relies on God's assistance, as Doyle writes, "It is a theological virtue not only because it has God as its final cause, but also, critically, because it relies upon God's help to reach this goal (and any other, secondary goods that are ordered thereto)."²²⁰ Since Aquinas places hope in the will, there is, in his view, a firm intentionality about it in contrast to a passing emotion.²²¹ In order to appreciate the form in which Aquinas communicated his theology regarding hope, it is necessary to understand its context. The charge given to the Dominican brothers was to preach and hear confessions. He intentionally structured the *Summa* to meet his brother's educational needs with a systematic approach that provided a format to convey, with conceptual clarity, an integrated theology.²²² In so doing, it provided a means of examining how the virtues relate to other aspects of theology, and most

²¹⁸ Andrew Moore, "Not Explanation But Salvation: Scientific Theology, Christology, And Suffering," *Modern Theology* 22, no. 1 (2006): 76.

²¹⁹ Dominic Doyle, "Changing Hopes: The Theological Virtue of Hope in Thomas Aquinas, John of the Cross, and Karl Rahner," *Irish Theological Quarterly* 77, no. 1 (2011): 19.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 20.

²²¹ *Ibid.*

²²² *Ibid.*, 21-2.

importantly, as Doyle observed, “More fundamentally, Aquinas gives a clear account of hope’s relation to the other theological and moral virtues—not least because, without hope, the moral life loses its direction and motivation.”²²³ This last idea of direction and motivation is exactly what despair drains from a person. Hope is about the future but despair would leave one stuck in the present with no prospect of moving on with life. Moral injury has this aspect of draining the will to move forward, and those so stuck need the compassionate assistance of their community.

This theological perspective can inform the discussion of moral injury in the context of war. Aquinas’ emphases on firm intention gives the morally injured a direction for their journey of repair and their future implying what he referred to as moral motivation. Hope does not project a phantom of the future; rather it embraces the realities of the present, which are often brutal and unpleasant. It stands before the imperfect and evil, and it claims a reality that is yet to be, though in the view eternity is already. Individuals and communities have enacted hope in various contexts, but one example is the way hope has transformed the memory of the massacre of El Mozote. On December 11, 1981, the Salvadoran army massacred over a thousand people in the town of El Mozote. Among the dead were many women and children. Elizabeth Gandolfo gives the details of the massacre, and she describes how an annual event takes place in the town that keeps the memory alive. She attended the twentieth anniversary and described the mood as joyful and hopeful. The events of the day concluded with a Mass described by Gandolfo:

The Eucharistic celebration was both mournful and joyful, calling to mind the suffering of Christ on the cross and the victims in the massacre, and proclaiming with joy and hope the divine power of Resurrection. The pace of the mass was unhurried and thoughtful, and the

²²³ Ibid, 23.

music combined songs of both lament and praise. The living presence of the victims in the communion of saints, living and dead, was declared and felt.²²⁴

At the center of Christian belief is the hope of the resurrection, and at the center of its liturgical worship is the Eucharist where all the saints, living and dead, join with the angels and archangels in adoration of the present Christ. The heart of the El Mozote celebration centered on these two themes.

Gandolfo proposes four ways in which these kinds of liturgical practices generate hope: they interrupt prevailing conceptions of history and reality; they empower formation in a liberating identity; they nurture a new moral imagination and vision of an alternative future; and they inspire those who remember to emancipatory action in the present on behalf of that future.²²⁵ Suffering has subversive power to degrade received narratives, but hope can transform them into moral memory, which makes them a dangerous memory. Worship, sacraments, and community keep the Christian memory, a dangerous memory alive. This memory has proven, above all by the martyrs, to be resistant the subjugation of totalitarian governments. The study of moral injury can draw lessons from the community of El Mozote on how to help the morally injured interpret their personal history and nurture the moral memory and imagination in a way that leads to a productive future.

While the memory of the morally injured may be of a terrible thing he or she did or witnessed, such as the taking of life, that terrible memory can lead to a deep self-inventory. From such self-reflection a hope can arise that opens possibilities for a healthier future. This

²²⁴ Elizabeth O'Donnell Gandolfo . "Remembering the Massacre at El Mozote: A Case for the Dangerous Memory of Suffering as Christian Formation in Hope." *International Journal of Practical Theology* 17, no. 1 (2013): 67.

²²⁵ Ibid, 69.

goes back to the work Edward Tick does in his program *Soldier's Heart*. Here, through story telling in a sacred and safe space, veterans gain insight and draw out hope not by changing their stories but by letting others help by holding the story with them. Through this process the community owns the individual stories and the stories become the community's story. Here the veterans may find the mysterious aspects at the deep levels of hope, the kind about which Gabriel Marcel says,

Hope consists in asserting that there is at the heart of being, beyond all data, beyond all inventories and all calculations, a mysterious principle which is in connivance with me, which cannot but will that which I will if what I will deserves to be willed and is in fact willed by the whole of my being. The simplest illustrations will be the best. To hope against all hope that a person whom I love will recover from a disease which is said to be incurable is to say: It is impossible that I should be alone in willing this cure; it is impossible that reality in its inward depth should be hostile or so much as indifferent to what I assert is in itself a good.²²⁶

This is a concept that takes hope beyond simple desire or wish. One can wish a family member to recover from an illness, which is to say it would be wonderful if it happened. Hope goes beyond that pointing not just to a desired outcome, but also to something beyond one's self and one's desire. Here no one is alone. This is what Lewis and Tolkien convey through the heroes of their stories. The community of El Mozote embraced a hope that encouraged a connectedness of the cross and the communion of saints. It drew deeply from a hope grounded the memory of a risen Christ and a faith that He is present now. Edward Tick's veterans discover hope in sharing their stories with an affirming community, and hope transforms veterans into spiritual warriors. Faith has the capacity to speak from a garbage heap, hope can transform immense suffering giving birth to new perspectives, but charity has the power to remake through suffering.

²²⁶ Gabriel Marcel, *The Philosophy of Existentialism*, trans. Manya Harhari (New York: Citadel, 1995), 28.

3.8 Charity: Remaking Through Suffering

Charity in truth, to which Jesus Christ bore witness by his earthly life and especially by his death and resurrection, is the principal driving force behind the authentic development of every person and of all humanity. Love — *caritas* — is an extraordinary force which leads people to opt for courageous and generous engagement in the field of justice and peace. It is a force that has its origin in God, Eternal Love and Absolute Truth.

—Benedict XVI, *Caritas In Veritate*, 1

The United States Military has a longstanding ethos of taking care of soldiers on the battlefield as stated in the *Soldier's Creed*, “I will never leave a fallen comrade.”²²⁷ Charity leaves no one behind; it is dynamic and not idle toward suffering. *Cartas In Verite* asserts that charity is at the heart of the Church's teaching on social justice. It also discusses the suffering caused by being out of work or dependent on public or private assistance for a prolonged period of time. It addresses issues of the suffering endured by those who are migrants, and the feelings of emptiness and abandonment brought on by the inattention to soul care. It speaks to charity never lacking justice, but moving beyond justice.²²⁸ Where humanity suffers, charity creates an inertia toward change. Jean-Pierre Torrell points out that Aquinas held the view that charity is unable to move without the moral virtues, and that charity brings the moral virtues along with it. Even though he saw the theological virtues as infused, Aquinas still held individuals responsible and knew that there would be difficulty in exercising the virtues. Torrell writes, “Nothing is further from Thomas's thought than quietism: the gift of grace always calls for man's collaboration.”²²⁹ Charity's response to suffering is not static but

²²⁷ “Soldier's Creed,” <https://www.army.mil/values/soldiers.html> (accessed August 9, 2017).

²²⁸ Benedict XVI, “Caritas in Veritate,” http://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_ben-xvi_enc_20090629_caritas-in-veritate.html (accessed November 14, 2015).

²²⁹ Jean-Pierre Torrell, *Saint Thomas Aquinas: Spiritual Master*, ed. Robert Royal (Washington, D. C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2003), 2:274.

continues to move and act on behalf of the one suffering. Opening one's eyes to the suffering of others is the beginning of a spirituality that leads to a praxis of compassion and mercy.

Service for the sake of the suffering and love for those who suffer are connected, and refusing to serve is denial of love. The three community efforts, Soldier's Heart, Soul Repair Center, and The Roever Foundation, introduced in chapter one, reach places unreachable by the VA and the techniques they employ. These communities start from a spiritual perspective and embrace the virtues of faith, hope, and charity. They foster environments where the community gathers and through patient sharing of stories find empathy and unconditional love. For fourteen months Dave Roever received intense physical therapy as well as emotional therapy as he recovered from his war wounds. His most effective therapy though was when his young bride saw him for the first time. Despite Dave's terrible disfigurement she reached down, kissed him, and said, "I just want you to know that I love you Davie. Welcome home."²³⁰ Her reaching out in love, a service in the midst of suffering, disarmed Dave of his greatest fears and allowed him not only to know her love but to know the love of God.

Love is disarming, and nothing is more disarming than the love displayed in the sacrifice of the cross. At the center of the life of the Church is the sacrifice, the pascal mystery where Christ is present. "Before this mystery of love, human reason fully experiences its limitations."²³¹ The direction of these thoughts offers a perspective through which one may view moral injury. The suffering caused by the moral injury of war places ethical demands on

²³⁰ Dave Roever, phone conversation with author, Steelton, PA, United States, June 9, 2016.

²³¹ John Paul II, "Ecclesia de Eucharistia," http://www.vatican.va/holy_father/special_features/encyclicals/documents/hf_jp-ii_enc_20030417_ecclesia_eucharistia_en.html (accessed November 16, 2015).

the nation and the communities in which the injured live to attend to their wounds.

Communities have the opportunity to see with open-eyed mysticism and to respond in love to the morally injured of our wars. They have the opportunity to help them carry their stories and to realize that no matter how strong one may be, a real hero needs outside help in struggles against evil and suffering. Charity, the heart of social justice, leaves no one behind. The personal story of Karol illustrates the struggle the human heart experiences when faced with harsh persecution and how love can prevent the moral injuries caused by hate.

3.9 Karol's Story Of Hate And Love

History, among other stories it tells, is the story of humanity enduring suffering caused by evil acts in a multitude of forms and venues. Under helpless situations, people often fall into despair. Despair has a definite psychological dimension, but despair has such an insidious nature that it moves beyond the mind to the soul or the self-consciousness that is the principle of human rational and sensitive activities.²³² Its appeal to the suffering person is to have a defense mechanism against false hope, but in the end, it may lead to one maintaining no hope at all. Dante with Virgil read the dreadful sign at the gates of hell, "All hope abandon, ye who enter here."²³³ An additional challenge for those who have experienced extreme suffering brought on through evil acts is overcoming the understandable temptation to hate.

²³² Ludwig Ott, *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, ed. James Bastible, trans. Patrick Lynch (Charlotte, NC: TAN Books, 1974), 97.

²³³ Dante Alighieri, "The Divine Comedy," trans. Henry Cary, vol. 20 of *The Harvard Classics* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1937), 13.

Larry Dewey's patient Dave in a rage fueled by hate killed two Japanese guards with a Samurai sword and lived with years of regret for his actions.²³⁴ A soldier who suffers violent persecution as Dave did or bears witness to the violence of persecution may fall into hate and become subjected to the possibility of moral injury. An epidemic of evil often perpetuates a cycle of persecution, hate and retaliation. Counter to this reaction to hate is to respond to violent persecution with love. Though it is difficult to react in this manner, it is possible, as demonstrated by some Polish Catholics during World War II.

The priest, Tomasz Zaleski, in the dramatization of Pope St. John Paul II, *Karol A Man Who Became Pope*, realized the truth about hate and its seductive abilities. The Nazis occupied Krakow and committed terrible atrocities against the Poles, especially the Jewish Poles. The people were helpless in stopping the atrocities they witnessed, which presented them with a troubling question. In a moving scene, the film presents Karol and his priest kneeling in the cathedral. As they prayed, Karol questioned,

Why don't I have an answer? Why does one man force another human being to live in absolute pain – without hope? How can we answer to all this? How many millions of monsters are there on this earth? Why must the innocent pay? How many more innocent still have to be born just to be exterminated?²³⁵

Karol's question represents a central challenge raised by the problem of evil. At that moment it was not an academic question, rather it was an existential question raised through the tears of the eyes of a witness to evil.

²³⁴ Dewey, 88.

²³⁵ Giacomo Battiato, *Karol: A Man Who Became Pope*, DVD, directed by Giacomo Battiato (Universal City, CA: Universal, 2006).

Karol represents all those who suffer brutality and injustice at the hands of seemingly heartless persecutors. Deep inside the human interior is the honest inclination to lash out in kind. Reflecting on Karol's question, Zaleski responded,

I was staring those Nazis in the eyes. The evil I saw there was so radical. So incomprehensible. Obscene. And, I felt like killing them. And, I'm a priest. I feel guilty about that. I don't want to hate like they do. Love – love – only love can keep men from falling into abyss.²³⁶

When hate attaches to one's soul there is a narrowing of options for good. This is similar to a negative bias in that one sees only negative aspects of a person or situation because that is all for which they are looking. Zaleski instinctively knew that hate then blinds one to the possibility of seeing better responses to suffering at the hands of evil men. In the midst of either witnessing evil or suffering under evil acts, it is one of life's greatest difficulties to distinguish between the consequences of evil and the agent of evil. In the end, if unchecked and undistinguished, the witness or victim becomes a re-victim of moral wounding and becomes a prisoner of hate. Hate is self-destructive and consuming. The response of hate or love is a choice.

The bond between soldiers who go to war together is strong, and when a soldier sees one of his or her friends die in combat it often evokes a hatred for the enemy. Hatred impairs the soldier's decision-making process and makes it more likely that she or he will make a decision that leads to moral failure on the battlefield. As demonstrated with the cases of *My Lai* and *Abu Ghraib* moral failure leaves soldiers vulnerable to moral injury. Returning veterans with moral injury complicated by a hatred for the enemy may never reach the point of loving their enemy but they can reform the way in which they view their former enemy. Edward Tick's

²³⁶ Ibid.

return journeys with Vietnam veterans to encounter former foes is an example of the possibility that veterans can change the way they view their former enemy.²³⁷

Veterans who confront their hatred of their enemy open the way for their story to continue in healthy way. This chapter told the story of evil and suffering but ended with a discussion of the mystery of love. The next chapter will discuss moral injury from the perspective that takes this mystery of love to its deepest level. Here the drama of moral injury encounters the drama of God's love. Chapter four tells the story of redemption.

²³⁷ Tick, *Warriors Return*, 70.

CHAPTER 4: THE STORY OF REDEMPTION

Let my spear lie idle for spiders to weave their web around it. May I live in peace in white old age. May I sing with garlands around my white head, Having hung up my shield on the pillared house of the goddess. May I unfold the voice of books, which the wise honor.”

—Euripides, *Erechtheus*,
In *War And The Soul*, 186

Euripides longed for the final chapter of his story to be one in which he would sit and read the books of the wise while his spear served no other purpose than to provide a construction site for spiders. This idyllic picture of life after war is the dream of many warriors. At some point, warriors want to enjoy the rest of a clear mind and a clean conscience. Is this life possible for those who live with moral injury? From where will their help come, and how will their story end? What has the power to transform their stories of moral pain and deep sorrow into stories with meaning and openness to redemption?

Andrew Greeley suggests that, “Religion is story before it is anything else and after it is everything else.”²³⁸ Greeley is correct in that the message of any religion is too important to tell aside from power of story. Hans Urs Von Balthasar developed a theological theory, *Theo-Drama*, where God’s uncreated infinite freedom and humanity’s created finite freedom interplay on the stage of heaven and earth.²³⁹ He identified the three elements of dramatic creativity as the author (Father), the actor (Son), and the director (Holy Spirit), and the three elements of dramatic realization as presentation, audience, and horizon.²⁴⁰ Noting the necessity of an audience, he wrote, “For the drama to be realized it has to be presented before

²³⁸ Andrew Greeley, *The Catholic Imagination* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 35.

²³⁹ Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 2, *Dramatis Personae: Man In God* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1994), 173-6.

²⁴⁰ Hans Urs Von Balthasar, *Theo-Drama: Theological Dramatic Theory*, vol. 1, *Prologomena* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1988), 268-314.

an audience and, as the audience becomes engaged in the drama, the performance opens up a new horizon of meaning through which the audience can gain a fresh understanding of itself and its situation in the world.”²⁴¹ This is the story that goes straight to the soul, touching the audience at the deepest levels.

Balthasar sees death as the central issue around which drama revolves, exists as a destiny, and is an interpreter of life.²⁴² His spotlight falls in the same places Tillich’s lights of existential anxiety illumined: death, fate, and meaning. Throughout the history of drama, Balthasar held that it was inevitable that death and love would come together as well as the place where death and the struggle for the good would meet.²⁴³ What is undeniable is that death and war do come together, with violence and killing. Randall Rosenberg observes, “The tension of drama lies in the ambivalence of the present situation and the future-shaping nature of our free decisions.”²⁴⁴ There is no stage like war where these words ring true, and for some warriors, the decisions they make on that stage haunt them long after the protagonist declare peace.

The Egyptian, Greek, Norse, and Celtic Mythologies all tell stories of war and religion, usually through the lives of the gods and goddesses associated with war. The Hebrew Scriptures tell stories of war and religion, especially as the Israelites took possession of the

²⁴¹ Stephen Wigley, *Balthasar's Trilogy: A Reader's Guide* (New York: T & T Clark International, 2010), 79.

²⁴² Balthasar, Vol. 2, 371-5.

²⁴³ Ibid, 388, 413.

²⁴⁴ Randall Stephen Rosenberg, “Theory and Drama in Balthasar's and Lonergan's Theology of Christ's Consciousness and Knowledge: An Essay in Dialectics” (PhD diss., Boston College, 2008), 30, in ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, <http://dbproxy.lasalle.edu:2053/docview/89143343?pq-origsite=summon> (accessed November 21, 2016).

land of Cana. Christian scripture is not void of violence. In the Garden of Gethsemane, a follower of Jesus drew his sword and cut off the ear of a servant of the high priest (Mat 26:51). Following a violent scourging, Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion. Religious leadership, represented by the high priest Caiaphas and the Sanhedrin, coerced government and political powers, represented by Pilate and Herod Antipas, to move to this pronouncement. However, those powers left a small detachment of soldiers with the grim mission of the execution, which involved torture and humiliation.

Despite the appearance of power and control of the Prefect of the Roman province of Judaea, Jesus freely laid down his life (John 10:18). God, through a power stronger than any Roman legion, the power of love, was unfolding a story more dramatic than any crucifixion. The central story the God of Christian Scripture tells is one of redemption, and redemption is God taking the initiative of love toward fallen humanity. The center of the great Theo-drama of Christianity, with conflict, tension, and resolution is Redemption with the Jewish and Roman political powers only playing supporting rolls. The real action is God's self-giving. In this drama, Jesus is one character with two roles as the Passover lamb or victim and priest.

4.1 The Mission

While the story of redemption is a great solace for humanity, the thought of its possibilities and uncertainties are, at times, frightening. The 1986 film, *The Mission* is a depiction of some of these dynamics. In the film Rodrigo Mendoza is a mercenary and slaver who makes his living kidnapping members of the Guaraní community. Mendoza finds that his brother, Felipe, is having an affair with his fiancé and goes into an uncontrollable rage killing his brother in a

duel. Although the authorities find Mendoza not guilty, he falls into what appears to be a deep depression but may very well be the moral injury described in this dissertation. Mendoza will more than likely die from lack of eating and self-isolation, except Father Gabriel visits him and offers him an intriguing challenge,²⁴⁵

Gabriel: So...you killed your brother. And it was a duel. And the law can't touch you. Is this remorse? / Mendoza: Leave...priest. / Gabriel: Maybe you wish I was your executioner. Perhaps that would be easier. / Mendoza: Leave me alone. You know what I am. / Gabriel: Yes. You're a mercenary, you're a slave trader...and you killed your brother. I know. And you loved him. Although you chose a strange way to show it. / Mendoza: Are you laughing at me? Are you laughing at me? Gabriel: I'm laughing at you...because all I see is laughable. I see a man running away, a man hiding from the world. I see a coward...Go on. Go on. So is that it? Is this how you mean to go on? / Mendoza: There is nothing else. / Gabriel: There is life. / Mendoza: There is no life. / Gabriel: There is a way out, Mendoza. / Mendoza: For me, there is no redemption. / Gabriel: God gave us the burden of freedom. You chose your crime. Do you have the courage to choose your penance? Do you dare do that? / Mendoza: There is no penance hard enough for me. / Gabriel: But do you dare try it? / Mendoza: Do I dare? Do you dare to see it fail?²⁴⁶

Mendoza does choose his penance. Joining the Jesuits on a mission trip, led by Father Gabriel, Mendoza drags a cargo bundle of his military equipment, including his sword and armor, through the thick rain forest and up dangerously steep cliffs. When they reach their destination, the Guaraní recognize Mendoza as the man who has killed and enslaved their family members. They also recognize a man who has found humility, and instead of killing him, as justice might allow, they free him of his burden, a burden Mendoza had refused to be

²⁴⁵ In mythology, Psyche (soul) suffered much at the hands of Venus. She desired to end her sufferings by drowning herself. Robert Johnson observed, "Does this not point toward a kind of self-sacrifice, the relinquishing of one level of consciousness for another? Almost always in human experience the urge toward suicide signals an edge of a new level of consciousness. If you can kill the right thing – the old way of adaptation – and not injure yourself, a new energy-filled era will begin." Robert A. Johnson, *She: Understanding Feminine Psychology* (New York: Harper, 1989), 47.

²⁴⁶ Robert Bolt, *The Mission*, DVD, directed by Roland Joffe (United Kingdom: Goldcrest Films, 1986).

free of throughout the trek through the forest. Mendoza found redemption at the only place possible for him, at the hands of the Guaraní community he had violated.

Mendoza was repentant but in a very unhealthy way: living in isolation and refusing food believing that, “For me, there is no redemption.” This is one of the key characteristics of moral injury, believing that one is beyond redemption. Meagher raises the question:

Are not our hearts hidden even from ourselves, or perhaps most from ourselves? If all sin, even the murder of God, can be forgiven, does this signal a new opportunity for innocence or a new path to impunity?²⁴⁷

Touching the pain and suffering of the moral wound creates a sacred moment where there is “a new opportunity for innocence,” but one can only approach this opportunity through faith that is willing to risk. This was so for Mendoza when he responded to the invitation to receive redemption at the urging of the priest, Gabriel. Mendoza had to take the first steps of faith not knowing with certainty if he would find redemption or live forever with remorse.

C. S. Lewis captures the sense of risk that accompanies faith in *The Silver Chair*, where Jill must decide about the trustworthiness of the Lion, writing,

“Are you thirsty?” said the Lion. “I’m dying of thirst,” said Jill. “Then drink,” said the Lion....“Will you promise not to – do anything to me, if I do come?” “I make no promise,” said the Lion. “Do you eat girls?” she said. “I have swallowed up girls and boys, women and men, kings and emperors, cities and realms,” said the Lion. It didn’t say this as if it were boasting, nor as if it were sorry, nor as if it were angry. It just said it....“Oh dear!” said Jill, coming another step nearer. “I suppose I must go and look for another stream then.” “There is no other stream,” said the Lion.²⁴⁸

Jesus promises to give those who follow him the water of eternal life (John 4:14), and yet those who follow him must take up the cross and lose their own life (Mat 16: 24-5). Just as Jill and

²⁴⁷ Meagher, 49.

²⁴⁸ C. S. Lewis, “The Silver Chair,” in *The Chronicles of Narnia* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 2010), 557-8.

Mendoza, those who would seek their redemption through following Jesus must first decide to trust him. Jonathan Shay in chapter one of this dissertation noted that moral injury destroys trust and what replaces it is an expectation for harm, exploitation, and humiliation.²⁴⁹

4.2 The Holy Door

Sermons, literature, visual art, music, and other media have served as the means of telling the dramatic story of God's redeeming action. What means could the community employ to tell the story of redemption to those who carry a moral injury, and to tell it in a way that the injured hear it in the depths of their conscience? This chapter will explore the possibility of one means: The Holy Door. This is a visual means of telling the story of redemption and by it; the audience becomes a participant in the drama of salvation. Drawing on Israel's sabbatical year of Jubilee, with its emphasis on universal pardon and joy, the Christian Jubilee celebrates its spiritualized form. Scholars believe that in 1300, Pope Boniface VIII instituted the first Christian Jubilee. The Roman Church celebrated the Jubilee every fifty years; the medieval Christians associated fifty with remission of sin. However, today the Catholic Church celebrates an ordinary Jubilee year every twenty-five years or she celebrates it when a pope proclaims an extraordinary year. From the Christian Jubilee developed the custom of the Holy Door.²⁵⁰

²⁴⁹ Jonathan Shay, "Moral Injury," *Psychoanalytic Psychology* 31, no. 2 (2014): 183.

²⁵⁰ "Holy Year of Jubilee," New Advent, <http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08531c.htm> (accessed November 22, 2016).

Pilgrims and penitents have used the *porta sancta* (holy door) since the fifteenth century as a ritual expression of conversion where they, “pass through it as a gesture of leaving the past behind and crossing the threshold from sin to grace, from slavery to freedom, and from darkness to light.” According to Giovanni Ruccellai of Viterbo, in 1423, Pope Martin V opened the Holy Door for the first time at the Basilica of Saint John Lateran, and Pope Alexander VI opened the Vatican Basilica’s Holy Door, on Christmas 1499.²⁵¹ This door, or gate, is symbolic of Jesus and the fullness of life in which the pilgrim enters. Jesus said of himself that he was the sheepgate (John 10:7-10).²⁵²

At the beginning of the Jubilee year the Holy Door at each of the basilicas in Rome are unwalled and then walled at the end of the Jubilee. Pope Francis encouraged each diocese to open a holy door during the most recent Jubilee, Year of Mercy. The Pope began the year on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 2015, and ended it on Christ the King Sunday, 2016, both with the customary rite at the Basilica of St. Peter. In announcing the Year Of Mercy, Pope Francis wrote in *Misericordiae Vultus*, “wherever there are Christians, everyone should find an oasis of mercy.”²⁵³ The primary feature of an oasis is water. At the oasis of mercy is living water that not only quenches thirst but also heals. Jill had to decide to trust the Lion in

²⁵¹ Rita A. Thiron, *Resources for the Year of Mercy: Part II the Holy Door* (Washington, DC: Federation of Diocesan Liturgical Commissions, 2015), 4-6.

²⁵² In ancient Israel, to protect against thieves, at night the shepherd herded the sheep into an enclosure built of loosely stacked rocks and an open entrance. The shepherd would lie down closing the open entrance and forcing any would be thief to physically step over him. See, William Barclay, *The Gospel of John Volume 2*, Revised Edition. (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1975), 58.

²⁵³ Francis, “*Misericordiae Vultus*,” Libreria Editrice Vaticana, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_letters/documents/papa-francesco_bolla_20150411_misericordiae-vultus.html (accessed November 22, 2016).

order to quench her thirst and the morally injured must grapple with this same decision for approaching healing waters involves the perceived threat of devouring forces.

While the morally injured may never have the opportunity to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Door of the Basilica of St. Peter, they may still benefit from the compelling story it tells. The door has a connection to war, or more exactly the avoidance of war. In 1949, Bishop Francesco Von Streng of Switzerland, in the name of Swiss Catholics spared from the terror of war, donated the current door. The door, created in bronze by Nivo Consorti, speaks the dramatic story of redemption through God's mercy. This door, also called the "Door of the Great Pardon," displays this story using four rows of four panels making a total of sixteen panels. One may access information regarding the panels at St. Peter's Basilica Info with the website information provided in the footnote.²⁵⁴ This chapter will discuss redemption from the perspective of the Holy Door, "Door of the Great Pardon," with special concern for moral injury in the context of war.

Each row of four panels tells a story. The four panels of the first row depict the angel guarding the gate of paradise, Adam and Eve driven from the garden, Mary receiving the Annunciation, and a depiction of the angel of the Annunciation. Inscribed on the second panel are the words *Quod Heva Tristis Abstulit* (What Sad Eve Took,); and opposite of it, moving right, inscribed on the third panel are the words, *Tu Reddidis Almo Germine* (You Have Made A Life-Giving Blossom). The words on the third panel complete the thought of the words from

²⁵⁴ "The Holy Door," St. Peter's Basilica Info, <http://stpetersbasilica.info/Interior/HolyDoor/HolyDoor.htm> (accessed November 22, 2016).

the second panel; both are from an ancient hymn.²⁵⁵ This chapter will discuss this first row as, “The Way Back From No Return.”

The second row begins with the panel depicting John baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River; it is inscribed with the words *Tu Venis Ad Me* (You Come To Me). Moving right, the next panel depicts the lost sheep with the inscription *Salvare Quod Perierat* (To Save What Was Lost). The third panel of this row depicts the father’s merciful response to the prodigal son with the words *Pater, Peccavi Coelom Et Coram Te* (Father I Have Sinned Against Heaven And Against You). The last panel of this row depicts the cure of the paralytic with the inscription *Tolle Crabatum Tuum Et Ambul* (Take Up Your Mat And Walk). The discussion centered on this row will carry the title, “Found In The Land Of The Lost.”

The third row begins with the depiction of the sinful woman drawing near and washing the feet of Jesus with its inscription *Remittuntur Ei Peccata Multa* (Her Many Sins Are Forgiven Her). The second panel in this row tells of the need for forgiveness displaying the scene of Peter asking how many times a person is required to forgive another, with *Septuagies Septies* (Seventy-Seven) as its inscription. The next panel unfolds the story of Peter’s denial, depicting Jesus turning and looking at Peter after his third denial and the inscription *Conversus Dominus, Respexit Petrum* (The Lord Turned And Looked At Peter). The last panel of this row displays Jesus crucified between two thieves and his response to one of them with the inscription *Hodie Mecum Eris In Paradiso* (Today You Shall Be With Me In Paradise). This chapter will use this row to tell the story of “The Promise Of Love And Forgiveness.”

²⁵⁵ The hymn, *O Gloriosa Domina*, O Heaven's Glorious Mistress was composed by Venantius Fortunatus (530-609), Bishop of Poitiers. See, “O Gloriosa Domina,” *Thesaurus Precum Latinarum: Treasury of Latin Prayers*, <http://www.preces-latinae.org/thesaurus/BVM/OGloriosa.html> (accessed January 2, 2017).

The bottom row starts with the panel depicting Thomas, having struggled with his faith, before his Lord. The inscription is *Beati Qui Crediderunt* (Blessed Are Those Who Have Believed). The second panel of this row displays Jesus giving the apostles the power to forgive sins with the inscription *Accipite Spiritum Sanctum* (Receive The Holy Spirit). The next panel shows Saul before Jesus with the words *Sum Jesus Quem Tu Persequeris* (I Am Jesus Whom You Are Persecuting). The last panel of this row and final panel of the Holy Door displays the scene of a pope knocking on the Holy Door to inaugurate a Jubilee. Its inscription reads *Sto Ad Ostium Et Pulso* (I Stand At The Door And Knock). The discussion of the story told by these panels is “A Wonderful New World.”

The following will discuss the panels from the Holy Door from the perspective of story and redemption. Chapter five, The Story Of Healing, will build on this material offering specific suggestions on how to use the panels in working with small groups of veterans in a retreat setting. While this chapter looks at redemption from a Christian perspective, the author recognizes that not all veterans are Christian and other ways of working with veterans are useful. Chapter five will also introduce a spiritual approach that was not Christian based used by a spiritual fitness team with soldiers in Iraq.

4.3 The Way Back From No Return

For us make no mistake. All that we fear from all the kinds of adversity, severally, is collected together in the life of a soldier on active service. Like sickness, it threatens pain and death. Like poverty, it threatens ill lodging, cold, heat, thirst, and hunger. Like slavery, it threatens toil, humiliation, injustice and arbitrary rule. Like exile, it separates you from all you love.

-C. S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory*, 70

The last adversity Lewis listed that a soldier endures is exile. Lewis would not have known the term moral injury and the exile it imposes, what Warren Kinghorn described as, “moral fragmentation of a teleological whole.”²⁵⁶ However, Lewis did know the experience of war and its moral effects on soldiers for he served as a Second Lieutenant in the British Army during World War I, known simply as the Great War until World War II. He arrived at the front on his nineteenth birthday serving in the trenches where the sight and smell of death was a living reality with no escape. John Keegan wrote, “You could smell the front line miles before you could see it.”²⁵⁷ The sights in the trenches were as bad as the smells. Joseph Loconte noted, “Rats roamed at will. Gorging themselves on human remains, some were the size of a cat.”²⁵⁸ On April 15, 1918, shrapnel hit Lewis in the hand, leg, and chest. The same shrapnel killed Sergeant Harry Ayres, whom Lewis felt dearly about as his own father. From his hospital bed, in Bristol, he encountered the shattered limbs and minds of the war wounded and those who would never leave the hospital alive. He struggled to come to terms with the

²⁵⁶ Warren Kinghorn, “Combat Trauma and Moral Fragmentation: A Theological Account of Moral Injury,” *Journal of the Society Of Christian Ethics* 32, no. 2 (2012): 67.

²⁵⁷ John Keegan, found in Max Hasting’s, *Catastrophe 1914: Europe Goes to War* (New York: Alfred A. Knoph, 2013), 516.

²⁵⁸ Joseph Loconte, *A Hobbit, a Wardrobe, and a Great War: How J. R. R. Tolkien and C. S. Lewis Rediscovered Faith, Friendship, and Heroism in the Cataclysm of 1914-1918* (Nashville, TN: Nelson Books, 2015), 59.

randomness of death and the scared face of war.²⁵⁹ After the war, Lewis and J. R. R. Tolkien would become great friends. The war profoundly affected them and influenced their writing. Tolkien also wrote of this sense of exile,

There was an Eden on this very unhappy earth. We all long for it, and we are constantly glimpsing it: our whole nature at its best and least corrupted, its gentlest and most humane, is still soaked with the sense of 'exile.'²⁶⁰

A more contemporary way of saying this is that Eden is a part of the human DNA and exile its inescapable story.

For Tolkien, "all stories are ultimately about the fall."²⁶¹ Lewis and Tolkien set about writing their stories, *The Chronicles of Narnia* for Lewis and *The Hobbit* for Tolkien, in the 1930s, when the educated dismissed any traditional belief in evil. For the educated, discussions of evil were the rotting leftovers of medieval superstition. About how Lewis and Tolkien's shared views of the fall Loconte writes,

Nevertheless, these authors anchor their stories in the ancient idea of the Fall of Man: just as a force of evil entered our world in a distant past, so it inhabits and threatens the world in a distant past, so it inhabits and threatens the worlds of their imaginations. It is the deepest source of alienation and conflict in their stories. Even so, it cannot erase the longing for goodness and joy, so palpably alive in the best and noblest of their characters. They are haunted by the memory of Eden: take away this fundamental idea, and their moral vision collapses.²⁶²

²⁵⁹ Ibid, 99.

²⁶⁰ J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 110-1.

²⁶¹ Ibid, 147.

²⁶² Loconte, 150.

Eden, Fall, and Exile are opening themes in the story told by the author of Genesis, and Tolkien and Lewis understood that all good stories about humanity address these fundamental themes.

4.3.1 What Sad Eve Took — You Have Made A Life-Giving Blossom

The first two panels of the Holy Door tell this story of exile based on the third chapter of Genesis which is in many ways, the saddest story ever told. The historical critical method assigns this account to the editorial work of the Yahwist whose composition rises to the level of Homer's epics.²⁶³ The first panel depicts the angel guarding the gate of paradise, and the second panel depicts Adam and Eve driven from the garden. Together they leave a sense of hopelessness, and if these were the only panels, it would be a story about hopelessness. The human capacity of memory makes possible both joys and sorrows. Some memories are a haunting reminder of what was and what could still be but for loss. Adam and Eve took little with them when they departed Paradise, but they did take the memory of Eden. Adam's greatest delight was now only a memory and it was a memory that haunted him, but without memory, the idea of hope would have little meaning. No matter how early regret arrives it is always too late, but no matter how late redemption arrives it is always in time.

For the moment though the story sits in the sadness of exile where redemption and return could only be a possibility for the future. The sadness for Adam and Eve was in what they lost for Paradise was their true home and in exile, they were homeless. John Milton captured the sad mood of this exile at the end of his epic poem, *Paradise Lost*, writing,

And vapour as the Libyan Air adust, / Began to parch that temperate Clime; whereat / In either hand the hastning Angel caught / Our lingring Parents, and to th' Eastern Gate / Led them direct, and down the Cliff as fast / To the subjected Plaine; then disappear'd. / low-

²⁶³ R K. Harrison, *Introduction to the Old Testament: With a Comprehensive Review of Old Testament Studies and a Special Supplement On the Apocrypha*, (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1969), 501.

They looking back, all th' Eastern side beheld / Of Paradise, so late thir happie seat, /
 Wav'd over by that flaming Brand, the Gate / With dreadful Faces throng'd and fierie
 Armes: / Som natural tears they drop'd, but wip'd them soon; / The World was all before
 them, where to choose Thir place of rest, and Providence thir guide: / They hand in hand
 with wandring steps and slow, / Through *Eden* took thir solitarie way.²⁶⁴

The entire world was before them, but the only world they wanted was behind them. They longed for home, the place where they walked with God and cooperated in creation by tending the garden. A return to their happy story seemed impossible. Moral injury is a story of Paradise lost, exile, and isolation.

Mendoza was an example of a person struggling just to maintain a resemblance of life as he squatted in his cell barely able to eat. Alexander Schmemmann saw the Fall as a non-Eucharistic life and a non-Eucharistic failing to transform the material life into the life of God. God gave Adam and Eve the fruit of every tree in the garden save one, whose fruit was self-communion apart from God. In choosing to eat that fruit, Adam and Eve revealed a change in their appetite. Schmemmann writes, "In our perspective, however, the "original" sin is not primarily that man has "disobeyed" God: the sin is that he ceased to be hungry for Him and Him alone, ceased to see his whole life depending on the whole world as a sacrament of communion with God."²⁶⁵ Moral injury metaphorically suppresses the appetite of the soul for the good things in life and leaves the injured inwardly in a cell of shame as Mendoza squatted outwardly in his cell.

²⁶⁴ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*, ed. Barbara K. Lewalski (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2007), 332.

²⁶⁵ Alexander Schmemmann, *For the Life of the World* (New York: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1988), 18.

4.3.1.1 Shame

Because of their change in appetite, Adam and Eve lost the ability to transform life. They would now return to the earth where both they and the fruit they ate found their origins, losing something greater than physical life: a life with God alone. Regarding Adam, Schmemmann observes, “He ceased to be the priest of the world and became its slave.”²⁶⁶ What Adam and Eve did transformed their emotional capacity where the first emotion they experienced post disobedience was shame. Shame as discussed in chapter two is different from guilt. Adam and Eve were guilty of disobeying God, but what they felt was shame. June Tangney and Ronda Dearing found little empirical evidence that would support the common assumption that shame arises from public exposure of some failure whereas guilt is in the private domain of internalized conscience.²⁶⁷ This is congruent with the narrative of the fall that locates Adam and Eve’s shame with an internalized awareness, an awareness of their nakedness, and the lack of public exposure for there was no public.

Shame is one of the most complex emotions. Michael Morgan writes, “Shame runs deep, and part of this depth is that it reaches to who we are overall, and the kind of person we are.”²⁶⁸ Morgan connects shame to character and sees it as a useful emotion in that its discomfort can motivate a person to change, writing, “Hence, when the issue is in fact a serious one, as the issue of violence, atrocity, and genocide is, to awaken us from our moral lethargy one should call upon a deep emotion, and shame fits the bill in this regard.”²⁶⁹ What Morgan identifies is

²⁶⁶ Ibid, 17.

²⁶⁷ June Tangney and Ronda Dearing, *Shame and Guilt* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2002), 24.

²⁶⁸ Michael Morgan, *On Shame* (New York: Routledge, 2008), 51.

²⁶⁹ Ibid.

shame motivating positive movement, but shame can also have negative effects when it causes a person to be emotionally stuck and their life story unable to progress, as with Mendoza.²⁷⁰

When shame immobilizes a person, it may also cause him or her to hide metaphorically as Adam and Eve responded. Moral injury is a story of fall and exile. Antal and Winings suggest that, “moral injury may be nothing more than a euphemism for sin and its consequences.”²⁷¹

Marine Captain Timothy Kudo, on the Opinion Page of *The Washington Post* addresses the issue of turning people into killers, the incongruences it causes, and the inadequate language the military and VA have to address it, writing,

VA has started calling this problem “moral injury,” but that’s as deceptive a euphemism as “collateral damage.” This isn’t the kind of injury you recover from with rest, physical therapy and pain medication. War makes us killers. We must confront this horror directly if we’re to be honest about the true costs of war.²⁷²

Kudo identifies the transformation of young men and women into killers as a horror just as Peeta portrays one who knows this horror in his response in Ceasar’s interview when he said, “I mean to murder innocent people, that costs everything that you are.”²⁷³ The killing Peeta participated in had transformed him, and he was no longer able to look at himself without disgust. People often ask veterans if they ever killed anyone. To this Kudo writes,

Civilians can comprehend the casualties of war because most people know someone who has died. But few know someone who has killed. When I tell people I’m a Marine, the

²⁷⁰ In chapter one Nussbaum took the opposite view contending that shame motivates one to hide. Nussbaum, 15.

²⁷¹ Chris J. Antal and Kathy. Winings., “Moral Injury, Soul Repair, and Creating a Place for Grace,” *Religious Education* 110, no. 4 (2015): 388.

²⁷² Timothy Kudo, “I Killed People in Afghanistan. Was I Right or Wrong?” *Washington Post*, January 25, 2013, https://www.washingtonpost.com/opinions/i-killed-people-in-afghanistan-was-i-right-or-wrong/2013/01/25/c0b0d5a6-60ff-11e2-b05a-605528f6b712_story.html? (accessed November 26, 2016).

²⁷³ Suzanne Collins, Peter Craig, and Danny Strong, *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay Part 1*, DVD, directed by Francis Lawrence (Santa Monica, CA: Lions Gate Entertainment, 2014).

next question many ask is: “Did you kill anyone?” To my ears, this sounds like: “What’s the worst thing you’ve ever done?” They don’t realize they’re asking about an intensely private matter.²⁷⁴

Kudo’s thoughts resonate with the story told by Larry Dewy’s patient Dave in chapter one where Dave passed around the blood-stained sword from World War II and expressed the feeling that he too carried the stain of that blood. The story of the morally injured who have killed in combat tells of this feeling of living with the stain of war.

4.3.1.2 The Stain Of War

War and the taking another’s life leaves a horrible mark on a person as Pope Francis suggested, “War can leave an indelible mark on them. In fact war always leaves an indelible mark.”²⁷⁵ It extends the common human exile, leading some who have killed into an empty wasteland East of Eden, a land of no return. The deepest part of the soul intuitively knows the sacredness of life. When nations send their armies to war the world becomes a darker place, and the soldiers who have had to kill return home with a stain on their souls.

Though Sir Edward Grey, British Foreign Secretary, in his 1925 memoirs could not recall his famous words on the eve of the Great War, but they are instructive regarding the darkness war brings. On August 3, 1914, looking over the Saint James Park from his office window, he and Sir Edward watching the custodians light the gas lamps, Grey reportedly said, "The lamps

²⁷⁴ Timothy Kudo, “I Killed People in Afghanistan. Was I Right or Wrong?”

²⁷⁵ “Address of His Holiness Pope Francis in the Fourth Course for the Formation of Military Chaplains On International Humanitarian Law Promoted by the Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace,” Libreria Editrice Vaticana, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2015/october/documents/papa-francesco_20151026_cappellani-militari.html (accessed December 26, 2015).

are going out all over Europe; we shall not see them lit again in our life.”²⁷⁶ No doubt, what he meant was the moral darkness that would descend on Europe, and indeed, the darkness fell and would fall again as the world plunged into war in September 1938, with darkness extending across North Africa, Europe, Asia, and beyond. Even today, the lights seem to have gone out across the Middle East and especially in Syria. Alexander Schmemmann writes, “Sin is always absence of love, and therefore separation, isolation, war of all against all.”²⁷⁷ War and the absence of love always make the world a darker place.

4.3.1.3 A New Beginning

Exile, darkness, and the plagues that march in column behind war’s formation seem to be an ineradicable feature of the human condition. Is humanity forever to weep at the gate of paradise, condemned to live in exile where they not just tolerate war with its killing, death, devastation, and plagues, but expect it? If there is any hope, the story must move and move it does to the second two panels of the Holy Door and its inscription on the third panel of the first row: “You Have Made A Life-Giving Blossom.” On one side is the old Eve with, “What sad Eve took,” followed by the other side with the New Eve, Mary, “You Have Made A Life-Giving Blossom.”

For the purpose of the story the panels tell, the Fall and Incarnation as told in the Annunciation are linked. God made humanity in his own image and then took on that image in

²⁷⁶ Hew Strachan, “How Darkness Descended Over Europe in August 1914,” *Telegraph*, August 2, 2014, <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/history/world-war-one/11006042/How-darkness-descended-over-Europe-in-August-1914.html> (accessed November 28, 2016).

²⁷⁷ Alexander Schmemmann, *Great Lent* (Crestwood, NY: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 1990), 23.

the flesh. The moment God became flesh was the Incarnation, and the Incarnation was the reversal of fortune in the story of Redemption. Saint Athanasius wrote, “For he was incarnate that we might be made god; and he manifested himself through a body that we might receive an idea of the invisible Father; and he endured the insults of human beings, that we might inherit incorruptibility.”²⁷⁸ This has tones of the original creation of Adam and Eve in God’s Paradise. For the Word to become flesh, God used flesh, the flesh of Mary, and the Incarnation provides the way back from exile.

The morally injured express the sense of being a stranger, morally lost, and trying to find their way home.²⁷⁹ Weighed down by shame, hiding, lies, and haunting memories, the cargo net they drag on their journey is harder to bear than the cargo netting full of military equipment Mendoza drug through the rain forest. Moral injury is a form of exile, but there is a way back from the land of no return, and now the story deepens with finding and restoring those lost in the land of exile East of Eden.

²⁷⁸ Athanasius, 167.

²⁷⁹ Anne Lamott tells the story of hearing a sermon by Veronica who told of a childhood friend. ‘When she was about seven, her best friend got lost one day. The little girl ran up and down the streets of the big town where they lived but she couldn’t find a single landmark. She was very frightened. Finally a policeman stopped to help her. He put her in the passenger seat of his car, and they drove around until she finally saw her church. She pointed it out to the policeman and then she told him firmly, “You could let me out now. This is my church, and I can always find my way home from here.” See, Anne Lamott, *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts On Faith* (New York: Pantheon Book, 1999), 55.

4.3.2 Found In The Land Of The Lost

They ask me where I've been, / And what I've done and seen. / But what can I reply
Who know it wasn't I, / But someone just like me, / Who went across the sea
And with my head and hands / Killed men in foreign lands... / Though I must bear the
blame, / Because he bore my name.

—Wilfred Gibson, *Back*

Can the Holy Door be for the morally injured veterans a door that opens up to a welcoming home where compassion, warmth, love, and safety await them? The second row of panels focuses on God finding and restoring the lost. This is a story filled with hope and comfort for the injured who feel they have lost their way home.

Wilfred Gibson's poem, *Back*, like so much of the World War I poetry, has deep reverberations of dark remorse and pining to come home or for regaining the feeling that home is normal again. Ernest Hemingway expressed such a reaction to hearing words like "sacred," "glory," and "sacrifice." He writes, "We had heard them, sometimes standing in the rain almost out of earshot, so that only the shouted words came through, and had read them, on proclamations that were slapped up by billposters over other proclamations, now for a long time, and I had seen nothing sacred, and the things that were glorious had no glory and the sacrifices were like the stockyards at Chicago if nothing was done with the meat except to bury it."²⁸⁰ The brute experience of war often leaves soldiers feeling far away from home and lost. Hemingway belonged to a group of writers known as the "Lost Generation." This post war group of writers reflected on their experiences in the war, rejected conventional values, and tended to embrace decadence and frivolous life styles in their writings. Hemingway used the term "Lost Generation" as one of his epigrams in his novel, *The Sun Also Rises*.²⁸¹ War tends

²⁸⁰ Ernest Hemingway, *A Farewell to Arms* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 185.

²⁸¹ Ernest Hemingway, *The Sun Also Rises* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926)..

to shatter optimistic views of the world and humanities capacity to transverse its lures of ambition and jealousies that spill over into violence. The morally wounded experience this type of disorientation and more with the sense of “lost” that carries the moral dimension of damnation or Tillich’s condemnation anxiety.

4.3.2.1 You Come To Me — To Save What Was Lost

Moving down to the second row of panels on the Holy Door, the first panel depicts John baptizing Jesus in the Jordan River with its inscription, “You Come To Me.” Moving right, the next panel depicts the lost sheep with the inscription, “To Save What Was Lost.” This discussion will take these two panels together to complete the thought of God’s initiative to seek and save the lost.

This part of the story begins with the baptism of Jesus. Why does the story begin here? God is taking the initiative in the story of redemption as Jesus begins by identifying with sinners, those who stand in need of redemption. The story is drawing its audience back to creation, back to the garden, back to a moment of decision. The story is contrasting the new Adam with the old Adam, as Jesus, the new Adam enters the Jordan. Justin Martyr says in his *Dialogue with Trypho*, “[...] but then the Holy Ghost, and for man's sake, as I formerly stated, lighted on Him in the form of a dove, and there came at the same instant from the heavens a voice, which was uttered also by David when he spoke, personating Christ, what the Father would say to Him: 'Thou art My Son: this day have I begotten thee;' [...].”²⁸² Jesus’ birth and

²⁸² Justin Martyr, “Dialogue with Trypho,” in *Ante-Nicene Fathers: The Writings of the Fathers Down to A. D. 325*, trans. Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), 1:244.

baptism are indispensable parts of the salvation story for in the Incarnation Jesus takes human flesh and in the waters of baptism he descends to humanity's exile. God takes the initiative in restoring the veteran who lives in the exile of moral injury.

Like Wilfred Gibson the morally injured veterans have seen death come for the young even more so than it comes for the old. They have seen, and walked the most crooked highways and byways the world knows. An exchange between James Darmody, a recently returned World War I veteran in his early twenties and his boss Nucky Thompson in the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire*, illustrates this awareness; it has at least a hint of moral awareness amongst alexithymic gangsters.

James: The war, Nuck, the things I did over there? You live in a trench for months on end. The killing, the smell of death Nucky, I'm nothing but a murderer. You know how many times I went over the top? They called me a fucking hero. The truth is I didn't care anymore. I didn't care. / Nucky: You're home now. You got a family. / James: I'm going to hell, Nuck.²⁸³

James' words reflect a sense of hopelessness and resigning one's self to being lost to any chance of a flourishing life. The morally wounded often feel this way and continue to live without a sense of hope.

Who are the lost, and is there any hope for them? The next panel completes the thought from the first panel. This second panel answers John's question, "You come to me?" with, "To save what was lost."²⁸⁴ Saints Hilary and Anselm saw the lost sheep of Matthew 18 as all of humanity, and the ninety-nine they viewed as the angels in heaven. Christ descended from the

²⁸³ Terence Winter, "Episode 1, First Season," *Boardwalk Empire*, DVD, directed by Martin Scorsese (New York, NY: HBO, 2010).

²⁸⁴ This last phrase comes from Matthew 18:11, which many contemporary translations omit or reference only in a footnote. The phrase is not found in many of the ancient manuscripts. However, the sense of the parable, even without the verse conveys the idea of the shepherd seeking the lost.

hills to restore the lost to the company of angels.²⁸⁵ Who are the lost? The answer to that question may be surprising, even alarming. In August 2013, Antonio Spadaro sat down to interview Pope Francis. Spadaro describes how the interview started.

I have the first question ready, but then I decide not to follow the script that I had prepared for myself, and I ask him point-blank: “Who is Jorge Mario Bergoglio?” The pope stares at me in silence. I ask him if this is a question that I am allowed to ask.... He nods that it is, and he tells me: “I do not know what might be the most fitting description.... I am a sinner. This is the most accurate definition. It is not a figure of speech, a literary genre. I am a sinner.”²⁸⁶

Pope Francis communicates a deep awareness of his sinfulness, yet he has a hopeful reliance on the mercy of God. One could imagine the sheep who has wander off from the flock, caught up in his sheep daydreams, suddenly realizing that his flock is nowhere in sight and he has no idea where he is. While at first such thoughts cause him distress, he settles down with the firm conviction that his beloved shepherd will find him and take him home to the flock. Since sheep often have names, that sheep’s name no doubt would be Francis.

Pope Francis sees seeking lost sheep as a vital mission the Church must embrace. On December 9, 2014, at a Mass at his quarters, the Pope said, “The joy of the Church is to give birth; the joy of the Church is to go out of herself to give life; the joy of the Church is go out and seek the sheep that are lost; the joy of the Church is precisely the tenderness of the shepherd, the tenderness of the mother.”²⁸⁷ He pointed out that failing at this mission the

²⁸⁵ Scott Hahn and Curtis Mitch, *The Ignatius Catholic Study Bible*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2010), 39.

²⁸⁶ Antonio Spadaro, “Interview with Pope Francis,” Libreria Editrice Vaticana, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2013/september/documents/papa-francesco_20130921_intervista-spadaro.html (accessed December 4, 2016).

²⁸⁷ “What Makes the Church Happy? Seeking Lost Sheep, Pope Says,” Catholic News Agency, USA, December 9, 2014, <http://www.catholicnewsagency.com/news/what-makes-the-church-happy-seeking-lost-sheep-pope-says-41614/> (accessed December 5, 2016).

Church turns in on herself. He concluded, “May the Lord console us with the consolation of a Mother Church that goes out of herself and consoles us with the consolation of the tenderness of Jesus and His mercy in the forgiveness of our sins.”²⁸⁸ Francis is reminding the faithful of the mission and initiative of the Church in proclaiming God’s mercy emulating the shepherd searching for his lost sheep.

Pope Francis puts a human face to the sought-after sheep. The faithful are sheep turned shepherd. Representing a human face, one deeply scared with the wounds of war, is the face of Dave Roever, who attempted suicide while in a hospital in Japan and determined to complete the suicide in Brooks Army Hospital, San Antonio, TX, before his fiancé had a chance to see his horrifying condition. Roever, a recipient of grace became an agent of God’s grace with an apostolate to minister to the physically and morally war wounded. Darrell Creswell writes,

Dave Roever’s transforming story of grace embodies remarkable courage and survival, the strength and love of his marriage, and personal commitment to his Lord and Savior. He shares his experiences of loneliness, struggles to survive, disfigurement and pain, and triumphs through Christ Jesus. Dave’s message of hope connects with the audience and presents God directed heart-felt solutions to many of life’s problems. “Everybody has scars,” Roever preaches, “Mine just happen to be on the outside.”²⁸⁹

Roever’s work has taught him that the deeper scares are the invisible scares hidden away in a soldier’s soul. These inner wounds point from the scene of the lost sheep to the more horrifying scene of the lost son.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Darrell Creswell, “Dave Roever, a Story of Grace,” *A Study of Christian Grace*, <https://darrellcreswell.wordpress.com/2011/07/19/dave-roever-a-story-of-grace/> (accessed December 5, 2016).

4.3.2.2 Father I Have Sinned Against Heaven And Against You

Moving to the right, the next panel depicts the father's merciful response to the prodigal son with "Father I Have Sinned Against Heaven And Against You," inscribed. This is one of the most dramatic of Jesus' parables. It contains a wide spectrum of human emotion including raw response to impulsive desire, growing self-awareness, forgiveness, joy, and jealousy. The younger son altered the familial homeostasis when he demanded his inheritance, though his father was still living. His subsequent squandering of his inheritance on wild living further enlarged his estrangement from family and self. Taking a personal inventory, he decides to go home where he hopes to live out his days as a servant, but finds the embrace of his father as only a son could experience. Seeing the father's response, the older son's jealous reaction, though not a part of the story of the panel, is a recognizable reality in the world of domestic transactions.

The father, who has longed to extend his love and mercy, finally embraces his lost son who he has now found. Pope Francis in his Message for Lent, 2015, encouraged the faithful, saying, "Dear brothers and sisters, how greatly I desire that all those places where the Church is present, especially our parishes and our communities, may become islands of mercy in the midst of the sea of indifference!"²⁹⁰ The Pope intends these islands of mercy for those whose way is lost. Homecoming and mercy are two themes intermixed and interdependent in the Prodigal's drama of identity, inner growth, and unexpected responses, and there is a connection in the story between humility and mercy. The word humility comes from *humas* or earth and

²⁹⁰ Francis, "Message of His Holiness Pope Francis for Lent 2015," Libreria Editrice Vaticana, https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/messages/lent/documents/papa-francesco_20141004_messaggio-quaresima2015.html (accessed December 5, 2016).

has the sense of lowering all the way down. St. Bernard of Clairvaux taught about pride and humility. He saw humility in the end as knowing the truth about self. This knowledge of self leads to a generous outlook on one's neighbor with a willingness, even eagerness, to extend mercy. Bernard says,

Truth teaches you that you must search for truth in those around you before you look for it in its intrinsic purity. You will afterwards learn why you must search for it in yourself before you do so in your neighbours. Thus in the enumeration of the Beatitudes in His Sermon He placed 'the merciful' before 'the pure in heart'.²⁹¹

The spotlight of truth on the stage of life illumines the need for mercy and that being merciful is required before one can be pure in heart. The truth this spotlight shines upon is self-knowledge.

The younger son learned some truth about himself, and his self-knowledge prompted him to action and change in his life. There may be a connection between this younger son, his wayward journey and subsequent homecoming and the soldier's return home, even as expressed in Homer's *Odyssey*. After his war, it took Odysseus ten years to return home, having already spent ten years at war, making an absence from home two decades. The war itself was a place void of beauty, from which Odysseus emerged, like some contemporary veterans, lost. With more than hints of the lost son of Luke's Gospel, Edward Tick describes Odysseus' homeward journey with its allusions to American veteran's journey.

His homeward journey, which lasted another full decade, was rife with confusion, anguish, ordeals, loneliness, promiscuity, mistakes, harmful pride, and grief over lost companions. He was seduced and waylaid by goddesses and beasts, even as veterans are today by their sexuality and other primal energies [...] He needed divine aid and expert intervention.²⁹²

²⁹¹ Bernard of Clairvaux, *The Twelve Degrees of Humility and Pride*, trans. Barton R. V. Mills (London: Society For Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1929), 57.

²⁹² Edward Tick, *War and the Soul* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005), 193.

What implications can one draw from these parallels between the lost son's quest for home and the path taken by Odysseus on his journey home? What insights do they offer for those morally wounded and those who care for them? Can the community invite the morally wounded, the Prodigal soldiers, to seek self-knowledge, embrace mercy, and make their journey home?

To answer the first question, both the journey the lost son took and the journey Odysseus took included a reckoning with self. This reckoning led to a humbling of the actor, the son realizing that he was not above begging his father for the lowest position possible on the family estate and Athena assisting Odysseus (e.g. with his struggle with the Cyclops, Homer, 81-9). Humility was not the end, it only opened the way for the otherwise stagnant journey to continue, if not the lost son would have continued a diet of pig food until he starved and Odysseus would have eventually wound up as Cyclops food. Further, their journeys had the elements of faith and hope. The son could only hope his father would take him back as a slave, and Odysseus could only have faith in his wife's virtue despite her many suiters and his own unfaithfulness. In other words, both had faith beyond themselves. Here the morally wounded can assess their own journey. If it has left them in a place of exile where pigs and Cyclops live, then they must find the faith in something beyond themselves to start the first steps toward home or risk being eaten alive by their own demons.

Regarding the second question concerning gaining insights, the morally wounded, like the lost son and Odysseus, coming to the truth begins with humility, not a groveling humility but a humility that opens the window to let in the breeze of new insight and self-awareness. Self-awareness can be enough to spark the desire to start the journey home. However, the journey is only possible if the veteran can overcome risk aversion. Any change in life requires some

risk and often great discomfort, but at the end of these stories, home awaits. In the *Silver Chair* Lewis captures this aversion to risk in his character Jill and her hesitation to approach the stream despite being thirsty.²⁹³

The third question involving the community's response in aiding veterans in self-knowledge and embracing mercy has a simple answer in the affirmative. Communities invite the morally wounded to embrace mercy and make their journey home through relationship. While the answer may be simple, the implementation of sustainable methods to make it happen is much more complex. For communities to become, in the words of Pope Francis, "islands of hope" for the morally wounded of war, will involve a commitment to emotionally taxing work. To the point, they should view it as a calling, but like any calling, the sacrifices pale in comparison to the rich fulfillment one experiences in servanthood. The morally injured veterans need the aid of such servants to successfully make their journey home.

²⁹³ Lewis, *The Silver Chair*, 558.

4.3.2.3 Take Up Your Mat And Walk

The last panel of this row depicts the cure of the paralytic with the inscription, “Take Up Your Mat And Walk.” Normally walking is necessary to go on a journey, at least before the invention of trains, planes, and automobiles. However, immobility due to an injury or illness has been for some the first step on a long and arduous journey, the journey of the soul. One soldier who experienced such an immobilizing injury that set him on a spiritual journey was St. Ignatius of Loyola. St. Ignatius was born into an aristocratic family in the Basque region of northern Spain just before Columbus set out to discover new worlds and as history turned the last page of the story of the Middle Ages. Ignatius grew up in a family tradition of machismo, bloody vendettas, and fathering children without the sanction of marriage. At a young age, he acquired the skills of a court page, but he preferred the more active life of the martial arts and the distractions of gambling, dueling, and dangerous romances.²⁹⁴ Ignatius admitted in his memoirs that as a young adult he had a craving for fame and a weakness for worldly vanities. This soldier had many desires in common with the Prodigal son.

In a six-hour battle for Pamplona, not only would Ignatius’ life journey take a drastic turn, but a spiritual influence that would change the direction of many lives around the world would be born on the bed of recovery. If the French cannon shot that crushed one of Ignatius’ legs and severely damaged the other had been a few inches in one direction it would have killed him or if a few inches in the other direction it would have missed him. Either way, at best, it would have left Ignatius as a footnote in history. As it was, the shot that hit him elevated him to the main text as a character in the spiritual story of human development.²⁹⁵ Ignatius would

²⁹⁴ Ronald Modras, *Ignatian Humanism* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2004), 3-4.

²⁹⁵ Ibid, 5-6.

forever after be unfit to fight, at least not in the worldly sense, but he would become a hero on the spiritual battlefield. Lying upon his “mat” for nine months at the Loyola castle, he read the only texts available to him: a four-volume text of the life of Christ and a collection of the lives of the saints.²⁹⁶ Modras compares the different kinds of journeys in Ignatius’ life writing,

What is usually called Ignatius’s conversion was the beginning of a literal and spiritual journey. The former would take him to foreign lands, the latter to the uncharted seas of his deepest self.²⁹⁷

The former adventure seeker now began the adventure of a lifetime. The friends of the paralytic brought him to Jesus; Ignatius came to Jesus by way of cannon fire.

The main point of the miracle story in Mark 2, the last panel in this story of “Found In The Land Of The Lost,” goes beyond the faith of the friends who carry the paralytic to Jesus and lower him through a roof. The point Mark wants to stress is that Jesus can forgive sin, and that sin is in some way linked to the man’s condition. Regardless of the man’s back-story, Jesus pronounced his sins forgiven. How does this paralytic man inform the issue of moral injury and repair? First, the most obvious point is the man was unable to walk. Moral injury, like so many other issues in life can make a person feel stuck, unable to move forward. The existential anxiety associated with moral injury may lead some to think that they are on a journey that wanders off into meaninglessness: a road to nowhere. Second, there are the friends. The morally injured may not need assistance in physical mobility, but they may need those who are willing to carry their story for a time. Tick’s observation regarding the power of sharing stories goes beyond discovering patterns and meaning in an individual

²⁹⁶ Ibid, 7-8.

²⁹⁷ Ibid, 9.

journey, as he writes, “Storytelling also knits the community together. It records or recreates the collective history and transforms actor and listeners alike into communal witnesses.”²⁹⁸

Veterans are often reluctant to share their stories because they are deeply personal and may contain elements that reflect poorly on themselves. Groups who would serve as the communal witness of these stories should listen with patience and tolerance. Third, Jesus, with a word, gives the man the ability to walk, and therefore, in some way begin a new journey. It is this kind of soul healing, that finds its profundity in its simplicity, that will allow the morally wounded to walk along new life vistas.

This row has told the story “Found In The Land Of The Lost.” This segment of the story began with the baptism of Jesus, where he entered the land of the lost to seek and find lost humanity. It continued with the story of the shepherd who left his flock to find the lost sheep, and the lost son who found home and mercy in the embrace of his father. Then finally, the story of healing, but more importantly the story of the forgiveness of sin concluded the second row of panels. The drama will intensify as it moves to tell of the promise of love and forgiveness and the price of that promise.

²⁹⁸ Tick, *War And The Soul*, 217.

4.3.3 The Promise Of Love And Forgiveness

Life itself teaches us that the strength of a soul in the midst of trial and temptations comes from its practical and experiential consciousness of the infinite value of Redemption, of the omnipotent efficacy of Christ's death on the Cross.

-Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange,
Knowing The Love Of God, 30

In the Christian story, redemption finds its fulfillment in Jesus' sacrifice on the cross. The third row of panels of the Holy Door tells this story. This chapter of the story begins with the depiction of the sinful woman drawing near and washing the feet of Jesus and moves to demonstrating the need for forgiveness as displayed the scene of Peter asking about how many times a person is required to forgive another. The tempo quickens as the next panel unfolds the story of Peter's denial, and finally it reaches its climax in the last panel displaying Jesus crucified between two thieves.

4.3.3.1 Her Many Sins Are Forgiven Her

The first panel of this row sets the tone for the development of this story of love and forgiveness. The inscription above the woman washing the feet of Jesus reads, "Her Many Sins Are Forgiven Her." What the woman of Luke 7 demonstrates is the link between forgiveness and love. Whatever her sins were, God forgave her prompting in her deep expressions of love and care toward Jesus. The simple teaching Jesus shared with his host, in whose home the event took place, was that those who are recipients of the forgiveness of a great debt tend to love their benefactor more than those who are recipients of the forgiveness of a minor debt. This depth of forgiveness is required in moral injury. Larry Dewey explains how the combat veterans he works with seek this kind of forgiveness noting that they are

troubled with more than the nightmares and intrusive thoughts of PTSD. He writes, “What they are most troubled by is the guilt over killing, the traumatic grief they suffer for beloved comrades brutally killed... ‘the problems of having bloodstained hands.’”²⁹⁹ No one who goes to war comes back the same person. A wife of one of his patients explained how World War II changed her husband,

We were regular churchgoers before the war. He was a good Christian. He never could understand after the war how God could forgive him for all he had seen and done. It changed our lives in that respect. He felt like a hypocrite going to church. We tried to go together for a while, but he was just too uncomfortable.³⁰⁰

Part of this man is unable to come home. Part of this man is stuck back in the war zone where his job was to prepare to kill and then to kill. He, like the woman who washed the feet of Jesus, needs to hear a voice of forgiveness.

Pulitzer Price novelist John Hersey was a World War II war correspondent. He spent much of his time in active combat zones where men were killing and dying as a daily routine. He was blunt in his observation, “[...] these are stories of what common men, not necessarily leaders or heroes, feel as they wage war – and their feelings are inevitably reduced, in the end, to what men cannot help feeling about their worst crime, which is murder.”³⁰¹ The combat veterans of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam lived with these “feelings” for decades. They, like the woman of Luke 7 need what only a deep experience of forgiveness can give. The harshest war tax is not the monetary toll imposed on the citizenry but the spiritual cost paid by women, children, and the elderly who live where war visits, and combatants who find

²⁹⁹ Dewey, 14.

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 15.

³⁰¹ John Hersey, *Of Men and War* (New York: Scholastic Trade, 1991), 6.

themselves doing what they had never imagined possible: taking life.³⁰² Soldiers, doing their duty and protecting their “battle buddies” pay this spiritual war tax. Dewey notes that many of his infantry veterans only killed to protect their fellow soldiers. He speaks of a love more powerful than the fear of death and the loathing of killing, which makes the enterprise of war possible. However, it comes with a spiritual price as he writes, “And the cost is terrible for the men and women who shoulder the burden of the fighting and killing.”³⁰³ This “cost” goes to the heart the of soldier who has taken life in combat and his or her need to internalize the story of forgiveness.

4.3.3.2 Seventy-Seven

The next panel in the story raises and answers the question about the frequency of forgiveness. The panel displays the scene of Peter asking about how many times a person is required to forgive another with its inscription, “Seventy-Seven.” Jesus’ answer of seventy-seven times indicates that Jesus saw no limit to forgiveness, mercy, and reconciliation. The need for reconciliation presupposes a broken relationship. Mendoza, of the film *The Mission*, knew at the deepest level he had a broken relationship with humanity, and he felt his crimes, his sins, were unforgivable and that he was beyond redemption. It was only through the acts of the indigenous people, whom he had harmed beyond repair, and his growing relationship with them, that he was able to know the freedom of forgiveness. This kind of forgiveness played

³⁰² The United States Congress did not pass any tax to fund the recent wars of Afghanistan and Iraq. Psychologically, it created a sterile environment where it was possible for many Americans to feel like they, and their country, was not at war.

³⁰³ Dewey, 50.

out in the lives of a handful of Marines as portrayed in the documentary, *Thank You For Your Service*.³⁰⁴

The documentary portrayed Kenny Toone and his mother, who acknowledged that as a child and young adult Kenny was very religious. His mother taught him to love and follow Jesus, but his participation in war, what he did and what he saw, changed him. After returning from war, he says he looked good on the outside with his wife, four children and a good job, but on the inside, he felt all torn up. He was someone in need of forgiveness but had no idea how to find it.

As a young man, Toone was a Marine in the 23rd Marine Regiment during the invasion of Iraq. On April 8, 2003, his unit received orders sending them into Baghdad to walk and clear segments of the city. It was a dangerous mission and the Iraqi forces shot and killed a Marine standing next to Kenny. That is when fellow Marine, Bruno Moya says it became real for him. Moya recalls how they received word of the enemy stopping vehicles, taking them and using them to attack the Marines. He along with Marines Daniel Walsh and Lu Labello describe three vehicles turning and heading directly toward their position, reporting that they all “opened up,” meaning they fired as many rounds as they could into the vehicles. An innocent civilian family occupied the cars with a male family member driving each car. The shooting left the father and two sons dead with the mother and daughter surviving. Walsh says the mother was wailing in English, “You killed my son, you killed my son.” Toone describes how this affected these Marines,

³⁰⁴ *Thank You for Your Service*, DVD, directed by Tom Donahue (Brooklyn, NY: Creative Chaos, 2015).

We didn't have time to care – we didn't have time to process it. We still had to do our job. It's really sad because I'm so proud of how we did and I am so ashamed of what we did at the same time.³⁰⁵

Days following that incident Toone says he did not think about that family as human beings, but later he started having recurring nightmares of a vehicle approaching his position and he and his fellow Marines firing on the vehicle. When the vehicle stopped, they would approach the vehicle and look inside, where Toone would see his own family with his own children dead. Toone eventually spiraled downward physically, mentally, and spiritually. By 2012, he had lost his wife, children, and his job and wandered from searching for God to searching for science to searching for humanity.

He finally walked into the desert with a revolver, chambered two rounds and spun the cylinder. He put the revolver to his chest because that was where he felt the pain. He pulled the trigger and the hammer fell on an empty chamber. Pulling the trigger a second time, the hammer again fell on an empty chamber. He could not pull the trigger a third time and subsequently spent two months on a lock-down ward taking eight different medications. Upon release from the hospital, the Marine went to live in the mountains, spending most nights outdoors. Toone was unable to experience forgiveness and lived in a self-imposed exile; however, this was not the final chapter of his story.

This group of Marines had another experience in their story that brought them closer to the forgiveness they needed. After returning from the war, Lu Lubello started searching the internet to find and contact his old Marine buddies. This led him to search and find any available information about the shooting of April 8, 2003. He discovered an article in *The New*

³⁰⁵ Ibid.

York Times by Dexter Filkins posted April 19, 2003. The article, *A NATION AT WAR: CASUALTIES; For Family in Iraq, 3 Deaths From a Moment of Confusion*, told how the Kachadoorian family decided to run with a few possession to escape the war zone their neighborhood had become. Their flight took them directly toward Lubello and the Marines. The shooting left the husband, James and sons Nicolas and Edmund dead. Nora, the daughter in her early twenties, had a severe shoulder wound, and with her mother, Margaret by her side was receiving treatment in a Baghdad hospital when Filkins discovered them and recorded their story.

Reading Filkins' article was the first time Lubello heard the voice of the victims. It put the human aspect of war back into his thought process leading to an intense desire to find the Kachadoorians, to talk with them, and get to know them. Through his continued research, he discovered their internet contact information. Unable to sleep one night, he recorded a video and sent it to them, speaking into the computer camera,

Hello, Nora. I was a member of Fox Company. Second Battalion, Twenty-third Marines [...] I often think of that day and I feel like I have a chance to actually reach out and, and meet you. I hope you understand that for me it's not a question of whether or not me and my friends did the right thing that night or, or we could have tried harder not to, not to shoot at your vehicles. None of that to me could be changed. I need to talk to you if you will let me.³⁰⁶

He was not asking for forgiveness for seventy-seven times, just one time, but that one time seemed impossible. How could anyone forgive a person who killed her husband, father, sons, and brothers?

Lu went weeks without hearing from Nora, finally reaching out to Filkins in his quest to find the Kachadoorians. Filkins agreed to help him find them and make an introduction, and

³⁰⁶ Ibid.

found that Margaret and Nora were living in the United States not much more than an hour's drive from Lu. He brokered the meeting and the Kachadoorians agreed to meet with Lu. Filkins described the meeting that took place in the Kachadoorians' living room saying they traveled a million miles in that room that day. Lu told them that he was sorry and wanted to recognize their loss. They asked him why he and the other Marines shot their vehicles to which Lu replied that they did not want their friends to die. Margaret asked him curtly if saying that made him feel better. Lu kept the conversation going telling them that he suffers to which Margaret told him she suffers more. When he told them he does not sleep, Margaret said she never sleeps. Lu told them of his now haunted life, and Margaret replied that he had no idea. Filkins describes how the "ice started to crack." Margaret and Nora's hearts began to open taking in Lu. Margaret looks at Lu and then at the pictures of her children telling Lu that he reminds her of her son. Lu found his forgiveness in Margaret's embrace.

In Iraq, the Kachadoorians were members of the country's Armenian Christian minority, but despite adverse conditions, the family had prospered. Their true wealth though came in the way they forgave what many would consider impossible to forgive. They forged new and lasting bonds with a man who participated in killing their family members. This lesson in forgiveness was not lost on Lu as he met with Kenny Toone and encouraged him with his story of finding forgiveness. Though Kenny could not find the courage to meet with the Kachadoorians, he did find enough hope to start non-traditional therapy to address his moral injury. For Lu, the forgiveness he received from the Kachadoorins did not end his story of war but gave it a new perspective and a new chapter.

4.3.3.3 The Lord Turned And Looked At Peter

The next panel on the Holy Door tells a story that in its conclusion will end with forgiveness. It tells the story of Peter's denial of Jesus with the inscription, "The Lord Turned And Looked At Peter." Much like Adam and Eve hid from God when they heard his voice calling in the garden, Peter could not bear the intensity of the knowing look in Jesus' eyes. His eyes seem to say what St. Augustine wrote,

Thou promisest me thy death, and thou wilt deny me thy life. Thou, who now thinkest thyself able to die for me, learn to live first for thyself; for in fearing the death of thy flesh, thou wilt occasion the death of thy soul. Just as much as it is life to confess Christ, it is death to deny Him.³⁰⁷

In the end, Peter would give his life for Christ, but at this point, he was broken on the "rock" of moral defeat.

Was it faltering moral courage or was it that Peter, claiming possession of great courage, put his trust in his own strength and failed to go a few hours without denying his Lord? The night the Roman soldiers arrested Jesus, Peter's story found the crossroads of courage and cowardice. This intersection has inspired many stories because it is something to which most people can relate and it has deep contours of ego mixed with a desire for self-preservation. It does raise the question as to whether a person can be virtuous without awareness of their virtue or have moral courage without awareness of their courage. Can a person develop the virtue of courage without deliberately thinking about its development? The military has addressed these issues. The Army draws a distinction between physical courage and moral courage in its Field Manual: *A Soldier's Guide*.

³⁰⁷ Augustine, *Tractate LXVI. Chapter XIII*. 36–38. (Christian Classics Ethereal Library), <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/schaff/npnf107.iii.lxvii.html> (accessed December 14, 2016)

The soldier who jumps on a grenade to save his comrades is courageous, without question. That action requires great physical courage, and pursuing victory over time also requires a deep moral courage to persevere and concentrate on the mission.³⁰⁸

It goes on to explain what moral courage means for soldiers.

Moral courage is the willingness to stand firm on your values, principles, and convictions, even when threatened. Moral courage is sometimes overlooked, both in discussions of personal courage and in routine, daily activities. Moral courage often expresses itself as candor. Candor means being frank, honest, and sincere with others while keeping your words free from bias, prejudice, or malice.³⁰⁹

Exercising moral courage allows a person to tell the truth even when the truth is painful. Lu Lubello had moral courage in his endeavor to meet with the Kachadoorians, and Margaret and Nora found the moral courage to meet with Lu and forgive him. At times, moral courage is required more so off the battlefield than on the battlefield. Finding the way back to the Garden of Eden takes the moral courage to be honest about one's self. The way back from moral injury requires nothing less. When Adam and Eve heard the voice of God calling them and when Peter looked into the eyes of Jesus looking at him, it was more than knowing that God knew them, it was God's voice and gaze of infinite mercy reaching out to them. When Jesus looked at Peter, he was looking upon a man he would die for in a matter of hours.

³⁰⁸ *The Soldier's Guide: FM 7-21.13* (Washington, DC: HEADQUARTERS DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY, 2003), 1-4.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 1-15.

4.3.3.4 Today You Shall Be With Me In Paradise

The last panel of the third row tells the story of Jesus on the cross between two thieves with the inscription, “Today You Shall Be With Me In Paradise.” The story of this row of panels regarding love and forgiveness reaches its climax in the crucifixion. God descended to take human flesh, to receive the baptism of John, and finally to experience a torturous death. The Christian story of the redemption of humanity found its fulfillment in the cross, but as the words of the panel suggest, there is a connection between the cross and Paradise. The story of this panel is reversing the story of the fall and exile told in the first two panels of the Holy Door.

The very first panel of the Holy Door depicts the angels guarding the gates of Paradise preventing the return of Adam and Eve lest they eat from the tree of life. Paradise’s tree of life from Genesis 3:24 reappears in John’s apocalyptic literature. In Revelation 22:1-2, John describes a vision he had where he saw the New Jerusalem (Paradise) and its river of life and tree of life. He describes the leaves of the tree as serving as medicine for the healing of the nations. When Jesus looked at the thief he saw a spiritually wounded man in need of the type of healing described in John’s Apocalypse.

Jesus’ gaze at the thief was one that saw and knew the man as he was, much like the gaze Jesus directed toward Peter after Peter’s denial. At the same time, it was a gaze of love and mercy. He saw not only the effect of sin on the soul, he saw the scars and the wounds left by evil and much suffering. Jesus saw and loved. Just as Jesus turned and saw the thief, he now looks and sees combat veterans wounded in the depths of their consciences by what they have seen and done in war. Larry Dewey describes the veterans in these words,

At the same time these vets are not just objects of violence and death but also perpetrators of the same. They, too, have killed. They long for mercy, reconciliation and forgiveness. If they let their desire for revenge lead them to further wrongs in combat or later in their lives, they have an even greater need for mercy and reconciliation.³¹⁰

Kenny Toone and Lu Labello are two examples of the kind of veterans in need of mercy, reconciliation, forgiveness, and inner peace. Lu was able to find forgiveness in the home of the Kachadoorians. At this point in the story Kenny is still struggling to find forgiveness and reconciliation.

4.3.3.5 What Does It Mean To Be Home

Through the promise of Jesus the thief found forgiveness and Paradise or metaphorically the original home God intended for humanity. Lu Labello found the way to Paradise in the home of the family of which he had help take the lives of the father and sons. Jonathan Shay asked the question, “What does it mean to ‘be home.’” He compared the story of Odysseus to the story of the Vietnam veterans to answer that question. He found that the answer to the question he proposed lies in safety, acceptance, value and respect, knowing one’s way, living according to patterns, having a part of each other’s future, and comfort.³¹¹ Though Shays patients suffered with complex PTSD these same issues related to “being home” may be applied to veterans with moral injury and examined through the lens of the thief on the cross.³¹²

³¹⁰ Dewey, 207.

³¹¹ Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 245-6.

³¹² Thomas More in his story of Utopa compared soldiers and thieves writing, “As long as you have these men, you will certainly never be without thieves. Nay, robbers do not make the least active soldiers, nor do soldiers make the most listless robbers, so well do these two pursuits agree.” See, Thomas More, *Utopia*, ed. Edward Surtz (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1964), 22.

Shay found that neither Odysseus nor his patients who were Vietnam veterans were able to find safety in the place that was their home.³¹³ At home, a nightmare haunted Kenny Toone where he saw visions that he and his fellow Marines killed his own family. The issue of safety along with the issues of acceptance and fear challenge the morally injured. The cross was the most unsafe place one could imagine, yet the thief heard Jesus promise that he would be with Jesus that day in safest place imaginable, Paradise. This is what those with moral injury need: a safe place to bear their conscience and honestly tell their story.

To address the issue of acceptance Shay simply asks the question, “Can Odysseus or the veterans say who they are without fear?”³¹⁴ Regarding the issue of acceptance Kenny said,

It would actually make me upset when people would come up to me and say “Oh thank you for your service, welcome home.” I would get angry and I would be like, what do you know. What do you know about being home and coming back from a war and living with these memories? Don’t thank me.³¹⁵

People were saying words of acceptance to Kenny but he could not hear them because the memories of war made him feel unacceptable. The thief on the cross was experiencing the most severe form of rejection, crucifixion. Yet, he heard the words of acceptance from Jesus, “Today you shall be with me in paradise.” To “be home” and to feel acceptable and accepted are important to the redemption and recovery of the morally injured.

Shay notes that Odysseus returned from his war years and journey home in the disguise of a beggar. The suitors who occupied his home showed him no respect.³¹⁶ Kenny and Lu’s

³¹³ Shay, *Odysseus In America*, 245.

³¹⁴ Ibid.

³¹⁵ *Thank You for Your Service*.

³¹⁶ Shay, *Odysseus In America*, 245-6.

families did value and respect them, but they were unable to internalize those sentiments.

Though the crowd at the crucifixion saw no value in the thief, some of the last words he would hear before his death were words of great value and respect from Jesus. Chapter five will offer suggestions on how to help veterans with moral injuries internalize the sense of value and respect.

After ten years of war Odysseus spent another ten years trying to find his way home. Odysseus' story is a metaphor for the journey the morally injured take. On his journey Kenny lost his wife, children, and his job and wandered from searching for God to searching for science to searching for humanity. It is difficult for the veteran with moral injury to find the right azimuth for Paradise (home). The morally injured, like the thief who wandered on wrong paths through life, may have to simply accept "home" as a gift.

Shay believes that Odysseus' pattern of domestic life was shaken when his wife Penelope tested his identity. He links this shift in Odysseus' story to the shifting pattern of American society that made the returning Vietnam veterans' return home so difficult.³¹⁷ The generation of veterans returning from the Afghani and Iraqi wars have found much more stability and support from society than did their predecessors. However, those who return with moral injuries experience shifting patterns deep within their conscience which leads them to see themselves as unfit for society. To say that the thief did or did not experience unstable patterns either in society or within his conscience would only be speculation. However, the Paradise Jesus promised him is where the unchanging love of God is the ultimate pattern of stability. This is the part of the story the morally injured need to hear, internalize, and experience.

³¹⁷ Shay, *Odysseus In America*, 246.

In his analysis of Odysseus' story Shay notes that when Odysseus returned to Ithaca he pretended to be someone else, killed many of his fellow citizens, and then left with little hope of a future. He links this to the discarded feeling many Vietnam veterans felt upon their return home and the corresponding feeling of little hope for a future.³¹⁸ The dynamics of the veteran's return home today is substantially different from the veteran's return home in the Vietnam era, but the morally injured experience a sense of hopelessness regarding their future in society. This leads some of them to drop out of society. After attempting suicide and spending two months on a lock down ward Kenny retreated to the mountains to live in isolation. "Today you will be with me in Paradise," are words that convey hope for a future where even people like the thief or Kenny have a place.

The last element in Shay's analysis is comfort. Odysseus found no comfort during the first nights in his home where he was endangered, troubled, and uncomfortable. Shay explains that the Vietnam veterans with complex PTSD find no comfort, rest, or decent sleep in their homes even decades after their return.³¹⁹ The morally injured share the symptoms of sleeplessness and vivid nightmares with those who suffer with PTSD. Kenny's recurring nightmare was the result of a moral injury. The morally injured need words of comfort and promise, and they need to hear them for as long as it takes to internalize them. The thief may have found little comfort in his life, but in his dying moments he did hear from Jesus words of comfort and promise.

To Shay's question of what it means to be home the word Paradise is a strong metaphorical answer. Here the morally injured may find safety, acceptance, value and respect,

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid.

a new found capacity to know and find one's way in life, the ability to live according to patterns, the experience of a shared future with their community, and comfort. The lens of the thief on the cross allows the morally injured to see their suffering as a cross and their companion Jesus who promises that they will be with him in Paradise. This Paradise however, they do not obtain in death for it is a metaphor for home. The morally injured may come home. This would seem like a good place to end the story, but the drama has one more act that moves the story beyond death.

4.3.4 A Wonderful New World

I have struggled with my use of the word redemption. I have tried to use words like recovery and healing instead but they don't express fully what my patients have experienced and expressed to me. They feel that they have been plunged into hell by their war experiences and through powerful and healing forces can now live life again without overwhelming anger, bitterness and guilt. They can once again experience joy in life. Somehow the word redemption expresses their escape from hell into a renewed life better than any other single word.

—Larry Dewy, *War and Redemption*, 187

Dewy expresses the wonderful new world his patients discover and can find no word that more appropriately describes the process than the word redemption. His patients experienced love, mercy, and forgiveness. Listening to their stories he heard them use the terms loving relationship, spiritual power, reconciliation, and peace.³²⁰ This final row of panels tells the story of redemption as a gift of a wonderful new life with the themes of Blessed Are Those Who Believe, Receive The Holy Spirit, I Am Jesus Whom You Are Persecuting, and I Stand

³²⁰ Larry Dewy, *War and Redemption*, 187

At The Door And Knock. The story of redemption must move on. However, as it moves there will be new challenges and new opportunities for spiritual growth.

4.3.4.1 Blessed Are Those Who Have Believed

The first panel of the last row depicts Thomas, having struggled in his faith. The inscription is, “Blessed Are Those Who Have Believed.” Thomas struggled to believe because of what he had not seen. The morally wounded often struggle to keep or repair their faith because of what they have seen. Deep anguish of the heart can obstruct any pilgrim’s journey. Meagher acknowledges that the American military knows how to kill the enemy with great efficiency writing, “What we are painfully coming to realize, however, is that we are also especially good at killing our own, killing them “from the inside out,” silently, invisibly.”³²¹ The Psalmist writes, “My loins burn with fever; there is no wholesomeness in my flesh. I am numb and utterly crushed; I wail with anguish of heart. (Ps 38:8-9)” In this anguish of the heart, one can hear the story of Kenny Toone and others like him who attempt to destroy their heart and thereby their anguish, witness their struggle to believe in something: religion, science, or at least humanity, and watch them walk away from society into the wilderness of self-exile.

Trauma of the heart is for many a roadblock on their pilgrimage. However, for the prisoners of the morally injured heart, with its bars of depression, walls of shame, and cells of isolation there is a gate that swings open from the inside. J. R. R. Tolkien sensed that his son

³²¹ Meagher, xiii.

Christopher was experiencing inner anguish in his service with the Royal Air Force during World War II. He wrote to him, encouraging him to keep his hobbitry in his heart and to remember that, “You are inside a very great story.”³²² This was Tolkien’s attempt to keep his son out of the prison of moral injury.

When the morally wounded are able to walk away from their prisons, they leave with scars. When Thomas struggled with his faith, Jesus showed him his scars from the nails and the spear. He showed Thomas scars that heal. Jesus invites the morally injured along with Thomas to see and touch these scars, the wounds that can touch their own scars and bring meaning beyond healing.

Typically, people with physical scars want to hide them, to keep them from public view. Those with inner scars not only desire to hide their scars but also to hide themselves. Real healing can happen when the wounded are willing to see the scars of others and to let others see their own scars. A scene in the HBO series *Boardwalk Empire* makes this point without saying it. Richard Harrow, a World War I veteran sits for a portrait sketched by his friend’s wife, Angela Darmody. Richard, previously a handsome man, now wears a facial prosthetic to hide a hideous wound and empty eye socket. As Angela is drawing Richard, they talk, and their discussion turns toward love, where Richard tells Angela of his twin sister Emma, whom he loved. Though his sister nursed him back to health when he returned from the war, he lost his love for his sister, left her to get lose himself in Chicago (self-exile), and had not seen her since. After a long pause, Richard removes his prosthetic, and Angela, in silence, starts to

³²² J. R. R. Tolkien, *The Letters of J. R. R. Tolkien*, ed. Humphrey Carpenter (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2000), 78.

draw again on a new sheet of paper.³²³ What scriptwriters do not articulate but depict is that Angela created the space for Richard to share with her his scares. The scares he shared were not just on his face, but the deepest scares in his heart, the war scars that changed him and his relationships. Sharing this was therapeutic for Richard. The real healing many morally injured soldiers seek is a place to share their scars, believe again, love again, and hear a word of forgiveness.

4.3.4.2 Receive The Holy Spirit

The second panel of the last row displays Jesus giving the apostles the power to forgive sins with the inscription, “Receive The Holy Spirit.” Jesus sent his apostles out on a mission to forgive sins. This is not the *cheap grace* or *grace without a price* Dietrich Bonhoeffer refers to in his works. Cheap grace seeks forgiveness without a cross, without discipleship, without contrition, and without desire for deliverance from sin.³²⁴ The *Rite of Penance*, used in sacramental reconciliation, views a penitent’s contrition as the most important act on the part of the sinner seeking forgiveness.³²⁵

Lu Lubello is a case study of this perspective in forgiveness. What he and his fellow Marines did to the Kachadoorian family broke his heart. He was numb, utterly crushed, and wailed with anguish of heart. He could have lived his whole life without reaching out to the

³²³ Terence Winter, “Episode 4, Second Season,” *Boardwalk Empire*, DVD, directed by Martin Scorsese (New York, NY: HBO, 2011).

³²⁴ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *The Cost of Discipleship*, 2nd ed. (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1959), 45-6.

³²⁵ *Rite of Penance*, 14.

family, without showing them his scars, but he found the courage, and did just that. Margaret and Nora could easily have ignored Lu's request to meet with them, and upon meeting with Lu, they could have vented their anger toward him and then thrown him out of their house. However, in this *Wonderful New World* the anguish and brokenness of the three hearts, together, found the way of forgiveness.

Edward Tick describes how Hugh Scanlen's friends, while well intentioned, left him in that land of the lost. Hugh, a Vietnam veteran, killed people and then photographed their bodies, laughing all the while. Later in his life he became remorseful for what he had done but could not find the way to forgiveness. He was a man in the prison of moral injury with no hope of a pardon. Hugh's friends knew his time in Vietnam bothered him, but they did not know the details of what he had done in the war and often gave him advice in the form of platitudes. Tick records the outcome of one conversation, "'God forgives you.' 'That's great,' I replied, 'but how do I forgive myself?' The conversation came to an abrupt halt.'"³²⁶ There had been no real attempt to understand the context in which Hugh felt himself unforgiveable. What Hugh and many veterans need is a place where ambiguity and shame can come together and sit with each other. Then, when the time is right, they can hear the certainty of forgiveness. This is what *The Mission* portrayed when Mendoza knew he was forgivable, forgiven, and that he could forgive himself. Saul, as Mendoza, persecuted a select people, though for religious reasons rather than financial gain, and had a moment of the awareness of forgiveness, but in a dramatically different way.

³²⁶ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 223.

4.3.4.3 I Am Jesus Whom You Are Persecuting

The next panel shows Saul, thrown from his horse, before Jesus along with the words, “I Am Jesus Whom You Are Persecuting.” This was a dramatic turning point in Saul’s story where Jesus revealed himself to Saul as the persecuted One. After Pentecost Saul was one of the chief persecutors of the followers of Jesus, minding the cloaks of the men who stoned Stephen. Saul had the blood of Christians, and thereby Christ’s blood, on his hands. Worse yet, he was eager for more blood. Hours before Pontius Pilate condemned Jesus to death by crucifixion Peter denied that he was one of his disciples. Both Peter and Saul were guilty of grave sin, yet Jesus forgave both men and they became leaders of those who followed Jesus. Jesus entrusted both men with the Gospel, Paul for the uncircumcised and Peter for the circumcised (Gal 2:7), and both eventually suffered martyrdom for the Gospel of Jesus.³²⁷

The thirteenth century *Golden Legend* finds contrasts between Saul and Adam. In it Jacobus de Voragine writes, “Adam stood up against God and Paul prostrated himself on the earth; Adam’s eyes were opened and Paul’s were blinded; Adam ate forbidden food and Paul abstained from permitted food.”³²⁸ His contrast between Adam and Paul’s sight is interesting in that Adam saw himself in his outward nakedness whereas Paul had three days without sight affording him time to look inward. With his eyesight gone, his companions had to lead him the rest of the way to Damascus where he would await further instruction. The encounter Saul experienced led him to a deeper understanding and awareness of God.

³²⁷ There is no parallel between Jesus changing Simon’s name to Peter and Saul presenting himself as Paul. Paul had a Jewish mother who gave him the Jewish name Saul at birth. His father was a Roman citizen and therefore he gave him a Roman name. Because of his mission to the “uncircumcised” it would have been natural for Paul to use his Roman name.

³²⁸ Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend*, trans. William Granger Ryan (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 121.

George Aschenbrenner noted that encountering God's love and forgiveness causes an internal sorrow to catch fire in many people. In addition to sorrow accompanying encounters with God, he also identifies momentary terror. This terror produces two insights that pierce the blindness of hearts. He writes,

First, we see the precariousness of human freedom, placed as it is against the backdrop of evil, and finding a focus within every human heart [...] Second, we may recognize how trapped and helpless we are in the face of such evil; even though our whole purpose is to exist and to have our destiny in God, no willpower of our own can free us from this enslavement.³²⁹

This sense of terror may have been part of Saul's experience. He was falling into the mystery of Christ where grace and helplessness flow side by side. Though he experienced great sufferings much of the time, his experience of grace made it impossible for him not to have joy and give thanks in all things (Phil 4:4).

These lessons of knowing sorrow, terror, and helplessness but allowing them to lead to grace, joy, and thanksgiving are instructive to the issue of moral injury. First, it allows an honest acceptance of facts because no one can turn the clock back and undo history. Saul had Christian blood on his hands and nothing would make it not so, just as Lu Lubello could not change what happened on April 3, 2003. Second, it acknowledges the existence of existential anxiety. Kenny Toone realized that though he looked good on the outside, on the inside he was hurt and wounded. Third, the blind Saul had to trust his friends to continue his journey and had to trust the voice of Jesus who told him to wait for further instruction. Toone and his fellow Marines had to realize their journey was not over and they had to learn to trust others and finally themselves. Toone did this through participation in *Save A Warrior*, a non-

³²⁹ George A. Aschenbrenner, *Quickening the Fire in Our Midst: The Challenge of Diocesan Priestly Spirituality* (Chicago: Loyola Press, 2002), 104.

traditional therapy program. One of the exercises for the participants was for each to climb a large pole while their fellow veterans supported them with ropes. When the participants reached the top, they were to stand on its surface, which was smaller than their feet. Next, they were to fall as their fellow veterans, holding the supporting ropes, ensured their descent would be a gentle ride. This was difficult for Toone, but he did it finding it an adventure in trust.

4.3.4.4 I Stand At The Door And Knock

Jesus has now called Paul as one of his apostles and sent him on an evangelical adventure that above all required trust. The story of redemption does not end in Damascus nor does it end in Rome. Countless women and men will come to know what Paul learned of sorrow, terror, and helplessness along with the grace, joy, and thanksgiving that God gives to those who open the door when Christ knocks. The last panel of this row and final panel of the Holy Door displays the scene of a pope knocking on the Holy Door to inaugurate a Jubilee. Its inscription reads, “I Stand At The Door And Knock.” The inscription comes from John’s Apocalypse, “Here I stand, knocking at the door. If anyone hears me calling and opens the door, I will enter his house and have supper with him, and he with me? (Rev 3:20)” The story of the Holy Door seems to end with a question; will the door open?

Heaven is humanity’s home. C. S. Lewis, taking an opposite look at a door, sees the doors of hell as locked from the inside, the damned as successful rebels, and hell as a place never made for humanity.³³⁰ The Easter story like the story of the Holy Door is about opening doors,

³³⁰ Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 129-30.

specifically the door to the grave, and by way of the grave the Easter story is about heaven and hell. At Easter Dinner, portrayed in *Empire Boardwalk*, at the home of Paul Sagorsky who is a veteran of the Philippine-American War and lives with bitterness and alcoholism after losing his son in World War I, sits Sagorsky's daughter Julie, six-year-old Tommy, and fellow American Legion members, including Richard Harrow. After belittling one of his guest for offering what seemed to be a childish prayer, Sagorsky initiates the following conversation:

Sagorsky: Of all the days on the calendar, this one takes the cake. He dies, comes back to life, disappears for 2,000 years, but don't worry. He'll turn up again. (chuckles) - Suckers. / Guest: There's a child at the table. / Sagorsky: (to six-year old Tommy) Am I shocking you? Put all this nonsense in their heads. Man in the sky, everlasting life. Years later we dump them off on some godforsaken shore with a rifle in their hands waiting to get their heads blown off. What good is Jesus then? / Julie: Dad! Stop it. / Sagorsky: (to Richard who wears a prosthetic mask to cover his wound) What good did he do you? / Julia: You don't have to answer that. / Sagorsky: No, no, no. He's a man and I asked him a question. / Richard: Just because you don't believe in something doesn't mean it isn't true. / Sagorsky: Oh. Well, you're shaping up into a disappointment.³³¹

Is it true? This is the question behind the knock. The Pope, Vicar of Christ, knocks. Will the door open? What good is Jesus when “they” dump soldiers off on a godforsaken shore? What good is Jesus when a twenty-year-old has to make a decision in a matter of a second as to whether another human being is going to live or die and has to live with the consequences of that decision the rest of his or her life? What good is Jesus when the soldier makes the wrong decision? Those who know the guilt of the wrong decision carry a burden that separates them from those they love. Toone's story of losing his wife, children, and job is too common among the veteran population. David cried out to God, “Free me from blood guilt, O God, my saving God; then my tongue shall revel in your justice. (Ps 51:16)” David too had blood on his hands

³³¹ Terence Winter, “Episode 7, Third Season,” *Boardwalk Empire*, DVD, directed by Martin Scorsese (New York, NY: HBO, 2012).

and it cost him his child. The story for Toone, David, and all warriors need not end with in the land of the lost.

If this chapter on the story of redemption were a movie, the credits would now start rolling and many people at the theater would be walking out. The seasoned moviegoers though would know that producers often put surprises in the credits, and they would still be in their seats. The producers of *Thank You For Your Service* slipped a surprise into the credits. As the credits roll, the audience sees Kenny Toone in the back seat of a car where he tells the camera that he is on his way to meet the Kachadorians. He describes how he first saw this kind of a meeting as an impossibility for him but now is looking forward to meeting them. This clip ends with Toone saying, “It’s going to be scary to step on to this pole.” The morally wounded have tough and often scary work to do on their journey to healing. However, the story the Holy Door assures them that the Redeemer lives, meets them in their exile, and will walk beside them on the way to Paradise. *Thank You For Your Service* leaves the audience with the suspense of not knowing if Kenny actually went to the Kachadorian’s home or if in the end, he gave into fear and called off the meeting. Will the morally wounded find their own drama of good and evil enacted and resolved in the great Theo-drama of redemption? The story of the Holy Door ends with a pope opening the Holy Door to begin a Year of Jubilee, a reminder of John’s vision of Jesus standing at the door knocking. The story ends with the suspenseful question, “Will the door open?” The final chapter will offer some suggestions that are meant to encourage veterans with moral injury to open the door to redemption and repair as it addresses the story of healing. It presents a retreat program, *Warrior’s Way Home*, and its facilitator’s manual.

CHAPTER 5: THE STORY OF HEALING

This dissertation has approached moral injury with the view that healing is possible and that the application of story can be a significant part of the healing process. This chapter presents a model for a healing retreat for veterans who have experienced moral injury. The author presents this model in a manual format. The focus of the model is the story of redemption told using panels from the Holy Door. A three-day retreat setting is ideal for this retreat. However, groups constrained by time may consider meeting weekly over an extended period.

The model uses several items to engage the Veterans' senses. The author adapted the use of boots and dog tags from spiritual exercises developed by a Spiritual Fitness Initiative team consisting of Glenn Sammis, Chryst Parker, and the author. The team ran the spiritual fitness initiative small groups for chaplains at Ft. Bragg in September 2010 followed by a deployment to Iraq in November, conducting the initiative at three separate locations for both soldiers and chaplains.³³² After the team returned, it again provided the initiative three times for soldiers at Ft. Bragg.

After the veterans hear a scripture reading the model asks them to use the method "You Are In The Story" as a way of helping them see, smell, hear, and feel the reading. It is presented in a narrative form and most often it places the veteran in the scene as a third party. The author adapted this method from Theresa Burke's program Rachel's Vineyard. In her

³³² Efreem Gibson, "Army chaplains attend Spiritual Fitness Initiative conference in Iraq," https://www.army.mil/article/48417/Army_chaplains_attend_Spiritual_Fitness_Initiative_conference_in_Iraq (accessed November 6, 2016).

program she presents the story of scripture readings in segments she named, “Living Scriptures.”³³³

³³³ Theresa Burke, *Rachel's Vineyard: Weekend Retreat Manual*.

**The Warrior's Path Home
Retreat Manual**

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Guidelines For Facilitators

1. Facilitators:

Each retreat will have three facilitators. With three facilitators two can run a session each taking certain parts while the third remains silent but ready to follow any one out who becomes too distressed to continue. This is a matter of concern that the person who leaves is not alone to struggle with his or her issue. The three can rotate around who takes what part and who is available to leave with a retreatant.

The team will consist of at least one professional counselor and one minister or clergy. It may consist of two from either category or the third facilitator may be a competent non-professional lay person. Gender inclusiveness is encouraged by having women and men serve together as facilitators.

Facilitators should be familiar with the military culture, customs, and challenges of combat. They should honor the dignity of the veteran and be mindful of the vulnerable state in which these women and men find themselves.

2. Hospitality Staff:

Volunteers will welcome the veterans as they arrive and assist them in finding their room. They will also make snacks and drinks available to the retreatants. If the facility does not have meals prepared by their own staff, the retreat coordinator will have to arrange a volunteer kitchen staff.

3. The Group:

Groups are made up of men and women who have experienced combat and are currently struggling spiritually, emotionally, and/or with a relationship. Groups should be formed with no less than six members and no more than twelve. The retreat organizer should use discretion on who joins the group. Highly volatile individuals may be disruptive to the work the group engages in. These veterans are better served by doing individual work until stable enough to be part of a group.

4. Structure:

This retreat consists of seven one and half hour sessions. Start on Friday evening with session 1. Conduct sessions 2 and 3 on Saturday morning and sessions 4 and 5 on Saturday afternoon. Make time on Sunday to offer a worship service for those who want to attend. Conduct session 5 and end session 7 at noon. A banquet follows session 7.

The sessions are centered around the story of redemption as told in the sixteen panels of the Holy Door. A door should be marked of with tape or otherwise to create spaces to fill in with copies of the panels. The particular panel or panels for a session should be placed on the door before the start of that session. There will be some panels not used. Simply save them for the last session in which a facilitator will place them on the door with the comments noted in Session 7.

Besides the panels other visual aids are used (e.g. boots). These items are placed on a coffee table in the center of the group. Not all items will be commented on rather they are there for the veteran to make the connection. A facilitator reads a passage of scripture and invites the veterans to take about two minutes to look at and reflect upon the particular panel/panels used in the session. Next another facilitator reads a narrative “You Are In The Story.” This narrative helps the veteran visualize the story. The veterans are encouraged to spend some time writing in a journal. Specific questions are provided to help them process what they have heard in the scripture and narrative. After journaling they are encouraged to share some thoughts or feelings with the group. Note, those who are not comfortable writing may draw or sketch their story in the journal.

5. Rucksack:

During the first session each veteran receives a rucksack containing six rocks. The rocks symbolize the burdens they have been caring (e.g. shame). At the end of each of the following sessions they are encouraged to leave one rock behind. They are asked to let each rock symbolize a specific burden they are now laying down.

6. The Banquet:

During the final session the veterans lay down their last rock and are invited to walk through the Holy Door as a symbolic way of walking the Warrior’s Path Home. When all have walked through the door the group shares a banquet as a way of concluding the retreat.

7. The Appendix:

Images of all the Holy Door panels, “Four Chaplains,” and Warrior’s Path Home patch are found in the Appendix.

Session 1 – An Invitation

Overview: This session serves as an overview and an invitation to engage in a process of spiritual reflection on biblical stories as imaged on “The Holy Door.” After connecting to their experience of combat, and identifying what it may have done to them as a person, the veteran will be invited to participate in six sessions as part of a therapeutic process to address their experience of moral injury.

The Image: Panel 16, “Knocking on the Holy Door”

Setting:

1. Room large enough to accommodate 6 – 12 veterans as well as three facilitators.
2. Chairs arranged in circle with a small coffee table in the middle.
3. A door
 - distinct from general entrance/exit
 - perhaps free standing
 - post Panel 16
4. Have larger image of Panel 16 on display; poster or electronic

Materials:

1. A rucksack (backpack) containing six large rocks each veteran
2. One notebook, pens for each veteran and facilitator
3. Boots and dog tags placed on the small coffee table
4. Warrior’s Path Home “patch” to affix to each notebook

Goals/Outcomes:

At the end of this session each participant will be able to:

1. Describe their experience of combat
2. Name their feelings associated with that experience
3. Articulate any change in identity before and after combat

4. Identify their experience in terms of moral injury
5. Make a decision about engagement further with the program.

Methods:

1. Time for gathering, nametags, introductions, light refreshments
2. Invitation to be seated in the circle
3. Self-identification – brief statement of military background; begin with facilitators
4. Their stories are important – briefly tell the story of Mendoza

The 1986 film, *The Mission* is a powerful story of one soldier's story. In the film Rodrigo Mendoza is a mercenary and slaver who makes his living kidnapping members of the Guaraní community. Mendoza finds that his brother, Felipe, is having an affair with his fiancé and goes into an uncontrollable rage killing his brother in a duel. Although the authorities find Mendoza not guilty, he falls into what appears to be a deep depression. Mendoza will more than likely die from lack of eating and self-isolation, except Father Gabriel visits him and offers him an intriguing challenge. His challenge is for Mendoza to choose his own penance.

Mendoza does choose his penance. Joining the Jesuits on a mission trip, led by Father Gabriel, Mendoza drags a cargo bundle of his military equipment, including his sword and armor, through the thick rain forest and up dangerously steep cliffs. When they reach their destination, the Guaraní recognize Mendoza as the man who has killed and enslaved their family members. They also recognize a man who has found humility, and instead of killing him, they free him of his burden, a burden Mendoza had refused to be free of throughout the trek through the forest. Mendoza found redemption at the only place possible for him, at the hands of the Guaraní community he had violated. Mendoza found that the Guaraní were now his family and their village was his home.

Mendoza's journey took him through a rain forest. Your journey home may take you over difficult terrain and by dangerous places. We hope though you will take the Warrior's Path Home.

5. Dog tags and boots

The boots on the table represent the boots you wore in combat. Those boots saw everything you saw. They know your story. If you find it hard to share your story you may want to ask your boots to do it. For example, you may say, "When I was in Iraq my boot saw...." Your boots were also with you when you came home. They may have a story to tell about that too.

The other item on the table are dog tags and represent the ones you wore. The dog tags and the information stamped on them stayed close to your heart in combat and like your boots, they came home with you. Dog tags contain the information considered the most important in the event of death on the battlefield. The first piece of information on dog tags is a name: someone valued you and gave you a name. The second piece of information is a social security number: even the government recognizes your uniqueness. The third piece of information is a blood type: nothing speaks more about life and sacrifice than blood. The last piece of information is religious preference: the government honors your beliefs. These four areas may be containers for your story. For example, “When I was in combat my religious beliefs....” Or, “When I returned home they placed my name....”

6. After group engagement with boots/tags; distribute the notebooks with the instruction that if they do not feel comfortable writing their story they can use drawings or something that is meaningful to them.

7. Invite each participant to write for 20 minutes on the following question:

“Who were you, what were you like when you first put on your boots/tags?”
 “Who are you, what are you like today?”

8. Return to the group – invite voluntary sharing of journal reflections

9. Give brief explanation of the Holy Door, Jubilee Year, Door of Mercy

Drawing on Israel’s sabbatical year of Jubilee, with its emphasis on universal pardon and joy, the Christian Jubilee celebrates its spiritualized form. There are special ceremonies that take place at the Vatican during one of these years. Much of it involves a special door called the Holy Door. This door is a visual means of telling the story of redemption using sixteen panels. Viewing these panels is a way to become becomes a participant in the drama of salvation. During our time together, we will be using some of the panels from that door to help us tell our stories.

10. Pass Warrior’s Path Home patches around the circle

- take a patch if you think you want to continue
- these patches a way of making our group a unit

11. Confidentiality: We honor the sacredness of each of our stories. Therefore, we ask that each participant and facilitator keep what we share in confidence. We ask that all electronic devices be left in your room or turned off.

12. Support and Encouragement: We are here to support each other. Your story is important for all of us to hear. If at any time you feel overwhelmed and need to leave the room, one of our facilitators will follow you, not to be intrusive but to ensure you are o.k. If you find this time to be difficult don't give up. Healing often involves pain. The inner wounds that touch our emotions our souls are often the most painful. In the preface to his book on pain, C. S. Lewis begins with these words,

No one can say "He jests at scars who never felt a wound" for I have never for one moment been in a state of mind to which even the imagination of serious pain was less than intolerable. If any man is safe from the danger of under-estimating this adversary, I am that man. I must add, too, that the only purpose of the book is to solve the intellectual problem raised by suffering; for the far higher task of teaching fortitude and patience I was never fool enough to suppose myself qualified, nor have I anything to offer my readers except my conviction that when pain is to be borne, a little courage helps more than much knowledge, a little human sympathy more than much courage, and the least tincture of the love of God more than all.³³⁴

13. Ask each participant to come to the door; give them a backpack with six rocks

- place your notebook in your rucksack
- bring your rucksack to every meeting

14. Conclusion

- after each participant takes backpack, all stand in front of door
- facilitator opens the door
- at end of program we be invited to walk through the door

15. Concluding Prayer

God of mercy, you know our stories, even the ones we are afraid to tell. Be our guide during our time together as we share and hold each other's stories as sacred gifts. Open our hearts to your love and compassion and when we are lost help us find our path home. Amen

[6]

³³⁴ C. S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain* (New York: Macmillan, 1944), 1.

Session 2 – Loss of Paradise, Fall and Shame (Panels 1&2)

Overview: In this session the veterans will hear the story of the Fall and the loss of Paradise. Through sharing their story and hearing the stories of their fellow participants they will connect feeling of alienation and shame with their behaviors. They will explore what impacts these feelings and behaviors have had on their relationships.

The Image: Panels 1 & 2, “Knocking on the Holy Door”

Setting:

1. Room large enough to accommodate 6 – 12 military personnel as well as three facilitators
2. Chairs arranged in circle with a small coffee table in the middle with an apple or fruit
3. Soft meditative music in the background
4. Have larger image of Panel 1 and 2 on display; poster or electronic

Materials:

1. Using the door in reverse from Session 1
2. An apple or piece of fruit on the table
3. A bed sheet for each participant

Goals/Outcomes:

At the end of this session each participant will be able to:

1. Describe their feeling of shame
2. Identify behaviors associated with their feelings of shame
3. Articulate how these feelings and behaviors have impacted their relationships
4. Identify their experience in terms of moral injury
5. Make a decision about further engagement with the program.

Methods:

1. Opening prayer

God of knowing, you know us as we are. We often feel we have traveled far from you, those we love, and ourselves. It sometimes feels like we are sitting in darkness and are unable to move to the light. Help us find a way back to you, our loved ones, and ourselves. Amen

2. Please close your eyes and hear a reading – a facilitator reads Genesis 3:22-24. Now look at and reflect for a moment on our panels (1 &2).

3. You are in the story

You are there in the garden. You once walked with God and enjoyed God's friendship. God gave you and your spouse the task of tending to the beautiful garden in which you lived. The work was a blessing for in it you shared in the joy of continuing God's creation. Life could not be better. Then something changed, something went horribly wrong. You and your spouse disobeyed God. (*Pause and glance at the fruit on the table*) You knew you had done something that would disappoint God and you hurt deep down inside. You just knew that God would never see you the same way again. You started to have a growing awareness that you were naked. Before this it never bothered you. In fact, not only did you not think about it you didn't even know it. But just now you heard something. It is God coming to visit. Quickly you and your spouse find a place to duck and cover for God must not see you like this. You begin to shake with shame and hope God doesn't see you.

But there is no hiding from God. God knows what you have done and yes, God is deeply disappointed in you. Your relationship with God has changed. God is sending you on a journey away from the garden. It is as if your boots are going to walk many miles over rough terrain, suffer heat and cold, and from time to time step into some very unpleasant things. You miss the garden and your old relationship with God, but now there is no choice but to walk. You only hope that one day your journey will bring you back here to the garden and to God.

4. Under the blanket (bed sheet) with soft music playing

The story you just heard is a story that gripes at the heart of all of us. We have provided you with a blanket or sheet. In a moment we will turn on some soft music. I want you to sit under the darkness of the blanket and replay the story you just heard. Take your time to see, feel, hear, taste, and smell all the parts of the story. Then try to see what parts connect with your story. Are there any smells or sounds that connect? We will take about ten minutes to do this.

5. Invite each participant to write for 20 minutes on the following question:

“What feelings did you have under the blanket?”

“What did you discover under the blanket?”

“What rock would you like to leave behind today and what does it represent?”

6. Return to the group – invite voluntary sharing

“What in the scripture story touched you?

“What feelings did you have?”

“What feelings do you have from your combat experience connects with this story?”

“How does your story connect with the feeling of shame?”

“What things has shame led you to do or not do?”

“How does your experience and shame and the behaviors associate with it affect your relationships?”

7. Conclusion

- as you leave today take one of the rocks from your rucksack and place it around the table
- this is hard work but you are worth it
- you may be surprised by the next story we will share

8. Concluding Prayer

God of understanding, you know how far our stories have taken us from you. Yet, you understand us and have not abandoned us to be alone. We pray that no matter how difficult the journey away from you has been, no matter what our boots have step in, that we would trust in you as our pathfinder. Amen

Session 3 – The Annunciation – Hope and Promise (Panels 3 & 4)

Overview: In this session the veterans will hear the story of the Annunciation. Through sharing their story and hearing the stories of their fellow participants they will explore their own feelings of hope, identify people in their lives who give them hope, and examine how hope changes their lives.

The Image: Panels 3 & 4, “Hope and Promise”

Setting:

1. Room large enough to accommodate 6 – 12 military personnel as well as three facilitators
2. Chairs arranged in circle with a small coffee table in the middle with “Four Chaplains” image and a model life boat
3. Soft meditative music in the background
4. Have larger image of Panel 3 and 4 on display; poster or electronic

Materials:

1. Picture of the Four Chaplains
2. A model life boat on the table
3. An area designated with a sign “Life Boat” that is large enough to fit all the participants into. This area can be roped off in the shape of a boat. The chairs are arranged in two rows in a “V” shape where all can see each other but gives the feel of a boat.

Goals/Outcomes:

At the end of this session each participant will be able to:

1. Describe what hope feels like to them
2. Identify people in their lives who gave them reason to hope

3. Articulate how hope changes their experience in terms of moral injury
4. Identify times when they found it hard to have hope
5. Make a decision on how they will look for hope in the future

Methods:

1. Opening prayer

God of hope, you come to us when we feel all is lost. When we face troubled days let us see in you a new day. When we feel small compared to the things that we carry that bring sorrow and suffering let us find in you a way to put them down. When we feel abandoned, help us trust that you will not abandon us but offer us welcome into the places you make safe. Amen

2. Please close your eyes and hear a reading – a facilitator reads Luke 1: 26-38. Now look at and reflect for a moment on our panels (3 & 4)).

3. You are in the story

You are there under the stars on a bright night. Over there, just outside of the door to a small building stands a very young teenage girl gazing up into the night sky. You wonder, is she looking for a shooting star to make a wish? Your curiosity leads you to move closer and as you do you can see something just above her. She is not looking at the stars but at something of which you are not sure what it is. You are close enough now that you can hear a voice saying to this girl something about her being highly favored by God. You think to yourself, really, how can that be? But you keep listening. You can't make out everything, but it seems like the thing above her is asking her to take on a mission. What a strange thing a young girl on a mission. Whatever the case it seems like she is accepting the mission.

Later as you try to sleep you can't stop wondering what that scene you witnessed was all about. What was that thing I heard talking? This must mean something important, but what? Maybe I will find out tomorrow. And as you drift off to sleep the scene once again plays out on the back of your eyelids, and this time it fills you with hope.

4. Room for you

Last session we found ourselves outside of the garden of Paradise knowing the roads we will now travel may be dangerous and difficult. We also wondered if we would ever see home again. The story you just heard tells of how hope enters our world. Sometimes hope comes to us in strange ways. What could be a stranger way than through a young teenage girl. Yet that is how God works. Through this girl God spoke hope to a hopeless world. Mary would bear into the world the one who will lead us home. We can see home again.

Mary has been given many titles. One of them is Ark meaning the container the Israelites saw as the dwelling place of God. I would like you to think now of it in a different way. Think of the Ark as a boat. If you are a Navy vet you will like this. When the seas are raging you want to be in the boat. In the boat there is hope. When ships go down it is the life boat that offers hope.

There is a wonderful story about how four chaplains gave away their life jackets so soldiers and sailors could make it to the life boats. In WWII the Dorchester was hit by an enemy torpedo and began to sink at a rapid rate. Most of the men ran from their quarters leaving their life jackets behind. Chaplains Lt. Fox, Methodist; Lt. Goode, Jewish; Lt. Washington, Roman Catholic; and Lt. Poling, Dutch Reformed began opening life jacket containers on the ships deck and distributing them to the frantic men. When they had emptied the containers they each took off their own lifejacket and gave it away. All four chaplains drowned but they gave hope to their men. Because of their action most of the men made it to the safety of a lifeboat. I invite you to move to over there – it's our lifeboat. There is room for you.

5. Inside the lifeboat – invite voluntary sharing

“How do you relate to the story of Mary?”

“What does hope feel like to you?”

“Who in your life gives you reasons to remain hopeful in difficult times?”

“When have you found hope?”

“From your experience what would you tell someone struggling to find hope?”

6. Invite each participant to write for 20 minutes on the following question:

“What feelings did you have in the lifeboat?”

“What did you discover in the lifeboat?”

“What rock would you like to leave behind today and what does it represent?”

7. Conclusion

- as you leave today take one of the rocks from your rucksack and place it around the table
- there is always room for in God's lifeboat
- you will find our next session interesting – especially if like acting

8. Concluding Prayer

In you God we put our hope and trust. Help us overcome destructive emotions, and lead us to have healthy ways of seeing ourselves and others. Keep us safe from the raging seas that sometimes enters our lives, and when they do, send us your lifeboat. Amen

Session 4– Homecoming and Forgiveness, The Prodigal Son (Panel 7)

Overview: In this session the veterans will hear the story of the Prodigal Son. By acting out this story they will gain insights into their own homecoming from war. After each veteran has acted out his or her story they will be given an opportunity journal what the experience was like for them. Those who wish to share what they journaled will be given the opportunity to do so.

The Image: Panel 7, “Homecoming and Forgiveness, The Prodigal Son”

Setting:

1. Room large enough to accommodate 6 – 12 military personnel as well as three facilitators
2. Chairs arranged in circle with a small coffee table in the middle with boots and dog tags
3. Have larger image of Panel 7 on display; poster or electronic

Materials:

1. One dirt covered sandal placed on the table
2. A staff (large walking stick) and a ring
3. A sheet representing a robe
4. A picture of a celebration

Goals/Outcomes:

At the end of this session each participant will be able to:

1. Describe what homecoming was like for them
2. Identify people in their lives who made their homecoming a celebration and/or who made it difficult
3. Express their feelings regarding their unit and leadership
4. Identify areas of their homecoming that needs attention

5. Make a decision on how they can live a healthy homecoming

Methods:

1. Opening prayer

God of welcome, welcome us into your loving arms. When we feel rejection or unworthiness gently remind us that we are your daughter – your son. When we are possessed with resentment help us to know the great love you have for us and the spiritual blessings you want to bestow upon us. Give us the courage to hear the “Yes” you speak about us. Amen

2. Please close your eyes and hear a reading – a facilitator reads Luke 15: 11-32. Now look at and reflect for a moment on our panel (7).

3. You are in the story

Early in the morning you are walking out the door from the building where you and the other servants sleep and you notice that young man that everyone seems to pick on sitting alone on the ground. The other servants usually laugh and say, “He used to be rich and boss people like us around and now he is one of us, pathetic little punk.” He looks like he has been sitting there all night and what is that he is mumbling to himself? No one else seems to like him so you decide today you will be his friend. “Hay there, why so glum? What’s going on?”

He tells you a bit of his story.

When I left home, I did something terrible to my family. Since I left I have made a mess out of my life. I was thinking all last night if I could ever face my father again. I know he is the one I hurt the most. I don’t think I can face him. How do you do the things I have done and go home and say, “Dad I’m home.” I know I would kick the crap out of one of my kids if he ever treated me the way I have treated my dad. I think this just might be my home the rest of my life – and at this rate that won’t be too long.

You feel unable to respond to what you just heard but you still want to help him. You think to yourself that if you can just sit here with him a little while maybe he will think of some better way out of this mess.

4. Welcome Home

The young man did think of something else as we heard in the scripture reading. We are going to give you an opportunity to act out the homecoming scene. Feel free to incorporate your own experience of your coming home from war into this drama. Each one will be given the opportunity to be the son or daughter. You will need to pick someone to play the father, elder brother, and other parts you may want to add. For the father we have some props for you to use – a sheet, a ring, and a staff. Who would like to go first?

5. Invite each participant to write for 20 minutes on the following question:

- “Who do you identify with the most in this story?”
- “In what ways does this story speak to your story of coming home from war?”
- “What parts of you still need to come home?”
- “What rock would you like to leave behind today and what does it represent?”

6. Reform the group and allow the opportunity for the participants to share from their journals

7. Conclusion

- as you leave today take one of the rocks from your rucksack and place it around the table
- it takes courage to come home
- there is always welcome home for you in the Warrior’s Path Home
- our next session will focus on finding courage in unusual places

8. Concluding Prayer

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
 Courage to change the things I can,
 And wisdom to know the difference

—Reinhold Niebuhr

Session 5 – Peter, “Weakness to Strength” (Panels 9, 10, & 11)

Overview: In this session the veterans will hear the stories of weakness, forgiveness, and strength. The veterans will hear how love and forgiveness are connected in the story of panel 9, the need to be forgiving in the story of panel 10, and the story of weakness and strength in panel 11. Only panel 11 will include the scripture reading and “You Are In The Story” segments. The veterans will be given the opportunity to share with the group what they journal regarding their feelings about their own experiences of weakness, forgiveness, and strength.

The Image: Panels 9, 10 11, *Peter, “Weakness to Strength” (Panels 9, 10, & 11)*

Setting:

1. Room large enough to accommodate 6 – 12 military personnel as well as three facilitators
2. Chairs arranged in circle with a small coffee table in the middle with a bottomless bucket
3. Have larger image of Panels 9, 10, 11 on display; poster or electronic

Materials:

1. A bucket with the bottom out
2. Large box of tissue

Goals/Outcomes:

At the end of this session each participant will be able to:

1. Describe God’s limitless forgiveness
2. Make the connection between love and forgiveness

3. Identify people in their lives whom they need to forgive
4. Recognize areas in their lives that need forgiving
5. Make a decision on how they can move ahead with courage

Methods:

1. Opening prayer

God of forgiveness, we come to you. Help us to trust that no matter what wrongs we have done, no matter how distorted our lives have become, you have the power and the desire to forgive us and make us right. God of forgiveness, we come to you. Amen

2. In this session we will hear two stories of forgiveness and then a third with scripture.

The first story comes from panel 9. In Luke 7, Jesus is eating dinner at a man's house and all of a sudden a woman bends down and starts washing Jesus' feet with her tears and drying them with her hair. Everyone was taken back – that is not something that is done in polite company. Besides, everyone seemed to know what kind of woman she was, everyone but Jesus that is. In fact, the host thought to himself, "If Jesus really was a prophet he would know she is a notorious sinner and he would not let her touch him." But Jesus knew exactly who she was and that was why he let her wash his feet. Jesus told his host a little story to help him understand how forgiveness and love are connected. In his story two men were in prison because they both owed a certain man a debt and they both were unable to pay. One man owed one hundred dollars and the other one million dollars. The man they owed the money to canceled both of their debts so they could go free. The man who was forgiven the million dollars naturally loved his benefactor more than the man who was forgiven a hundred dollars. Jesus' point for his host was that this woman understood how much she was forgiven and therefore she was brought to tears and used those tears as a gift to Jesus. No matter what you did in combat or when you came home, God wants you to be honest about it and make it right where you can. God also wants you to place those things before his limitless forgiveness. Like the bucket on the table, the one with no bottom, no matter what or how much you put in it, you will never exhaust its capacity. Which brings us to our next panel.

Moving to panel 10 we see the story of Peter asking Jesus how many times he should forgive his brother. Peter thought seven times was a fairly generous number. Jesus told him no but seventy times seven would be more fitting. Jesus was not giving Peter a math problem to solve. He was not saying to Peter that when he reached four hundred and ninety times he was done. Rather he was telling Peter that God has no limit on forgiveness, therefore we should be generous to those who ask for our forgiveness.

There may be people who have hurt you or disappointed you deeply. Something inside of us tells us to hold on to that hurt. They don't deserve our forgiveness. But forgiving others opens ourselves up to receiving forgiveness. Peter will learn more about forgiveness.

All four Gospels have a version of the story of Peter's denial of Jesus. Please close your eyes. Hear the account from Luke. Facilitator reads Luke 22:54-62. Now look at and reflect for a moment on our panels (9,10 &11).

3. You are in the story

It has been a long day of and you finally made it to Jerusalem. It is late, dark, and cold. Not having a place to sleep for the night you decide to join a small group of people huddled around a fire. After a little chit chat you close your eyes hoping to drift off for a little while. Just as you are about to nod off you hear the excited voice of a young woman, "This man was with them." The man though strongly denied it. But someone else pipes up and says he saw him too with that man. Even more so the man denies it with a harsh tone. Now you know sleep is not going to happen and who is that man they keep saying this man was with? Now you are fully awake with your eyes open and staring at this man they are making all the fuss over. You sit there for what seems to be a long time wondering why it was important to these people that this odd man was with another man who seems to be in some kind of trouble. Is this why the man keeps saying he doesn't know the other man, he doesn't want to be in trouble too? Then another person finally says that he is positive, the two men were together. And, as before the man in question denies it. As he finishes his rebuttal you hear the cock crowing. The man's face which had been so hard suddenly goes limp. He looks up and you can see his eyes are saying something about what is going on inside him. What is he looking at? You follow his line of sight to see for yourself. There is a man surrounded by guards. This must be the man they kept saying was with the man at the fire. You can tell that the two men are looking at each other. It is as if they are talking to each other with their eyes. It is intense, but what are they saying?

Peter did find forgiveness for denying his Lord. Because of that he found the courage to become one of the great leaders in the early Church. Later he found the courage to stand by his conviction that Jesus is Lord even to the point of execution. Could it be that his courage was born from a deep sense of having received a great forgiveness?

4. Invite each participant to write for 20 minutes on the following question:

"In what ways do these stories speak to your story of coming home from war?"

"What part of your story would you like forgiveness for the most?"

"What rock would you like to leave behind today and what does it represent?"

6. Reform the group and allow the opportunity for the participants to share from their journals.

7. Conclusion

- as you leave the room today take one of the rocks from your rucksack and place it around the table
- it takes humility to ask for forgiveness
- there is a connection between love, forgiveness, and courage
- our next session will focus on how far love will go to forgive

8. Concluding Prayer

Together let us pray:

Our Father, Who art in heaven
Hallowed be Thy Name;
Thy kingdom come,
Thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;
and lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil. Amen.

Session 6 – Loving Unto Death, the Crucifixion (Panel 12)

Overview: In this session the veterans will hear the stories of the crucifixion. The segment “You Are There” will place the veteran in the story as one of the soldiers who carried out the crucifixion. This gives the veterans the opportunity to connect the task the Roman soldiers were given to the duties they were assigned in combat. The veterans will be given the opportunity to share with the group what they journal regarding their combat duties and the self-giving love of the cross.

The Image: Panel 12, *Loving Unto Death, the Crucifixion*

Setting:

1. Room large enough to accommodate 6 – 12 military personnel as well as three facilitators
2. Chairs arranged in circle with a small coffee table in the middle with dog tags and a rubber knife
3. Have larger image of Panels 12 on display; poster or electronic

Materials:

1. Dog tags
2. A rubber knife

Goals/Outcomes:

At the end of this session each participant will be able to:

1. Express what the death of Jesus means to them
2. Relate how the assignment of crucifixion the Roman soldiers were given to the duties they were assigned in combat
3. Recognize the love of the cross provides them the pathway home

4. Make a decision on how they can move ahead with their journey home

Methods:

1. Opening prayer

O God you love us so much that you gave yourself up to suffering and death. Help us to know that you did that knowing all that we are and all that we have done. Help us now to see, know, and trust that love. God of love, we come to you. Amen

2. The drama of how far God will go to forgive you and make a path for you that leads back home, to the Paradise we saw earlier, now reaches its high point. Or, from God's perspective, God has now descended to the very low point in the work of redeeming us. Please close your eyes. Hear the account from John. Facilitator reads John 19:17-37. Now look at and reflect for a moment on our panel (12).

3. You are in the story

As a soldier you always find yourself on one detail or another. Today is no different. Today you were told that you were on a crucifixion detail. It is a detail you have been on several times before, but still you would rather be given something else to do. Once the nails are in and the cross is set it's more or less standing around waiting for the prisoners to die. Today there will be only three crucifixions. Maybe it won't take long.

When you were assigned the mission, the officer said something about one of the prisoners thought he was a king. Really, king of what? Oh well, you think to yourself, maybe you can get some of the left-over possessions, like last time.

After climbing a hill just outside of town, it's time to get to work. It's not the most pleasant work, but you say to yourself, "Someone has to do it." Yes, you find that there is enough stuff for you and your three buddies to each get something. Later you will roll the dice to see who gets the seamless tunic the one prisoner wore. You raise one eyebrow as you think about how humiliating it must be to spend hours dying in agony while all the while onlookers are mocking your naked body. There is no honor in it. As a soldier you would rather go out with the sword rather than the nail.

But something strange is happening. The prisoner who thinks he is a king is talking to what appears to be his family. That's not unusual. You have seen prisoners talk with family while they are dying before. But there is something different about this guy.

You and your buddies just got word to move things along – it's some kind of religious holiday coming up. This means the detail will have to break some legs so the prisoners won't be able to push themselves up to breath any longer. The first two prisoners are taken care of right away. But you come to the one who thought he was a king and he seems to be already dead. You yell over to your fellow soldiers, "I think this one is already dead." They yell back, "Poke him and make sure." You take you spear and run it into his side. Blood and water start to flow. He is dead alright. That night back in the barracks you couldn't get the images, sounds, and smells from today's work out of you mind. You don't know what it means, but you do know this was not like the rest of the crucifixions. You think that if you get some free time tomorrow you might run back up the hill and see if you can figure this thing out.

4. Invite each participant to write for 20 minutes on the following question:

"What moved you in the story of Jesus' crucifixion?"

"What duties were you given in combat that disturbed you?"

"How does the self-giving love of the cross relate to you now?"

"What rock would you like to leave behind today and what does it represent?"

5. Reform the group and allow the opportunity for the participants to share from their journals.

6. Conclusion

- as you leave today take one of the rocks from your rucksack and place it around the table
- Jesus died because he chose a path of love and inclusion. He wants us to find our way home
- your rucksack should be almost empty but even caring the last rock will make the journey home difficult
- our next session will focus on an invitation

7. Concluding Prayer

God, we stand at the cross. We realize that it is we who are naked, just as Adam and Eve. We acknowledge our desire to come home and our inability to find our way. And, we know that it is by the cross you have redeemed us. Amen

Session 7 – “A Whole New World” (Panel 16)

Overview: In this session the veterans will hear the invitation to walk the Warrior’s Pathway Home. Panel 16 depicts a Pope opening the Holy Door. Revelation 3:20 Jesus knocks at the door and promises his fellowship with anyone who opens the door. This session takes a literary liberty in letting the veterans walk through the door symbolizing their commitment to journey home. The retreat concludes with a banquet.

The Image: Panel 16, “A Whole New World”

Setting:

1. Room large enough to accommodate 6 – 12 military personnel as well as three facilitators
2. Chairs arranged in circle with a small coffee table in the middle with invitation cards and boots
3. Have larger image of Panel 16 on display; poster or electronic

Materials:

1. Invitation cards (one for each participant) that reads,

Dear (Individual’s Name),
I have longed for you to come home. You need not carry your heavy burden any longer.
The burden I will give you is light. Will you walk the pathway home? I will walk with
you and at the end of the journey you will share with me in my banquet.

2. Boots

Goals/Outcomes:

At the end of this session each participant will be able to:

1. Articulate what their journeys has been and what they anticipate it will be
2. Identify new opportunities and directions in their lives symbolized by the door
3. Identify those who will walk with them
4. Make a decision to walk through the door (journey home)

Methods:

1. Opening prayer

Provide each participant with a copy of Psalm 23

Facilitator: Together let us pray the twenty-third Psalm.

2. You may have noticed that our door has some missing panels. Just like in life we don't always get the whole story. The stories these panels tell are important, but any endeavor in life has its limitations. We did not have time to cover every panel, so we leave it to you to explore the missing stories. However, we will leave you with some clues.

A facilitator now adds the missing panels to the door (Panels 5,6,8,13,14,15)

Our final panel depicts a Pope knocking opening the Holy Door. This is the end of the story of the Holy Door and it ends with a question. Will you open the door? The vision this panel projects is reminiscent of a verse of scripture. Facilitator reads Revelation 3:20. Now look at and reflect for a moment on our panel (16).

3. You are in the story

We have done a lot of work together. You have heard stories of redemption, forgiveness, hope, and love. You have reflected on many aspects of your journey and recorded some thoughts in your journals. You have shared with the group difficult things about your own journey, and you have supported your fellow veterans as you have listened and reflected on their stories.

We are now coming to a close of this retreat, but your journey must continue. It does not have to continue down the same path it has been on. Our encouragement is to walk the Warrior's Path Home. On this path you are not alone. You may have found someone on this retreat that will walk with you and you with them. During our time together, you may have identified someone back home or in your community that would be willing to walk with you. You may have been reminded that a faith community is a good traveling companion. Most of all you may have discovered that Jesus will walk with you every step of the way.

This is your story. We heard in our scripture reading that Jesus stands at the door and knocks. He wants you to except his invitation and open the door for him. His promise is that if we open the door he will come in and eat with us – in other words share a deep fellowship with us.

We are going to take a little liberty with the story and reverse the position of the door. Instead of opening the door we invite you to walk through the door to enjoy fellowship with Jesus at his banquet. You will receive an invitation to this banquet. If you except, please remove and leave your final rock around the table. Please leave your rucksack too. Then move to the door and simply walk through it. Do you remember taking a PT test and after the running portion those who finished first stated at the finish line and encouraged their comrades. Think of this as a PT test.

4. A facilitator hands an invitation to a veteran. The facilitator waits until the veteran has removed the final rock, left the rucksack, and has walk through the door before handing out the next invitation.
5. When all have walked through the door the group is escorted to a banquet. The banquet concludes the retreat.
6. This prayer or another appropriate one may be used at the end of the banquet.

All loving God, you are never far from those who seek their way home and you always show mercy to those love you. Remain with those gathered here who journey toward you and guide them on their way. May your grace be their companion until their journey's end. Amen

Appendix

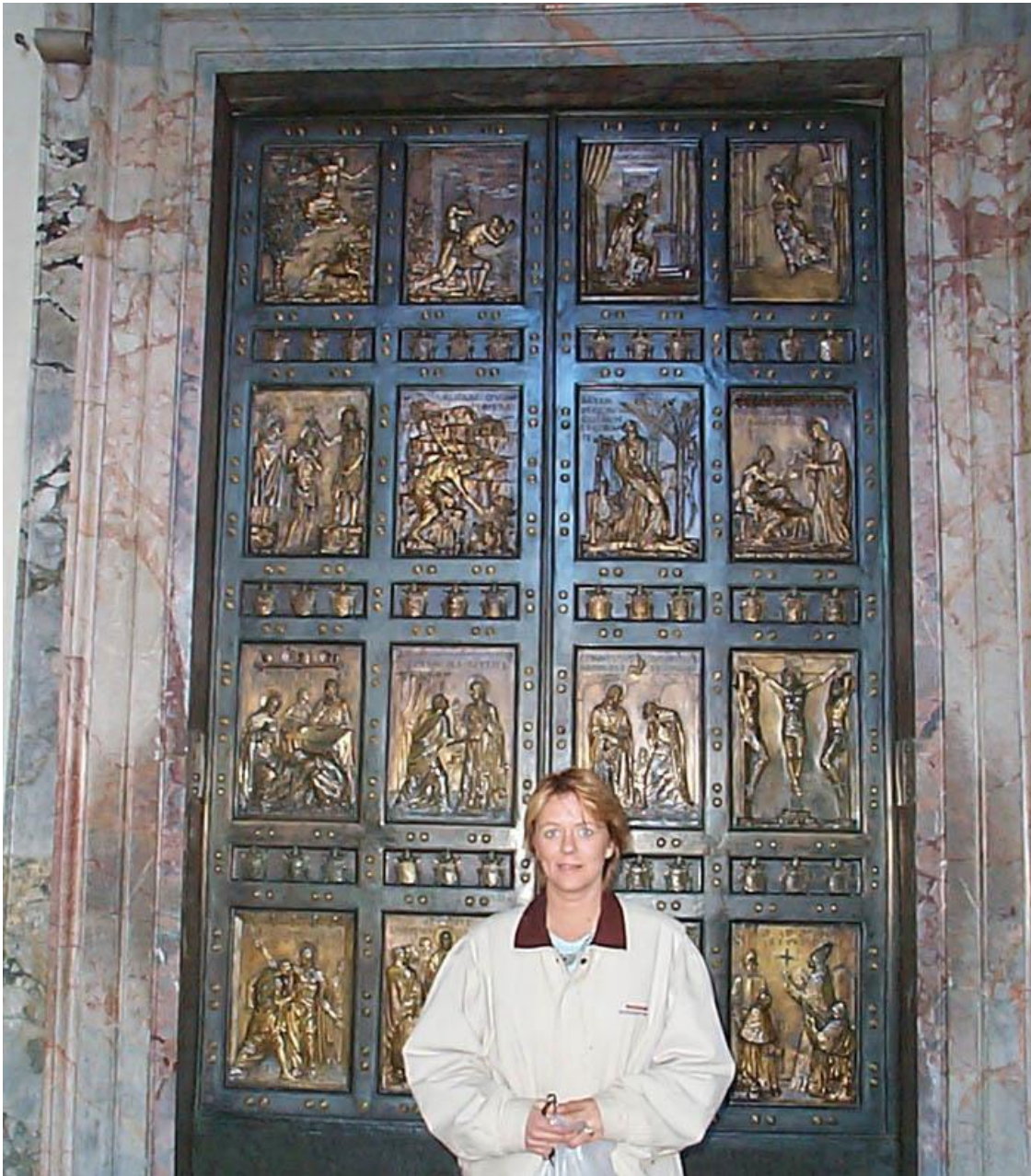


Figure 1. The Holy Door

“St. Peters Basilica.Info,” <http://stpetersbasilica.info/Interior/HolyDoor/HolyDoor.htm>
(accessed March 1, 2018).



Figure 2. The Angel at the Gates
of Paradise (Panel 1)

[27]

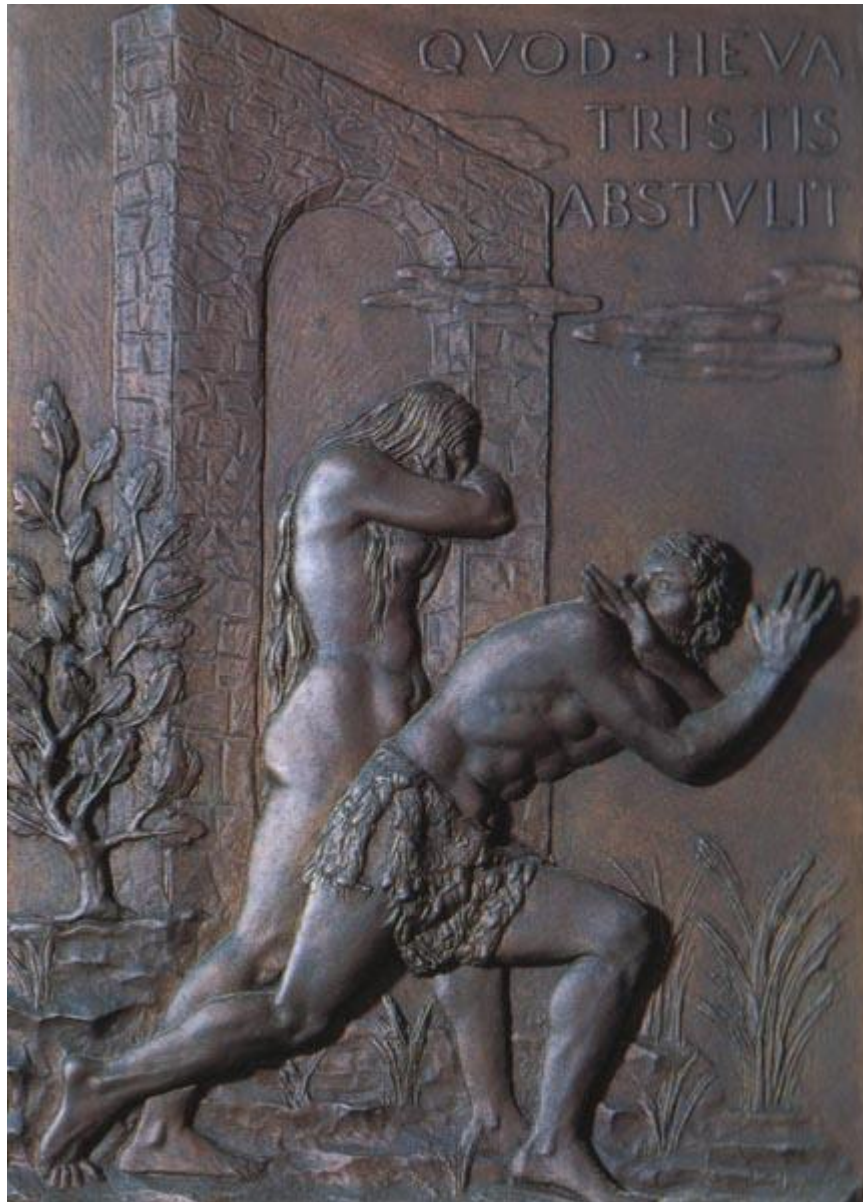


Figure 3. The Fall (Panel 2)

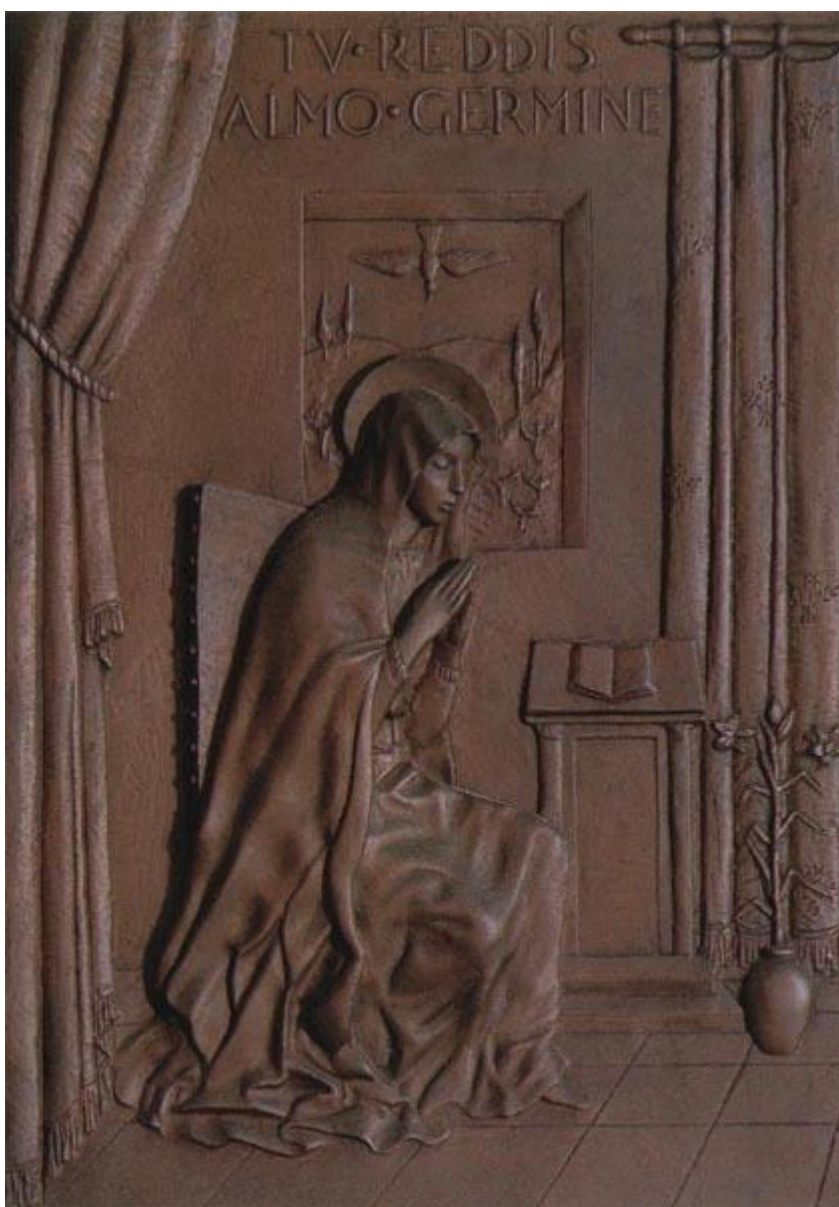


Figure 4. Mary
The Annunciation (Panel 3)



Figure 5. The Angel of
The Annunciation (Panel 4)



Figure 6. Christ's Baptism
in the Jordan (Panel 5)

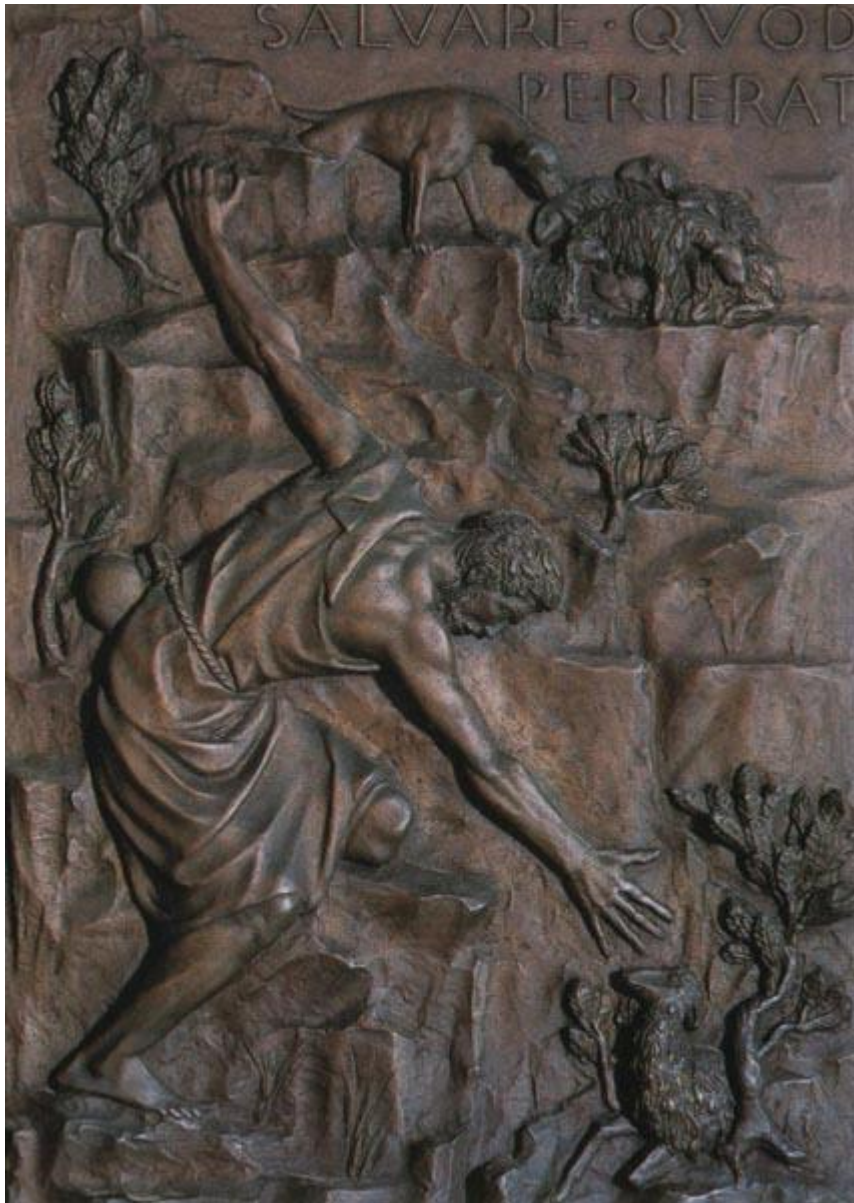


Figure 7. The Lost Sheep (Panel 6)

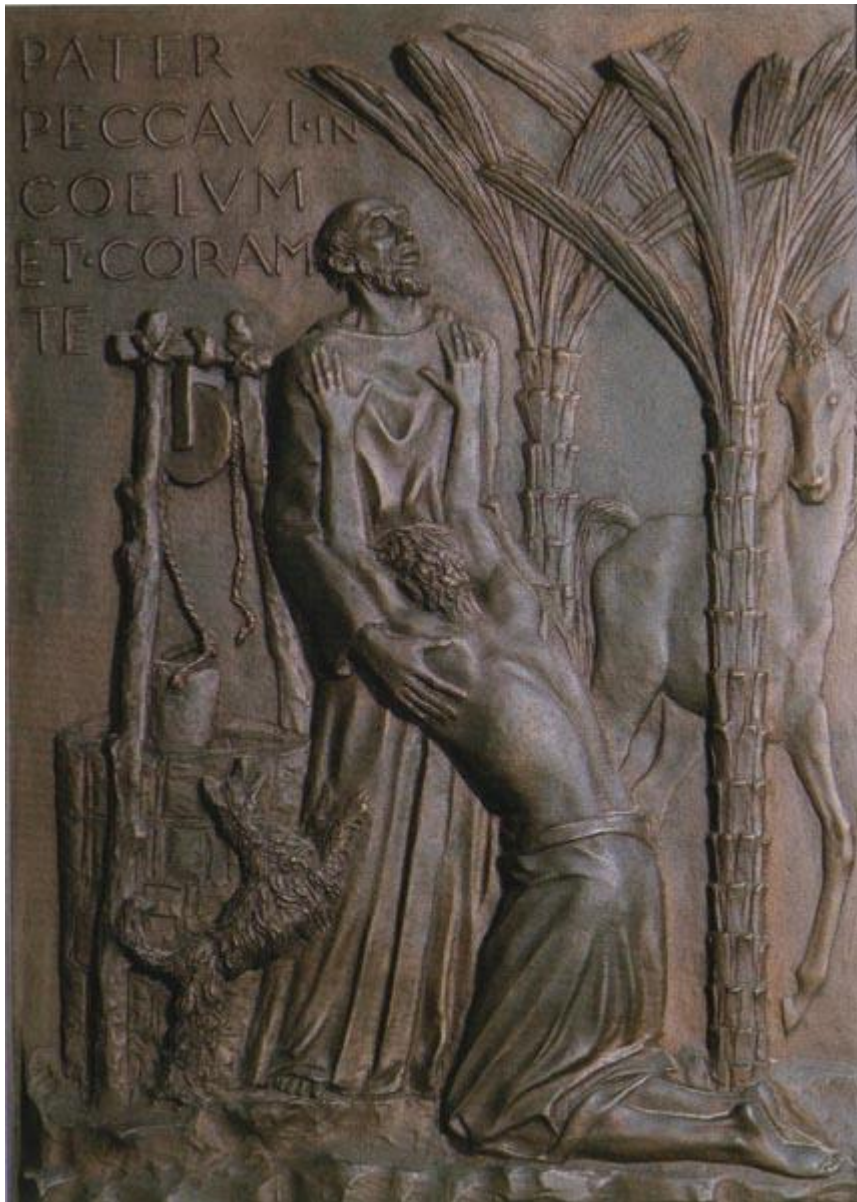


Figure 8. The Merciful Father (Panel 7)



Figure 9. The Cure of
a Paralytic (Panel 8)

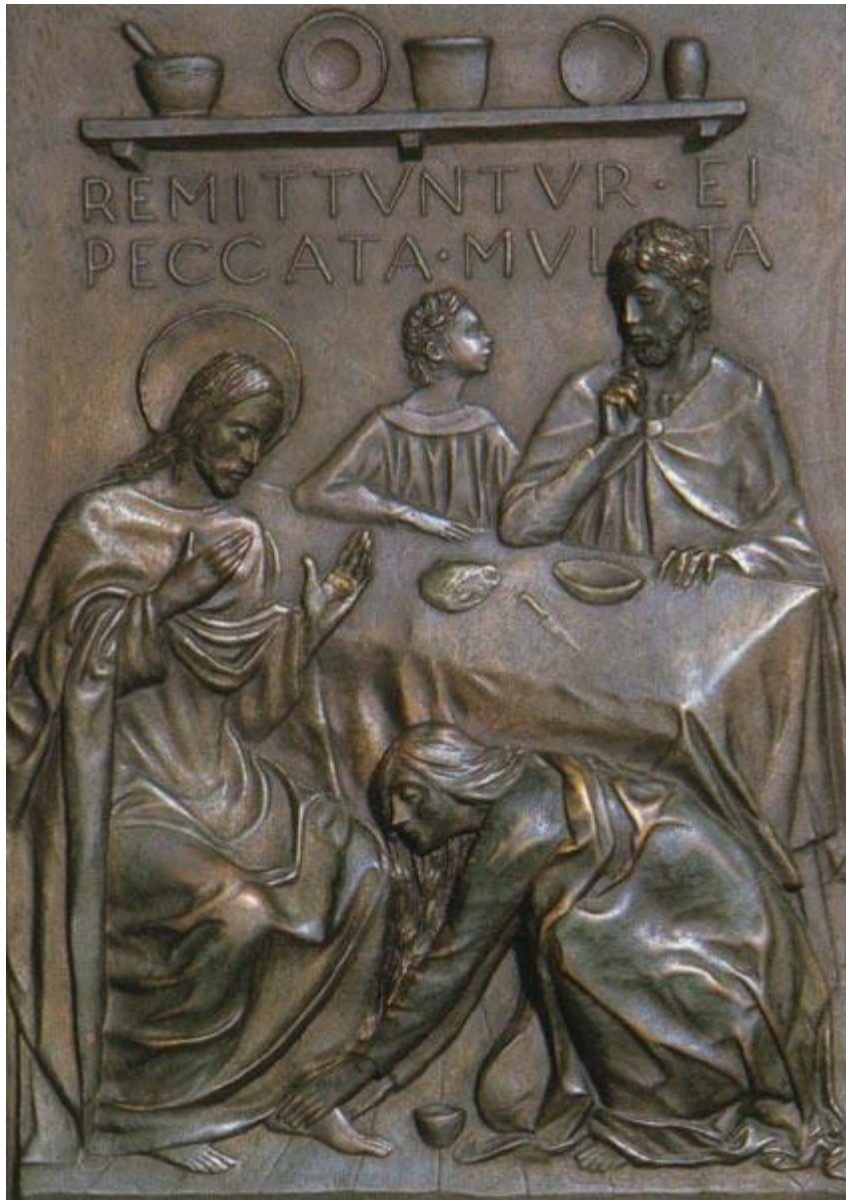


Figure 10. The Woman who
was a Sinner (Panel 9)



Figure 11. The Need for Forgiveness (Panel 10)



Figure 12. Peter's Denial (Panel 11)



Figure 13. In Front of the Crucifix



Figure 14. The Appearance
to Thomas (Panel 13)

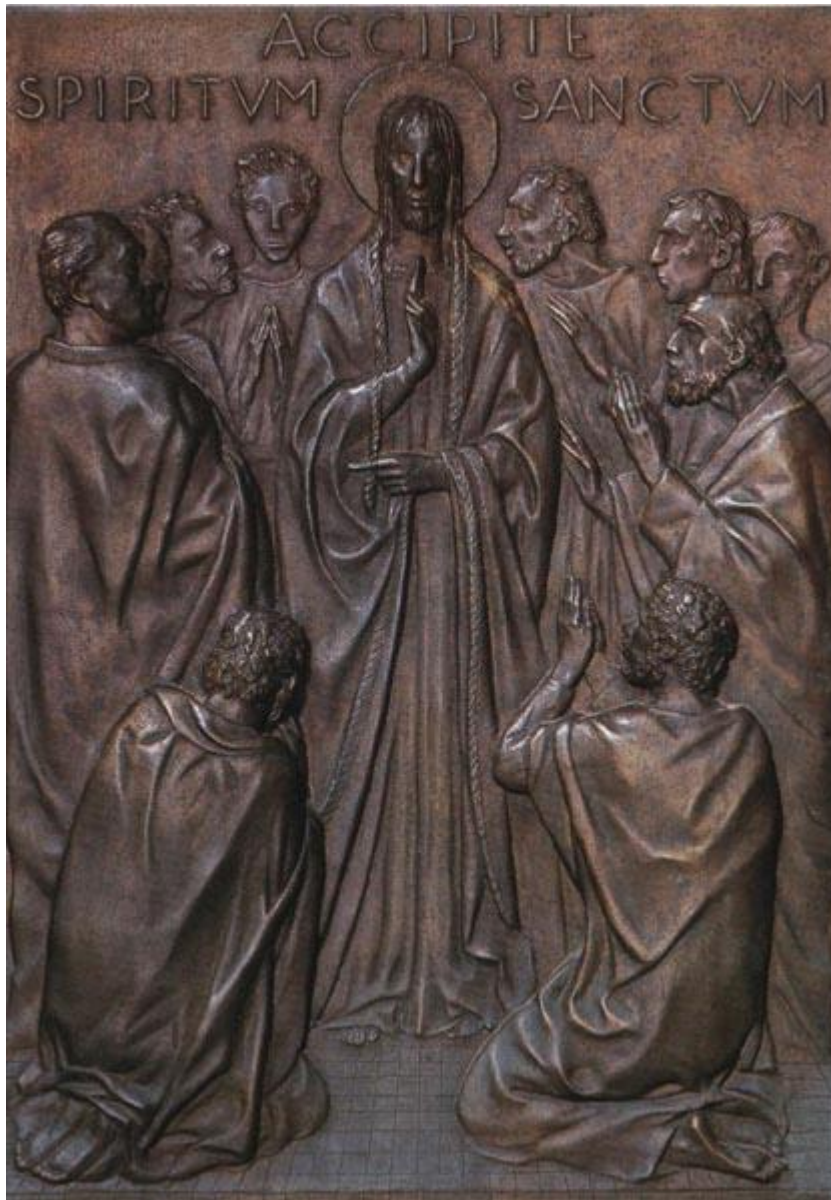


Figure 15. Christ's Appearance to
The Disciples (Panel 14)



Figure 16. The Conversion
of Saul (Panel 15)



Figure 17. Opening the
Holy Door (Panel 16)



Figure 18. Carlisle Barracks Memorial Chapel "Four Chaplains" Stained Glass Window

"U.S. Army War College Memorial Chapel,"
<https://www.facebook.com/USAWCMemorialChapel/photos/a.119842818070855.20511.119842311404239/119842824737521/?type=1&theater> (accessed March 1, 2018).

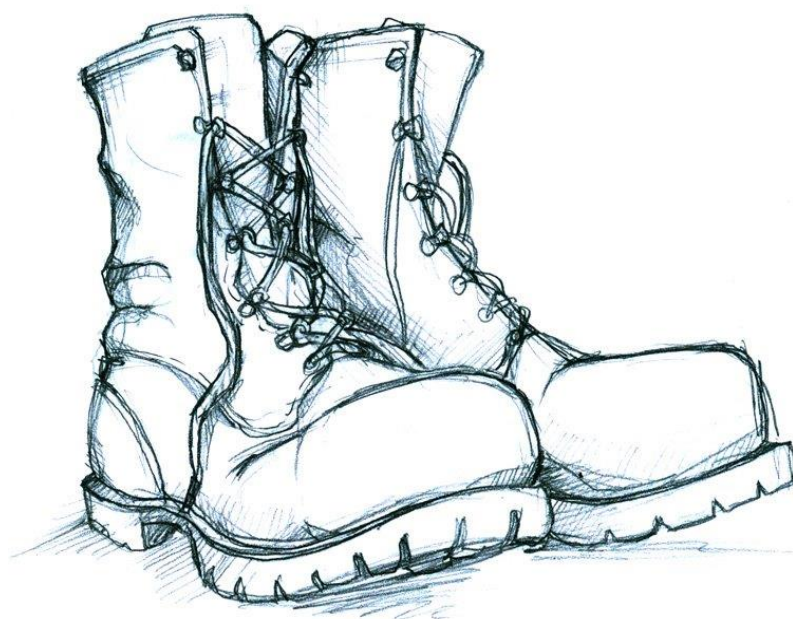


Figure 19. Warrior's Path Home Patch

POST GROUP WORK

When veterans complete the retreat, they return to their lives of work, family, and education. However, the veterans will still have work to do on their moral injury and experience of war. Just as surgery may heal a person with cancer this group work may foster healing for those with moral injuries, but just as the patient after cancer surgery will have a long period of recovery and possibly further treatment so will the veteran with moral injury have maintenance efforts to make toward spiritual health. Some groups may continue to meet on a regular basis. The major effort of continued self-care is for the veterans to stay connected. The facilitator can encourage the members to at least stay connected to each other by social media or telephone. Some may find continued support through their place of worship, the VA, or axillary agencies such as the Veterans of Foreign Wars or the American Legion. Staying connected to some form of community helps the veterans resist returning to shame and the isolation that accompanies it. The story of healing, from the perspective of this chapter, takes the effort of many story tellers.

CONCLUSION

You must go by a way which is the way of ignorance. In order to possess what you do not possess. You must go by the way of dispossession. In order to arrive at what you are not. You must go through the way in which you are not. And what you do not know is the only thing you know.

—T.S. Eliot, *Four Quartets*, 127

Citing a portion of T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, this dissertation began with the assertion that a person obtains the deepest parts of wisdom on journeys that have no ecstasy. The epigram above completes that thought. All true journeys and adventures begin with some degree of uncertainty and lack of knowledge, but they begin trusting that the very process of the journey will make possible the discovery of knowledge that points the way. Current psychology and theology have much to discover about moral injury in the context of war and the journey of soul repair. More accurately, they have much to re-discover about moral injury because ancient wisdom and Sacred Texts have plumbed the depths of this issue, though with a different vocabulary. This dissertation has borrowed from that vocabulary to tell the story of moral injury.

The story of moral injury is one of a journey that lacks movement and a journey that lacks the trust to take the next step. Theology has much to contribute to helping those who feel stuck in guilt and shame, with no hope for redemption. It has the vocabulary for the task, but more importantly, it has the story. It has the story that goes straight to the soul and opens new paths that lead home.

This dissertation has been an effort to bring the theologian, research scholar, and warrior together to contribute to the understanding of moral injury in the context of war and to discover real paths that lead to healing and home. It proposed that story is an effective way to address

moral injury. Authors like Edward Tick and Larry Dewey have identified the power of story in human experience, and especially in regard to the spiritual journey. The dissertation opened with the story of moral injury where soldiers find themselves morally challenged by what they experience in combat. This challenge comes from a violation of one's conscience which can arise from witnessing an atrocity, or feeling betrayed by one's leadership. The response to moral injury is shame.

The dissertation next took up the story of self. Here the focus became on how identity develops, Paul Tillich's model of anxiety, and how moral injury distorts one's identity. This chapter discussed killing in combat and its effect on personal identity. As Dave Grossman noted human beings have a natural aversion to killing, therefore military training is designed to overcome this aversion.³³⁵ This training to kill distorts one's identity.

In the story of evil and suffering the dissertation addressed the problem of evil. It included a discussion of moral failure using the examples of the *My Lai* massacre and *Abu Ghraib* prisoner of war abuse on the battlefield. It noted that these kinds atrocities set the condition that makes moral injury possible where soldiers either bear witness to acts of violence (Brett Litz's definition of moral injury) or they feel betrayed by leadership (Jonathan Shay's definition of moral injury). This chapter suggested training soldiers in virtue as a preventive measure of moral failure.

The fourth chapter was the story of redemption. It used the film *The Mission*, to set up the connection between moral injury and the need for redemption. Here Mendoza's story of his journey through a rain forest as a means of doing penance for killing ended with him finding

³³⁵ Grossman, 29-36.

redemption. This chapter used the Holy Door and its sixteen panels as a means to tell the story of redemption. It incorporated the story of four marines and their struggle to find redemption.

The final story, the story of healing, built on the story of redemption. It proposed the Warrior's Path Home. Here veterans attend a seven-session retreat where they form as a group, hear narratives based on the panels of the Holy Door, reflect through journaling, and share their stories. At the end of the retreat the veterans are invited to walk through the Holy Door and begin the journey of the Warrior's Path Home.

While this dissertation has focused on moral injury experienced by military troops, the issue of moral injury is larger than its connection to war. The dynamics of war experienced by soldiers can be mirrored in other populations. Police officers, prison guards, and some first responders come face to face with human atrocity. Crime ridden city streets can seem like a battlefield that too often involves killing and feelings of betrayal by leaders. Hopefully this study will contribute to the efforts of those who seek healing for these populations.

As noted in Chapter Five the "Spiritual Fitness Initiative" has proven itself to be one means of healing for soldiers afflicted with moral injury. This dissertation recognizes the value of that program. At the same time, the Christian story of redemption adds another whole dimension to the healing process. For the Christian soldier the proposed program that draws on the imagery of the Holy Door can allow the injured to hear again familiar stories in a new way. If they find healing through this process they will find themselves in stories far beyond military life, a story that they can rely on as they face whatever challenges might lie ahead.

The perplexities of the issues discussed in this dissertation may well remain perplexities.

On the other hand, one may gain, with Dante, a flash of insight:

Here vigour fail'd towering fantasy:
But yet the will roll'd onward, like a wheel
In even motion, by the Love impell'd,
That moves the sun in Heaven and all the stars.³³⁶

While war brings death, destruction, and injury, the story of Divine Love conquers even death itself. This is a story that can heal.

³³⁶ Dante, 426.

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