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Beyond the Call of Duty: Supererogation Towards an Apologetic Approach in the US Navy

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BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY:
SUPEREROGATION TOWARDS AN APOLOGETIC APPROACH IN THE US NAVY
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ABSTRACT

Members of the US Navy subscribe to common values outlined in the *Sailor's Creed*, a shared dictum of foundational ideals that burdens all persons within the organization to follow. Honor, courage, commitment, excellence, and fairness are explicit organizational values written therein that codify the standard values expected of all Sailors regardless of rank or other designators. For Christians serving in the US Navy, how can they present the tenets of the Gospel in a manner appropriate, and legal, for a professional, secular work environment such as the military but are consistent with the biblical imperative to give a defense of Christianity to all who ask (1 Peter 3:15)? The answer lies in what John Rawls calls supererogatory acts, those actions in which there is no moral obligation to perform, and are above and beyond the standard ethical behavior the Navy expects; these are not only extraordinary acts of heroism but simple and small occurrences of humility and hospitality. Common moral intuition may lead any Sailor, Christian or not, to perform supererogatory acts but a follower of Christ can intentionally use these actions as part of a greater apologetic approach. In the language of public theology, the paper explores the Heart Before Head method, a combination of Blaise Pascal's psychological apologetics and evidential apologetics, a two-step method that first appeals to an individual's heart, the seat and center of human emotion, volition, and will, before moving to historical evidences for the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

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CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction: All Gave Some, Some Gave All

“Scripture tells us...that a man has no greater love than to lay down his life for his friends,” spoke Former President George W. Bush to a crowd gathered at the White House on April 2005 to celebrate the heroic actions of the deceased Sergeant First Class Paul Smith.¹ Two years earlier while engaged in kinetic operations in Baghdad, Paul Smith organized the evacuation of several injured soldiers and allowed them to retreat to safety while he fought gallantly, albeit futilely, against an enemy vastly superior in number. For his actions, US Congress posthumously awarded Sergeant Smith the Medal of Honor, which President Bush presented to his 11-year old son in front of a grateful, somber White House audience.

What makes Sergeant Smith’s actions praiseworthy and remarkable is that his efforts went well above and beyond the call of normal, typical duty. Any of the other soldiers at that intense battle could have done similarly, yet there was only one individual who distinguished themselves enough to earn the highest military medal of the United States. Were the other soldiers negatively disciplined for not doing as Sergeant Smith? Not so, for many soldiers present at the firefight received lesser awards and some received no military medal, theirs was the basic yet wonderful opportunity to return home which is its own reward in and of itself.

Sergeant Smith’s collective *res gestae* is what ethicists have appropriately called supererogatory acts. If a required action is understood as something that meets moral obligations, then supererogatory acts go above and beyond those to the truly extraordinary. Elizabeth Drummond Young gives a basic definition in this way, supererogatory acts are “acts which are

¹ President George W. Bush, “Medal of Honor Presentation for Sergeant First Class Paul R. Smith” (White House, April 4, 2005).

good to do, but are optional.”² Her simple definition has implications, both positive and negative, when considered carefully for in the affirmative we observe that there is conduct that a person can do of which they have no burden or obligation to perform. Young’s definition also infers obligatory acts, or duties if you will, those behaviors that one must do out of responsibility irrespective of their desire to do or not do it.

1.1.1 The Navy Ethic in the *Sailor’s Creed*

Members of the military are called to such obligatory behavior through a prescribed value system, indoctrinated into each individual from the moment they constrain themselves to the Department of Defense by voluntary commitment. Each branch of the US military esteems specific virtues over others for one reason or another but the ideals are generally consistent throughout the service. In the Navy, we find our values etched in stone within the Sailor’s Creed, a shibboleth each member is required to memorize, and occasionally recite upon request:

I am a United States Sailor. I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and I will obey the orders of those appointed over me. I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and those who have gone before to defend freedom and democracy around the world. I proudly serve my country’s Navy combat team with Honor, Courage, and Commitment. I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all.³

Here we observe the standard virtues expected of the individual Sailor: honor, courage, commitment, excellence, and fairness. Notice that I did not say the ideal virtues for Sailors to aspire to but rather these are the minimum behavioral expectations the organization burdens each member with; violation of these values can be met with punitive or administrative discipline, and sometimes both.

² Elizabeth Drummond Young, “God’s Moral Goodness and Supererogation,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 73, no. 2 (April 2013): 83–95.

³ Naval History and Heritage Command, “The Sailors Creed,” accessed March 27, 2019, <http://public2.nhhcaws.local/research/library/online-reading-room/title-list-alphabetically/s/the-sailors-creed.html>.

The formal introduction to the Navy ethic typically happens at one of several accession points—boot camp for enlisted personnel, officer candidate school (OCS), a service academy, officer development school (ODS is for lawyers, doctors, dentists, chaplains, medical professionals), or a university reserve officer training corps (ROTC) program. Shortly after arrival at one of these entry points, drill instructors indoctrinate a recruit or candidate with service values through rote memorization of the Sailor’s Creed, short mnemonics, or little ditties designed to help the individual retain unfamiliar information quickly. Recognizing the virtues and what the organization expects is only the initial step, a lifetime of practice and adherence to those values is the expectation henceforth.

US Navy considers each of its members a professional warfighter, practitioners of the art of battle distinguished from mercenaries, terrorists, guerilla warriors, and other non-state combatants. To this end, Navy service is a profession rather than an occupation, and as such the organization places higher ethical demands on its members as compared to the workforce of common employment. As professionals charged with the defense of the nation, military leaders must not only be experts in the conduct of war but they must be “moral individuals both of action and of intellect, skilled at getting things done, while at the same time conversant in the military art.”⁴ Strong character and competence are the minimum expectation but the blueprint for the ideal is the shared values across the service.

The 2017 *Joint Doctrine of the US Armed Forces* recognizes that historic success on the battlefield has been dependent upon the shared values of its individual members across the different branches of service. It states, “these values adhere to the most idealistic societal norms,

⁴ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Joint Doctrine for the US Armed Forces (JP1 CH 1),” July 12, 2017, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp1_ch1.pdf, Appendix B.

are common to all the Services, and represent the essence of military professionalism.”⁵ This is commonsensical, for if value dissonance existed within the organization, its motivations, goals, and end states would pull its members in conflicting directions. It is through shared values where unity of effort is achieved and the military machine has effectiveness on the modern battlefield.

Commitment similar to duty, another Navy virtue not specifically named in the Sailor’s Creed, is the value that binds all servicemembers and conveys moral obligation as “defenders of the Constitution and of the nation”⁶ with an “unyielding sense of duty.”⁷ As Sailors committed to the naval profession of arms, we fulfill our oath without consideration of self-interest to the ultimate point of sacrificing our lives if an extreme situation warrants such a demand.

Commitment gives birth to responsibility and all that it entails.

Honor is the value that defines the ethical fulfillment of a Sailor’s commitment and duty. It is the virtue that obligates servicemembers to “exemplify the ultimate in ethical and moral behavior” which means that we are to never lie, cheat, or steal in our personal or professional dealings.⁸ Honor burdens and blesses each Sailor with the responsibility to adhere to an uncompromising code of integrity in actions and relationships, to embrace and seek accountability, to fulfill commitments, to demonstrate responsibility, and to represent our nation with distinction and valor.⁹

When the Navy prescribes courage to its personnel it infers two types, moral and physical, for both encompass the entirety of situations a Sailor will encounter in the course of

⁵ Ibid, Appendix B.

⁶ Ibid, Appendix B.

⁷ Chief of Naval Operations, “Naval Doctrine Publication 1: Naval Warfare” (Department of the Navy, March 28, 1994), accessed August 3, 2020, <http://www.iwar.org.uk/military/resources/aspc/pubs/ndp1.pdf>, 7.

⁸ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Joint Doctrine for the US Armed Forces (JP1 CH 1), Appendix B.”

⁹ Chief of Naval Operations, “Naval Doctrine Publication 1: Naval Warfare,” 7.

their duty. Moral courage is what allows a person to take risk and make decisions even if the decision is against popular opinion. It gives internal fortitude to its possessor, strengthening them with the ability to take a stand for what they believe is right because their conscience will not allow them to do otherwise. Even more, moral courage means seeking and receiving criticism from subordinates, peers, and superordinate alike. In order for self-improvement, commonly mistaken for weakness but actually a demonstration of incredible personal mettle through courage. Physical courage provides the ability to overcome manifest obstacles “through an unyielding sense of duty and commitment.”¹⁰ Military service is inherently dangerous and thus physical courage is required to confront “physical pain, hardship, death, or threat of death” and even the ability to act alone if necessary.¹¹

The Sailor’s Creed concludes with the phrase *I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all* to complete the Navy’s list of organizational values.¹² Excellence is interwoven into the very fabric of naval service as the institution foundational to naval service as leaders continually strive for process improvement, efficiency, innovation in day-to-day operations as well as pushing every member to live up to their maximum potential. The principle of excellence prevents the Navy from complacency and stagnation as large government institutions are prone to do but instead is the catalyst for the forward movement of the organization and its personnel into an uncharted future.

Equal and fair treatment of all Sailors recognizes the intrinsic value that each member of the Navy has regardless of rank. From the highest-ranking Admiral to the most junior seaman right from boot camp, each Sailor is afforded the same opportunity and impartial treatment as

¹⁰ Ibid, 7.

¹¹ Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff, “Joint Doctrine for the US Armed Forces (JP1 CH 1).”

¹² Naval History and Heritage Command, “The Sailors Creed.”

every other member. The new Secretary of the Navy, Kenneth Braithwaite, signed a new equal opportunity statement that summarizes the principle of *fair treatment of all*. It begins:

The Department of the Navy (DON) is committed to ensuring that all DON employees and all civilian applicants to the DON have the freedom to compete for workplace opportunities on a fair and level playing field, and that they are free from discrimination on any protected basis.¹³

This organizational standard fosters an environment of trust and confidence within Sailors and allows them to perform at their highest levels, free from the distraction and burdens of discrimination, favoritism, and prejudice.

1.1.2 Going Above and Beyond: Supererogation towards an Apologetic

Christians serving in the military are not only obligated under the value framework the Navy specifies, but also have the Biblical mandate to live the Christian life sincerely whatever the forum may be and to stand ready to give a reason for the hope of Christ within should the faith be questioned whether in earnest or pejoratively (1 Peter 3:15). In essence, a Christian serving in US Navy is dually obligated, one by the tenets of their faith and the other by the organization with which they have sworn loyalty.

It is plain to observe the tension that arises in such a dynamic, for which fealty is supreme should an individual feel burdened to act by one in a manner that is contradictory to the other? A Christian is delighted to share their faith and gladly answer inquiries made from coworkers about it yet the Navy frowns upon individuals openly sharing their religious views. Long has the organization made proselytizing verboten, and so this aversion to open religious vernacular—aside from very limited settings—is now ingrained in Navy culture. For the Christian pushing against the cultural norm, no matter how passionate or zealous the belief, to share their faith will

¹³ Secretary of the Navy, “Equal Employment Opportunity Policy Statement,” July 2, 2020, <https://www.secnnav.navy.mil/donhr/Site/EEO/Documents/Equal%20Employment%20Opportunity%20Statement.pdf>.

result in informal organizational censure with progressively stronger measures such as administrative or legal action should an individual refuse to change tack.

The question emerges from such pontification, “How can a Christian passionately contend for their faith while serving in the Navy but without violating organizational values, orders, or the code of a professional work environment?” The way the question is posed infers that the Navy severely limits how authentically Christians can exercise their faith, especially since the Bible compels its adherents to share the Gospel with an unbelieving world. It is true, the Navy does constrain the religious expression of its members but it similarly limits political discourse as well as hair style, manner of dress, and where a Sailor can go on annual leave. The Navy enforces regulations that the government does impose upon the civilian population it protects, Sailors voluntarily surrender some of their rights when they join the military service.

Even still, Christians can faithfully present their beliefs and not be in any violation of order or regulation, and further, be well within the unwritten rules of decorum, manners, and good taste expected in a professional work environment. The balancing act is to safely navigate these waters without falling victim to the explosive mines that linger in plain view and just beneath the surface, ready to take the Christian off the spiritual battlefield. Mickey Weinstein, founder of the Military Religious Freedom Foundation, prides himself (as touted on his company website) on the numerous legal victories his organization has won against the military establishment over issues of religious expression and practice of its members. A favorite target of his are military chaplains, who he decries are clear and living examples of the violation of the church and state separation.

To avoid providing easy fodder for subversive and undisguised Christian enemies, the believer must be judicious and measured in their spoken and written words. An overtly Christian

email from an official government email address and computer offers all the incriminating evidence needed for an offended co-worker to alert the chain of command of inappropriate religious activity in the ranks. Christians serving in the Navy know they must be careful in their speech and expression as western culture's institutions have made their slow and steady march towards secularization. Even though sociologists like Jürgen Habermas rightly claim that the West and Europe are now in a post-secularization period, proper etiquette and consideration of our neighbor's beliefs also temper the Christian's public expression of faith.¹⁴ Through sincere and authentic living as a disciple of Christ, the Christian's silent witness is not in violation of any Navy regulation nor is demonstrating self-sacrificial love to your shipmates after Jesus' example either. Principally speaking, a Christian can live their faith without issue, but the question remains how to practically accomplish this in the Navy's day-to-day activities. Even more, how to positively promulgate Christianity with an intentional apologetic approach given the mores of the Navy community.

In this project, we will explore a deliberate solicitation of Christianity through acts of supererogation; deportment within the Navy that exceeds the organizational standard of ethical behavior. Supererogation is what John Rawls defines as unrequired acts that come at a "loss or risk involved for the agent himself."¹⁵ Common moral instinct leads humans to recognize such heroic acts intuitively and enthusiastically celebrate them, but modern ethicists have expanded upon Rawl's supererogation definition to include diminutive—but significant nonetheless—acts which an individual has no obligation to perform for another's benefit yet does. It is in the space

¹⁴ Jürgen Habermas, "Notes on Post-Secular Society," *New Perspectives Quarterly* 25, no. 4 (September 2008): 17–29.

¹⁵ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 100.

between the moral obligations an organization's ethical standard creates and supremely heroic acts where Christians in the Navy can make a compelling case for following Christ through simple supererogation. Opportunities for unpremeditated, unpretentious heroism are rare which is why when a soldier jumps on a live grenade to take the brunt of an explosion on behalf of his comrades, the military awards a him with a medal of valor. Gallantry of this magnitude truly stands out among other acts for going above and beyond what moral obligation requires but seldom arise. The supererogation acts that we will examine here are not those rare heroic occurrences, although they are certainly included should the opportunity present itself, but instead every day opportunities to demonstrate the Christly virtues of humility, generosity, hospitality, and charity that the Navy does not requires of its members; this project focuses specifically on hospitality and humility.

1.1.3 An Additional Step Needed: Supererogation with Apologetics

Admittedly, supererogatory acts alone do not deliver a comprehensive Gospel presentation, in fact they may do little to make a definitive and unilateral case for the existence of God or Jesus' resurrection of their own accord without additional apologetic work. An extra step beyond supererogation is necessary to introduce the Gospel's wonderful truth of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For supererogation to have full efficacy as Christians can intentionally use it, it must be coupled with another apologetic component to give a robust presentation for the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Since apologetic's ultimate goal is evangelistic in nature, to lead an individual to put their faith in Jesus Christ as their personal savior, supererogation with an evidential apologetics makes a solid case for Jesus.

To this end, supererogation is the consummate complement for the Head Before Heart apologetic approach that is proposed here. This two-step approach starts with the heart—the

center of human emotion, volition, and will—before moving to evidence for Jesus’s death, burial, and resurrection. Gary Habermas, distinguished research professor of apologetics at Liberty University, asserts that seventy to eighty percent of all doubters, skeptics, atheists, and agnostics deny Christianity for emotional reasons and intellectual ones.¹⁶ This accounts for the confusing position of Bart Ehrman—the renowned understudy of the New Testament scholar Bruce Metzger—who knows far more about the New Testament than most Christians can hope to know in a lifetime, who readily affirms Habermas’ minimal facts on the resurrection yet vehemently denies the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is not for lack of evidence or proof that people reject Christianity, according to Gary Habermas, but rather it is the suppression of it.

For this reason, it is necessary to appeal to the heart first, to open it with authentic Christ-like living by demonstrating supererogatory acts of humility and hospitality. The French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal profoundly stated, “The heart has reasons, that reason does not know.”¹⁷ The heart Pascal referred to was not the physical organ responsible for pumping blood through the body but rather the seat and center of human emotion, volition, desire, and will. It is the internal force that compels an individual to whatever end of their choosing regardless of whether that end is reasonable or rational. For an apologetic method to have the full power of persuasion, the apologist must appeal to both the head (through evidence, proofs, and historical facts) and the heart (proposing a solution for the wretched human condition).

The heart opens the mind to truth, for it is the gateway to all genuine, true conviction—without it any information retained is knowledge for the sake of knowledge without any

¹⁶ Gary Habermas, “Apologetic Methods” (Lecture, Liberty University, September 15, 2020).

¹⁷ Blaise Pascal, T. S. Eliot, and W. F. Trotter, *Pascal’s Pensées* (Kindle Edition: E.P. Dutton, 1958), location 1620.

transformational power. The Bible, in one well-known passage, speaks of the connection between the head and the heart, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom” (Proverbs 9:10, NKJV). A heart condition of reverence and respect directly correlates with a phenomenon that happens in the head, but intuitively we understand the converse is not true. A constant refrain of Jesus when he addresses the masses is “He who has ears to hear let him hear!” (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, Mark 4:9, 25), which is an implicit call to urge the listener to open the receptivity of their inner will so that they can hear *and* receive what he says. It is the same principle Solomon admonished with his words in Proverbs 9:10—the inclination of the heart, for good or for ill, guides the head.

1.2 Conclusion

Within the Navy context, supererogatory acts give the Christian the ability to positively affect the proclivity for unbelievers to receive evidence for Christ’s salvific work. To only evangelize with Gospel preaching can satisfy the Christian requirement to share the faith to the unchurched (Matthew 28:19-20) but supererogation builds into a more effective apologetic method. It is with small, intentional acts of humility and hospitality above and beyond the ethical standard outlined in the Sailor’s Creed that Christians can begin an apologetic to win hearts and minds for Christ. Although any person can demonstrate supererogation, the argument will be made that a Christian’s deliberately and purposefully use of them can be coupled with an apologetic approach to make greater case for Christ. Supererogation does not make a Gospel presentation itself but must be paired with an apologetic approach that presents evidence for Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection. In this project, the case will be made for Heart Before Head apologetic approach where Christians appeal to an individual’s emotional and volitional center before moving to historic evidence.

Supererogation is the key to the efficacy of this apologetic approach, particularly in the context of the US Navy. It is through the normal activity of the Christian Sailor, but distinguished as supererogatory within the Navy, that the Kingdom of Heaven is brought near, and those in the military service can experience the goodness of God. And this in and of itself is an apologetic not in a strict scholarly sense as Toren defines but an apologetic of presence through supererogatory acts as part of a larger methodology. In doing so, William Craig's three vital roles of apologetics are accomplished of (1) shaping culture, (2) strengthening believers, and (3) evangelizing unbelievers¹⁸ as well as fulfill the imperative to give an account of the hope within the Christian (1 Peter 3:15). It is by going above and beyond the call of duty, doing more than what the Navy requires is part and parcel for a greater apologetic methodology, for acts of charity, hospitality kindness, and hospitality are not moral obligations of the military but are the natural outworking of the Holy Spirit in a Christian's life. Supererogatory acts demonstrate the highest possible moral ideal, done voluntarily, motivated by love, bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to the Navy through the willing Christian Sailor.

1.3 Method Through the Project

The major focus of this dissertation is to answer the question how a Christian serving in the Navy can use acts of supererogation to present the Gospel to others in a legal and appropriate manner consistent with a professional work environment. The only correct starting point is to first understand why a Christian should commit themselves to a lifelong endeavor of sharing the Gospel. The "why" must proceed the "how"; for if an individual lacks a foundational impetus behind their actions are dependent on emotion and self-generated willpower that waxes and

¹⁸ William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith (3rd Edition): Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton, United States: Crossway, 2008), accessed July 27, 2020, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/liberty/detail.action?docID=355122>, 16-22.

wanes like all human emotions. If, however, something much deeper and profound drives the desire for evangelism in the Christian's heart—like love for God and the unbeliever—than genuine care replaces dutiful obedience. With this in mind, Chapter Two dedicates itself to articulating what should be the starting place for all evangelism and apologetics: love for God and others.

Chapter Three tackles the question “What is supererogation?” by examining scholarly literature on the subject, and devising a working definition. JO Urmson, John Rawls, and David Heyd have significantly contributed to supererogation ethical category through their thoughts captured in various published work. The result has been similar but subtly different definitions as to what supererogation actually is; these contributions are noteworthy in their own right but have done little to definitively resolve the ambiguity surrounding this unique class of moral actions. Nevertheless, Chapter Three we will explore a synthesis of adequate (but incomplete) supererogation definitions and move to return to the term's original essence found in Parable of the Good Samaritan.¹⁹ In Chapter Three, we will examine a new supererogation definition that is consistent with the consummate template for going above and beyond to love others—Christ's sacrificial example at the apex of the Passion Week. Jesus serves as the model for all Christians on how we ought to love and serve others and is the very embodiment of supererogation—any definition must be consistent with Christ's example.

The next step is to determine what the Navy care values are so that we can establish a standard by which we can measure supererogatory acts against. Since supererogation is going above and beyond duty's call than it is essential to know what the organization requirements for

¹⁹ In Chapter Two, I demonstrate that “supererogation” finds its origin in the Luke 10 Parable of the Good Samaritan from the Latin Vulgate rendering of the passage. “Beyond what you spend” in verse 35 is taken from the Latin phrase “supererogaveris.”

duty and obligation are. Chapter Four, unpacks Navy's core values derived from the *Sailor's Creed*—a short declaration that summarizes the institution's mission and principles—and *The Doctrine of the Armed Forces of United States* that is an over-arching document that governs all military branches, not just the Navy. Understanding the Navy ethical standard and value system is a necessary and important step as they provide the baseline for which we can measure supererogatory acts against. The *Sailor's Creed* is a fundamental element of Navy life; the organization requires all members to memorize the five-sentence aphorism and to adhere to its tenets. The values therein are the standard by which the Navy measures and evaluates all Sailors and provide the foundational principles by which the organization operates.

Chapter Five, pivots to articulate how Christians are distinct from other people groups in manner and form given that Jesus calls His followers “salt” and “light” (from Matthew 5:13-16). Since the Navy core values are honor, courage, and commitment, supererogation is above and beyond that but the question is “How?” Because supererogation is the vehicle through which a Christian can create conditions for a Gospel presentation within a Navy context, it is necessary to identify acts that distinguish themselves from Navy mores and the ethical norm. Chapter Five, we will examine the uniqueness of humility and hospitality from a Christian perspective; Christ and God the Father serving as the consummate examples for believers to emulate. It is humility and hospitality done with intentionality that serves as an essential step to the HBH apologetic approach and it is against this backdrop that Christians serving in the Navy can distinguish themselves with supererogatory acts for the ultimate purpose of evangelism.

After discussing the genesis of evangelism, defining supererogation, examining organizational values, demonstrating Christian distinctives through humility and hospitality, the intuitive logical progression is to present an apologetic approach that is tailored to Christians

serving in the Navy. Chapter Six will take the supererogation definition developed in Chapter Three and integrate that with an apologetic method—specifically the cross-section of supererogation and Blaise Pascal’s anthropological apologetic method with particular attention on how acts above the ethical standard demonstrate God’s goodness. Supererogatory acts are a means to counteract a person’s proclivity towards indifference to the Gospel. The apologists can pair supererogatory humility and hospitality—values not explicitly emphasized in the Navy—with the evidential method of apologetics to make a more robust, comprehensive and efficacious apologetic approach than supererogation, the anthropological method, or the evidential apologetic method by themselves. Supererogation alone does not present a definitive argument for Christianity so it must be integrated into other apologetic elements that supports the Christian faith’s cogency and validity. The method proposed in this paper is appropriately entitled the Head Before Heart apologetic approach.

In spite of all best efforts and intentions, there is not a surefire formula to win souls into the Kingdom of Heaven no matter how crafty the apologetic approach may be. Remember, the vast majority of people who had the unique privilege to interact with the Incarnate Word while He walked the earth did not believe. Jesus’ disciples were few in comparison to the grand multitudes who either heard His parables, witnessed His miracles, were fed by His provision, or saw His death by crucifixion; only a handful were transformed by His simple message, “The Kingdom of Heaven has come near.” How can a Christian apologist expect to be more successful than the One whom they represent? With this in mind, the final chapter (Chapter Seven) is dedicated to remind the believer that the best evidence and proof for Jesus’ resurrection is their own transformed life. A life changed by the resurrected power of Christ through the believer is tangible evidence of a reality that is available to all who believe.

As a bonus, Appendix A discusses the nascent theological discipline that arose out of a desire to present religious speech, ideas, and principles in the open market place of ideas for equal consideration amidst the plethora of voices. The theological field is known as public theology. Public theology intersects well with apologetics and HBH method developed in Chapter Six since Christians employed in the Navy will use concepts constructed by Elaine Graham and Max Stackhouse to help effectively evangelize in a secular environment.

1.3.1 Limitations

The majority of data and information for the project comes through reviewing Navy policy, doctrine, and instructions concerning Core Values and work place conduct. Department of Defense reports will also be useful in studying trends, incidences, and demographics that otherwise would be impossible to attain. Those topics that are not military specific come from qualitative literature that are referenced in the various chapters that broach upon the subject. Collectively, this will provide the qualitative information necessary to make informed claims and provide logical conclusions to the issue at hand. Here, the project's novelty lies in the cross-section of several different lanes of study. On the basis of the outcome of the analysis and evaluation we shall conclude that supererogation is the preferred method to promulgate the Christian message in the Navy when augmented by the evidential apologetic method delivered at the right time. Legal constraints and appropriateness of a professional work environment demand that individuals not overstep personal boundaries unless invited to do so. Supererogation of humility and hospitality have a low bar for being allowed in the work place; it nearly always appropriate to humble and hospitable. We will see that these are supererogatory acts in and of themselves; not extraordinary acts of heroism alone but simple and small occurrences of

intentional humility and hospitality coupled with timely messaging with the ultimate goal to win hearts and minds for Christ.

An obvious weakness to the argument is that history has shown, and will continue to demonstrate, that any person regardless of worldview, religion, or ideology is capable of supererogatory acts. Supererogation is not unique to Christians for any individual has the capacity for them but the argument here is that Christians can specifically use supererogatory acts as a segue to apologetic discourse and evangelism. As stated before, supererogation can be especially effective when integrated with another apologetic methodology. Christians model and perform acts of supererogation after Jesus Christ's consummate example, who had no moral obligation or duty to pay for the sins of humanity yet willingly did so that all may have the opportunity to have a relationship with him.

At this project's conclusion there will be unanswered questions as to specifically how Christians can use supererogation in their day-to-day activity to create conditions for apologetic discourse with their co-workers at the application level. This paper will not cover the particular "how to" with the full understanding that this is a necessary component to fully enact what is proposed here. The principles and the foundational of the method we will unpack here, and those other questions we will save for a later project to complete or hand over to another interested party. In the intermediate, there is enough to discuss without expanding the scope of the project to other, but no less important, relevant items.

CHAPTER TWO

2.1 Why Engage in Evangelism and Apologetics?

If a Christian were looking to Scripture for an explicit injunction to evangelize, there is no shortage of prescriptive verses; the New Testament alone provides clear instruction to engage in this fundamental Gospel-witnessing activity. Matthew 28:19-20, Luke 24:46-48, Mark 16:15, Acts 1:8 commands a Christian proclamation campaign originating from the Church that goes forth unto the entire world. Perhaps the singular most referenced passage for evangelism is what is colloquially known as “The Great Commission,” Jesus’ final earthly pronouncement before his heavenly ascension, which states, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations...” (Matthew 28:19, NKJV).

Hermeneuticists giving their due diligence to practically apply the Great Commission passage correctly note the imperative verb tense of “make disciples,” which typically expresses a command to bring about a desired outcome through a volitional act.²⁰ The Church has given particular credence to Jesus’ final command as demonstrated by historical missionary efforts to the far reaches of the earth to the most geographically isolated people groups the world over. As a result, there are churches, monasteries, chapels, cathedrals, and temples in the most unusual and unlikely places throughout the world’s continents first initiated by either Protestant or Catholic missionaries desiring to bring the Gospel to people that had not previously heard or known the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The Christian evangelism effort continues through the continued work of modern missionaries abroad as well as the active engagement of Christians to the neighbors in the

²⁰ Michael S. Heiser, and Vincent M. Setterholm, “Imperative,” *Glossary of Morpho-Syntactic Database Terminology* (Lexham Press, 2013).

communities they live—each work for Gospel promulgation’s sake. For the non-missionary kind, these Christians share their faith in the common spaces of public life—youth sporting games, neighborhood activity events, places of employment, education institutions, community spaces, and the like.

The question explored here is, “What motivates a Christian to evangelize?” A related but even more fundamental question is not the “what,” but the “why”—as in “Why should Christians purposefully engage in evangelism at all?” An immediate response from many in the church community would invariably harken to the Great Commission, which commands followers of Christ to make disciples of all nations, but is it the command to share the Gospel or is the motivation to evangelize grounded in something else? Christian’s often cite the Matthew 28:16-20 Great Commission passage as the impetus for evangelism, however, it is God’s revelation of love through Christ and the believer’s love for Him that compels the Church (2 Corinthians 5:14) to share the Gospel, and defend it when challenged through apologetics, to unbelievers. Rather than a sense of duty or obligation to a command, love for Christ and love of others (called neighbors in Matthew 22:39) motivates the believer to engage with purposeful, intentional evangelism and apologetics to share in the love that they know.²¹

2.2 Evangelism and Apologetics: Loving Others Towards a Common Goal

Before a discussion on evangelism can progress, it is necessary to establish a working definition of the term on what is meant by “evangelism” and those who practice it, an “evangelist.” The New Testament provides straightforward elucidation through Paul’s words. In one letter, he encourages his understudy, Timothy, to do the work of an evangelist (2 Timothy

²¹ Through the course of this discussion, “love of Christ” and “love of God,” or some variation of the aforementioned, is used synonymously with one another.

4:5), a unique office, with a specific function in the larger Church body (Acts 21:8, Ephesians 4:11). The evangelist is a public proclaimer after the likeness of the ancient Greek herald who makes pronouncements in the public arena on behalf of an authority (usually a governing figure of some sort),²² but the evangelist's message is singularly focused on the Gospel alone. The word "evangelism" itself is not found in the Bible's pages, but the word gets its meaning from the Greek verb εὐαγγελίζω (or euangelízomai in its infinitive form)—which is frequently found in the New Testament—that means to "proclaim good news."²³ Without any further extrapolation then, evangelism is understood as a Gospel proclamation activity, and an evangelist is one who shares it.

At the most basic and fundamental level, this is the center of evangelism—to share the Gospel with others—but more can be said. To whom is evangelism meant, and what role does it have in the entirety of a believer's faith journey? Do Christians evangelize each other? Is this a Sunday morning activity when the Church gathers to worship? Without further theological explanation, the potential for evangelism misapplication abounds.

In the common era, Christians have typically understood evangelism through one of three lenses: (1) preaching the Gospel to nonbelievers; (2) making disciples of Christ after the Matthew 28 Great Commission; or (3) the work of bringing the Kingdom of God to earth through a purposeful transformation from deliberate actions. David Barrett, a life-long missiologist practitioner and academic on evangelism, does not take exception to the three commonly understood applications but rather what is meant by evangelism—is it simply the

²² Gerhard Friedrich, "Εὐαγγελιστής (Euangelistés)," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985).

²³ Gerhard Friedrich, "Εὐαγγελίζω (Euangelizo)," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel and Gerhard Friedrich, vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans, 1985).

Gospel proclamation (regardless of the outcome), or are the attainment of positive results implied in the definition?²⁴ A prima facie New Testament reading seems to suggest both.

William Abraham in *Logic of Evangelism* narrows the focus from the broader understanding of evangelism to a more practical definition. He says, “We can best improve our thinking on evangelism by conceiving it as that set of intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating people into the kingdom of God for the first time.”²⁵ There are two important points worth mentioning here. First, notice that Abraham’s definition states the desired objective without necessitating that the objective is included in the action. In other words, evangelism is meant to bring about a conversion experience but recognizes that not all evangelized will. The phrase “initiating people into the kingdom of God” of Abraham’s definition highlights another theologically relevant aspect that makes the evangelism activity distinct from other Christian functions. Jones wording the description in this way “restricts the word ‘evangelism’ to the beginning phase of the Christian life.”²⁶

As Abraham suggests, evangelism understood as only initiating an individual’s relationship with Christ distinguishes the activity from discipleship: the purposeful process becoming more Christ-like with daily intentional choices and practice.²⁷ Discipleship is meant to be a co-labor endeavor that partners newer believers with more mature ones to confer what consistent Christian living looks like in practicum—from the veteran to the neophyte.

²⁴ Scott J. Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor: A Theology of Witness and Discipleship* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2003), 14-15.

²⁵ William J. Abraham, *The Logic of Evangelism* (Grand Rapids, Mich: W.B. Eerdmans, 1989), 95.

²⁶ Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor*, 17.

²⁷ Martin H. Manser, “Discipleship,” *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: M.M., 1999).

Discipleship is a continuous and iterative process that occurs throughout a Christian’s life to pursue maturity, whereas evangelism is explicitly reserved for the beginning phase.

2.2.1 The Loving Act of Evangelism

Jones expands Abraham’s evangelism definition to include what he deems the only appropriate motivation for the task—love for God and love for neighbor. Notice Jones’ emphasis on love embedded in his definition, “Evangelism is that set of *loving*, intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating persons into Christian discipleship in response to the reign of God”²⁸ (italics mine). Also of note here—Jones prefers “reign of God” to “kingdom of God”²⁹ because the former connotes God’s active and assertive participation in the world versus the passive imagery that the latter may invoke.³⁰

For Jones, love for neighbor and Christ is the genesis of evangelism. This is based upon the Matthew 22 dialogue where a Jewish lawyer challenges Jesus asking, “Which is the greatest commandment?” (v. 36) to which brings forth the response to love God and to love others (vv. 38-39). If the inquisitive scribe were asking in earnest to understand God’s laws better, he would have asked the only appropriate follow-up question to Jesus’ answer—*How* do I love God and love my neighbor? Amongst the myriad, and often ridiculous, questions the scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees ask Jesus this was not one of them.

In later dialogue during the Passion week, Jesus plainly states what it means to love Him, “If you love me, keep my commandments” (John 14:15, NKJV). Since God the Father and Jesus are one (John 10:30), following God’s commandments are analogous to Jesus’ and vice-versa.

²⁸ Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor*, 18.

²⁹ βασιλεία *basileia* to mean “kingdom” and βασιλεύω *basileuo* translated as “reign” both come from the same word family. To use “reign” in place of “kingdom” is consistent with its proper usage.

³⁰ Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor*, 18.

To love Jesus and God is to abide by their instructions willingly; in this instance it is obedience to love them with the entirety of the human person—physical ability (body), cognitive capacity (mind), and the inner essence (soul). In this, one can observe that love is fundamentally a choice, first and foremost. Commands from God always tacitly imply volitional decisions on the individual's part to either obey or rebel in contradiction to what He directs. In contrast to the notion that love is simply a feeling or an emotion one feels, and thus varies in level based upon inward sentiment, each individual must choose to love God; therefore, it is an active and constant activity in which one can only participate in through their conscious choice.

One can apply the same to loving neighbors—it first begins with a choice. Once someone decides to love their neighbor, how does that look in praxis? Jesus' Parable of the Good Samaritan is the consummate example where a desperate situation creates a crisis in which the victim must rely upon the goodwill of strangers to survive the situation (Luke 10:30-37). Only one of three people who encounter the despondent man responds to him and consciously chooses to love by attending to his needs through gratuitous and supererogatory care. This demonstration of love is even more beautiful because it crossed deep and long-standing hatred between two people groups. In Chapter Two, I will demonstrate the famous Luke 10 story is the foundation of supererogation, or at least as it is developed there. In this parable, Jesus unequivocally teaches that love for others is not constrained to those within one's race or tribe—nor any other physical or social designator— but applies to all people. One can argue that God's dictum to "Love your neighbor" is intentionally ambiguous—just as Jesus is in the Parable of the Good Samaritan—so as not to have His followers place a limit on whom they may love.

It may seem that Jesus curtails "loving others" to physical needs only based upon the Luke 10 narrative, but limiting love to this singular aspect of the human experience is to

handicap the command in a way that God did not intend. This is not to say that biblical love is without boundaries and limits in its expression, but as implied in Luke 10, Matthew 22, and Mark 12, love for Christ is meant as a wholistic endeavor a believer undertakes with all the components that compromise who they are. It logically follows that a Christian's love towards others considers not just one aspect of who they are, such as physical needs only, but extends to the needs of each component of their being—their mind, body, and soul.

Evangelism, understood through the lens of Abraham and Jones' definition, addresses the preeminent soul need a person has—the need for a Savior. This principal soul need is addressed upon initiation into God's kingdom through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. To love one's neighbor is to love and care for their soul. The question arises, "How does one love the soul of their neighbor (a relevant question the inquisitive lawyer from Luke 10 failed to ask)?" The answer is obvious—to address the soul's greatest need by introducing Christ to them. Jones says as much in *Evangelistic Love*:

To evangelize non-Christian persons without loving them fully is not to evangelize them well. To love non-Christian persons without evangelizing them is not to love them well. Loving God well means loving God one's non-Christian neighbor evangelistically and evangelizing one's non-Christian neighbor lovingly.³¹

Love for neighbors through evangelism, therefore, can be best understood as an integrative Christian enterprise where the total needs of the person—to include their mind, body, and soul—are considered. Elmer Thiesson in *The Ethics of Evangelism* unequivocally states that care for the whole person, physical needs included, is the bedrock of the Christian evangelism ethic.³² Humans have intrinsic dignity and worth, therefore to evangelize without considering tangible

³¹ Ibid, 21.

³² Elmer Thiesson, *Ethics of Evangelism: A Philosophical Defence of Ethical Proselytizing and Persuasion* (Milton Keynes: Authentic Media, 2014), 44.

felt needs (and addressing them as capability allows) is to misrepresent God's love that evangelism is meant to share.³³ In this rigid and myopic way, evangelism in this way treats people as a means to end—a kind of consequentialistic religious ethic where Christian converts are simply anonymous numbers added to the body of believers and not individuals designed uniquely after their Creator's imagination to whose relationship they are now restored.

Unfortunately, unsavory practices and methods have marred evangelism's history with such heinous acts as the forced conversions under the Spanish Conquistadors in the Americas, the eleventh-century Christian Crusade abuses, or, more recently, an attempt at state-imposed Christianity at one district in Russia.³⁴ Contemporary Evangelical Christians reject the notion of compulsory conversion; however, history has shown such practices took place for the sake of evangelism—spreading Christianity amongst the unchurched. The aforementioned are obvious examples of evangelism without love and care for the individual, but the opposite extreme is not without historical example; notable non-profit organizations that once started with a Christian outreach mission have dimmed from the evangelical beginnings to focus on a humanitarian function primarily—the American Red Cross (ARC) and the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) are two notable examples. In the case of the YMCA, the organization's primary goal was evangelism but has since had a seismic secular shift that focuses on the nonsectarian development of the individual.³⁵ To the credit of the group's leadership, The Salvation Army is

³³ Ibid, 44-45.

³⁴ Ibid, 39-40. On page forty, Thiesson recounts an instance in 1992 when the Russian Ministry of Education solicited the services of a Christian Evangelism outreach ministry called CoMission to teach Christian ethics to Russian school teachers in response to a perceived moral vacuum amongst the students and teachers. Instead giving an instruction about the Christian foundation for ethics and morality, CoMission took the opportunity to compel required attendees to convert to Christianity with their captive audience.

³⁵ Mayer N. Zald and Patricia Denton, "From Evangelism to General Service: The Transformation of the YMCA," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 8, no. 2 (1963), 217-218. The Zald and Denton article chronicle the mission of the YMCA from a primarily evangelistic one that is distinctly secular and universal. The article applauds

the consummate counter-example of an organization that has maintained consistency in its goals over time as the group continues its evangelism mission while simultaneously caring for the concrete needs of impoverished people across the globe.³⁶

2.2.2 Apologetics as an Entry Way to Evangelism

Thiessen, Abraham, and Jones all agree that loving neighbors must include evangelism but not at the cost of ignoring physiological and other human needs—loving one’s neighbors must include both. With clear and practical examples of loving neighbors through service (as previously discussed), a question then arises, “How are Christians to evangelize?” Historical illustrations would not fail to mention the works of Dwight L. Moody, George Whitefield, Billy Graham, and Greg Laurie as some of the great evangelists who spoke (and continue to speak in Laurie’s case) to the gathered masses, but the Gospel-sharing practice is equally an individual mandate that each Christian is supposed to do—evangelizing is a fundamental distinctive to Evangelical theology.³⁷ The personal, one-on-one level with direct interaction, more so than stadium events, is where most evangelism takes place as Christians directly engage with unchurched people within their spheres of influence.

the YMCA for transforming its business model to be member focused and inclusive which the authors believe contributes to the organization’s success over time.

³⁶ Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., “Salvation Army,” in *Encyclopedia of American Religious History*, ed. Edward L. Queen II, Stephen R. Prothero, and Gardiner H. Shattuck Jr., 3rd ed., vol. 1 (New York, NY: Facts on File, 2009), 875–876. Part of the Salvation Army’s mission statement includes the mission to “preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to meet human needs in his name without discrimination” according to their international website www.sawso.org.

³⁷ Mark A. Noll, David W. Bebbington, and George M. Marsden, *Evangelicals: Who They Have Been, Are Now, and Could Be* (Grand Rapids, United States: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2019), 34. Here, the authors identify the four main Evangelical theological identifiers: “conversionism, the belief that lives need to be changed; activism, the expression of the gospel in effort; biblicism, a particular regard for the Bible; and what may be called crucicentrism, a stress on the sacrifice of Christ on the cross. Together they form a quadrilateral of priorities that is the basis of Evangelicalism.”

In these situations, apologetics—the theological discipline that seeks to defend or give a positive reason for Christianity—is valuable. Since Christians evangelize nonbelievers and not those within the Church, many interactions will take place in non-religious situations in the common spaces all citizens share. The secularization wave that swept across Western civilization in the US in the twentieth century’s latter half made unsolicited evangelism a societal faux pas—the twenty-first century shows no sign of changing course.³⁸ Secularization’s adherents expected the modern era would gradually push religion out of the common spaces so religious ideas, concepts, and principles would occupy no place in public discourse, but the movement largely failed, although not entirely.³⁹ As the secular mood’s remnants remain in this current era theologians call the post-secular age.⁴⁰ Post-secular hallmarks include ecumenical dialogue from the different belief systems, atheism and agnosticism included, but seeking to win converts in the current pluralistic setting is considered taboo—evangelism must be measured, timely, and appropriate.

Apologetics effectively communicates the Gospel because it uses non-religious and common language to communicate Christianity’s truth. In *Reasonable Faith*, William Craig states that there are three primary purposes for apologetics, one of which is for evangelizing unbelievers.⁴¹ The ultimate goal of apologetics is to proclaim the Gospel truth; the logical

³⁸ Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age* (London, United Kingdom: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2013), 106.

³⁹ Stephen Eric Healey, “Public Theology and Postmodernism: A Theological-Ethical Analysis” (Ph.D., Boston College, 1996), 50.

⁴⁰ Elaine Graham, “How to Speak of God? Toward a Postsecular Apologetics,” *Practical Theology* 11, no. 3 (May 27, 2018): 206–217.

⁴¹ William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith (3rd Edition): Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton, United States: Crossway, 2008), 2. The two other purposes apologetics can serve are: (1) shaping and influencing culture and (2) strengthening the body of Christ with answers to objections to Christianity or through providing positive reason why their faith is solidly grounded in evidence.

consequence of people hearing it is a positive response, in some instances. Apologetics invariably leads to new converts as evidences are explored to demonstrate why belief in God’s existence, the Resurrection of Jesus, a Divine origin of morality, and the Bible’s authenticity—among other important topics—are justified given the reasonable historical, philosophical, theological, and factual argumentation a Christian apologist may present.

One can hardly distinguish apologetics from evangelism given Jones’ definition “Evangelism is that set of loving, intentional activities governed by the goal of initiating persons into Christian discipleship...”except that apologetics is more robust in its function and service to the Church.⁴² Apologetics is primarily a discipline of evangelism and is always so if properly approached, but the inverse is not invariably true. Evangelism is singularly concentrated to get non-Christians to begin a relationship with Jesus Christ. Fundamentally, apologetics seeks to give a defense (1 Peter 3:15) or positive reason for the Gospel of Jesus Christ so that nonbelievers may put their faith in Him previously mentioned, but can also serve to strengthen the believer’s faith foundations and can influence culture through logical and philosophical argumentation on issues of morality and ethics.

Apologetics fits Jones’ evangelism definition if the one who is engaging meets two criteria: (1) the motivation is love for neighbor, and (2) the aim is to initiate the neighbor into Christian discipleship. As already stated, apologetics is not for the benefit of besting Christian antagonists in personal discussion, formal debates, academic arguments, or whatever the forum may be. Especially in a secular context, apologetics aims to give a clear and accurate Gospel presentation, first and foremost, through the ontological, anthropological, classical, reformed,

⁴² Jones, *The Evangelistic Love of God & Neighbor*, 17.

teleological, moral argument, evidential, or some other apologetic approach. This fulfills the second criteria.

Regarding the first criteria, Jesus' command to "Love your neighbor as yourself" must actuate the Christian to engage in apologetics for the benefit, concern, and care for their neighbor's soul. There are noble but unloving motives as well as pretentious, ostentatious, and ignoble reasons for engaging in apologetics, but these disqualify it from Jones' definition of evangelism and violate the "love your neighbor" command.

2.3 God's Revelation of Love

The supreme inspiration for Christian's love for neighbors comes from none other than Christ Himself as God's ultimate and consummate revelation.⁴³ God coming to earth as Jesus Christ demonstrates His immeasurable love for humanity and serves as the spiritual reality for all believers throughout the ages.⁴⁴ Jesus Christ is the climax of God's special revelation of love, in whom the source and content of revelation converge, and who, as the preexistent creative logos, imparts to reality in general and chosen humans, in particular, a logical, rational character.⁴⁵ In this, "Jesus Christ as "the source and content of revelation converge and coincide."⁴⁶ There is no greater revelation from God to man than Jesus Christ nor any great act of love. Jesus, as God in the flesh, lived and dwelt on earth, demonstrating His love for humanity by suffering and dying for them (Romans 5:8).

This love compels Christians to share the Gospels with others through evangelism and apologetics (2 Corinthians 5:14). To love neighbors well is to not only have concern for their

⁴³ Avery Robert Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Maryknoll, N.Y: Orbis Books, 2008), 14-18.

⁴⁴ I. Howard Marshall, *Biblical Inspiration* (Vancouver: Regent College Pub., 2004), 13.

⁴⁵ Carl F. H. Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority (Set of 6)*, Logos Bible Software (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway, 1999), location 104.

⁴⁶ *Ibid*, location 12541.

relationship with God but practically consider their physical needs—it is loving others’ mind, body, and soul. Why should Christians purposefully engage in evangelism at all?” It is not only for obedience to the Great Commission’s prescription to make disciples of all nations but rooted in love for neighbor, and it is God’s revelation of love through Christ and the believer’s love for Him that exhort Christians to evangelize and champion the Gospel with apologetics when questioned by earnest seekers or ardent antagonist. More so than dutiful obedience, love for Christ and love of others motivate the believer to engage with purposeful, intentional evangelism and apologetics to share in the Kingdom of God on earth and the afterlife.

CHAPTER THREE

3.1 What is Supererogation?

A category of moral actions that ethicists define as going “above obligation” or “beyond the call of duty” is known as supererogation. At first glance, these phrases intuitively describe what is meant without ambiguity, but upon further reflection, issues arise. Is there anything more significant than doing one’s duty? If the latter question is answered in the affirmative, is it even possible for someone to go above their duty? From a Kantian categorical imperative and utilitarian ethic perspective, supererogation is problematic, as we will discuss later in this chapter. In the immediate, understanding what supererogation is, how it is defined, and analyzing the definition for adequacy will be the task at hand. An adjustment to the description may be necessary after analysis.

Supererogation is a somewhat recent term (although supererogatory acts have long preceded the philosophical discipline). JO Urmson’s “Saints and Heroes” article in 1964 brought recognition to the term. Since that introduction, ethicists and philosophers have studied the category to determine its nuance and acceptance or rejection.⁴⁷ Since supererogation entered the mainstream philosophical discussion, scholars have made attempts to bring specificity to the term with all its nuances, but at this point, a definitive consensus is close but not unequivocal. My task here is to advance the definition to bring further clarity.

It is vital to the supererogation discussion first to determine what is meant by “duty” for how one can exceed their duty in the form of supererogation if they do not know their responsibilities. This discussion aside for the moment, general understanding of supererogation

⁴⁷ Elizabeth Drummond Young, “God’s Moral Goodness and Supererogation,” *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion* 73, no. 2 (April 2013): 86.

acts includes those that are saintly and heroic (hence Urmson's article); they are uncommon among the public except for the truly exceptional among us. In this regard, supererogatory acts are typically understood as praiseworthy actions when identified and those that everyone should aspire to do.

This was Jesus' point in the Parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10:30-37. The impetus for the well-known parable was a question from a Jewish lawyer who asked, "Who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29), to which Jesus responded with a story of a traveler who was robbed, beaten, and left for dead on his way to Jericho from Jerusalem. At the moral of the story's conclusion, Jesus' prescription to his unwitting inquisitor is to "Go and do likewise" (10:37) as the despised Samaritan serving as the exemplar.

3.2 Defining the Term

Jesus' Luke 10 parable serves as the consummate Christian illustration of supererogation—a praiseworthy worthy act of which no apparent obligation existed to perform. Commitment forms the crux of supererogation and distinguishes a routine action from a truly extraordinary one. For many philosophers, no duty exists for a requirement to do more than what is obliged. Obligation burdens moral agents to act in a certain way; going beyond that enters into supererogation.

There is a negative aspect to supererogation that must be considered. Roderick Chisholm, for example, provides the following supererogation definition, "something which it would be good to do and neither good nor bad not to do."⁴⁸ Notice both the positive and negative dimensions. If an individual does this act, it is good, but they receive neither praise nor penalty if

⁴⁸ R. M. Chisholm, "Supererogation and Offence: A Conceptual Scheme for Ethics," *Ratio (Misc.)* 5, no. 1 (1963): 10.

they do not. From the negative perspective, an act that meets their definition is not an obligation nor a duty; in the positive sense, an act that satisfies their description is beyond the requirement of supererogatory.⁴⁹

Elizabeth Drummond, M.W. Jackson, and David Heyd concur with this understanding. Drummond states supererogatory acts are good to do but are not required.⁵⁰ Jackson's definition is similar, "[supererogation is] right to do but not wrong not to do."⁵¹ Here, "good" and "right" are used interchangeably without detracting from what Drummond or Jackson are conveying. Supererogation is both good and right at once, or one or the other without losing the sense of the phrase.

In explaining supererogation, David Heyd provides four conditions that must be met for an action to belong to this unique category:

1. It is neither obligatory nor forbidden.
2. Its omission is not wrong, and does not deserve sanction or criticism—either formal or informal.
3. It is morally good, both by virtue of its (intended) consequences and by virtue of its intrinsic value (being beyond duty).
4. It is done voluntarily for the sake of someone else's good, and is thus meritorious.⁵²

In her commentary on Heyd's definition, Tessman states that supererogation must have positive moral value and be so in two distinct ways.⁵³ First, it must be morally good based on the intentions of the moral agent.⁵⁴ Secondly, the act itself must possess a positive moral value that

⁴⁹ David Heyd, "Supererogation," ed. Edward N. Zalta, *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, 2011.

⁵⁰ Drummond Young, "God's Moral Goodness and Supererogation," 86.

⁵¹ M. W. Jackson, "The Nature of Supererogation," *The Journal of Value Inquiry* 20, no. 4 (January 1, 1986): 294.

⁵² David Heyd, *Supererogation: Its Status in Ethical Theory* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1982), 115.

⁵³ Lisa Tessman, *Moral Failure: On the Impossible Demands of Morality* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2015), 220.

⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 220.

exceeds obligation.⁵⁵

For Tessman, supererogation cannot be accidental but deliberate on the part of the moral agent. If, in the course of breaking into a house, a thief smashes a window ushering in fresh air from the outside and unknowingly saves all the residents who were previously knocked unconscious due to a noxious gas leak, one could hardly label the act supererogatory. If the thief noticed the house inhabitants incapacitated on the floor in the same scenario and acted to save them, then, by Heyd's definition, the act could be supererogatory.⁵⁶ Part and parcel to supererogation is the purposeful intent of the individual to perform an action of which exists no obligation to do.

3.2.1 Morally Optional

One cannot help but notice the inescapable freewill component essential to the consensus understanding of supererogation. Individuals are free to choose or not choose to act in such ways and will receive no penalty or praise for failing to do or not do what they have no duty to perform. In Gregory Mellema's attempt at defining supererogation, individual freewill receives prominence in his three conditional statements:

1. The performance of the act fulfills no moral duty or obligation,
2. The performance of the act is morally praiseworthy,
[and]
3. The omission of the act is not morally blameworthy.⁵⁷

In each of the three conditions, the exercise of free will is indirectly implied, yet it is essential to

⁵⁵ Ibid, 220.

⁵⁶ There is nuance to this situation that requires further consideration. It is not certain that Heyd's first and second condition are met in this scenario. Consequential and deontological ethicists may agree that there is duty to save lives regardless of the original intention that brought the thief to house in the first place. Some ethicists may judge that there is an obligation to act, thereby nullifying Heyd's first condition; others will determine that for the thief to take no action is a point of criticism and thus a violation of the second.

⁵⁷ Gregory Mellema, "Supererogation and Business Ethics," *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 8, no. 2 (1991): 191–199.

the premises. For Condition 1, the individual can choose to act or not since there is no requirement. The individual is qualified for praise because they freely choose to act in Condition 2. By the same token, if the individual decides not to act—as in Condition 3—it would be incorrect to criticize them for declining to engage. The consensus among scholars on the subject agrees that the performance of supererogatory acts is unconditionally optional.⁵⁸ For this reason, duty and supererogation cannot be used interchangeably; the latter is not morally binding but is strictly optional for the individual.

Supererogation is what many ethicists consider “morally optional.” An action is morally optional if and only if it meets two irrevocable qualifications: (1) Performing the act is morally permissible, and (2) Nonperformance of the act is morally permissible.⁵⁹ Here, if the act is not prohibited nor required, then it is considered morally optional. Again, the indispensable component to morally optional acts is the individual actor’s free will.

3.2.1.1 Qualified and Unqualified Supererogation

The previous point is not without dispute. Other ethicists—labeled qualified supererogationists—argue that supererogation is obligatory but to a lesser degree than standard duties.⁶⁰ In this regard, supererogatory actions are ultimately reducible to moral requirements.⁶¹ While one may not have a requirement to go above and beyond what duty requires (according to the consensus supererogation definition), this view holds that people should endeavor to do so

⁵⁸ Andrew Michael Flescher, “Going beyond the Call of Duty: A Re -Examination of the Nature of Heroes, Saints and Supererogation” (Ph.D., Brown University, 2000), 16.

⁵⁹ Alfred Thomas Mckay Archer, “Beyond Duty: An Examination and Defence of Supererogation” (Ph.D., The University of Edinburgh, 2015), 28.

⁶⁰ Heyd, *Supererogation*.

⁶¹ Flescher, “Going beyond the Call of Duty,” 41.

occasionally.⁶² The reason—all good actions carry a prima facie obligatory force. According to Heyd, “qualified supererogationism is reductive in nature: it insists on accommodating supererogatory acts within a deontic framework (i.e., the language of duties and obligations).”⁶³ Here, the deontic underpinnings demand that moral actions are required, yet consideration should be given to “exemption, risk, disutility of enforcement, personal (in)capacity, excuses, difficult psychological circumstances, and rights....”⁶⁴ The limiting factor of obligation is the personal cost to the one performing the action. If a man jumps in front of a bus to push someone out of the way to safety yet is killed in the process, the cost of his action is too great to be an obligation. Again, the risk and potential hazard for the individual have the potential to provide an exemption for action.

There are three qualified supererogation versions, each with its subtleties. In one variety, nonperformance of supererogation qualifies as blameworthy through the offense of non-action.⁶⁵ In another version, relief from performing supererogation comes from the human inclination towards weakness and inaction when faced with a risky, fearful, or dangerous situation.⁶⁶ In this instance, when confronted with the danger of the situation, human impuissance provides an excuse from supererogation.⁶⁷ Supererogatory acts “are considered so by default, our inability to

⁶² Ibid, 41.

⁶³ David Heyd, “Obligation and Supererogation,” *Encyclopedia of Bioethics* (New York, NY: Macmillan Reference USA, 2004), 1917.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 1917.

⁶⁵ Heyd, “Supererogation,” 125-128. In this instance, some actions are non-obligatory but have a praiseworthy component. Conversely, there are harms that are unprohibited yet their performance is offensive. Since this is the case, the individual is free to not participate in the offensive act thus the non-action is a form of supererogation.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 129-130. Here, supererogation in philosophical form intersects with human reality and experience. In many supererogation instances—those that are worthy for individuals to become either heroes or saints for performing—are inherently dangerous and come at either great physical or personal risk. This version of qualified supererogation accounts for the frailty of human will that comes in the face of such danger.

⁶⁷ Ibid, 130.

perform them as duty overriding that we ought to do them nonetheless.”⁶⁸ The third version of qualified supererogation arises from the vocation or career of the individual moral agent. Specific career fields demand supererogatory acts part and parcel to the job description that renders the actions as obligations and duties more than behavior that goes above and beyond.⁶⁹ Consider firefighters and emergency medical technicians (EMTs) who put themselves at significant risk of life and limb to save the life of another; their duty calls for them to act in response to exigent circumstances. For regular citizens of which there is no such requirement, performing the actions of a first-responder is supererogatory even though the same actions are not supererogatory for the firefighter or EMT. On occasions when civilians enter the space generally reserved for designated emergency personnel, the public meets them with praise on the other side of their supererogation.

Unqualified supererogation means that performance or nonperformance is equally and fully morally permissible.⁷⁰ There is no exacting moral obligation or oughtness attached to unqualified supererogation for Heyd. What comes into question is somewhat more opaque—how do we draw the line between duty and supererogation? Even Heyd acknowledges there can be a wide disparity of opinions between duty and what goes beyond it, like in the case of giving to charity from altruistic motivations and giving specific communities tacitly require.⁷¹ In the former instance, there is no duty, but in the latter, an obligation is implied, yet in both cases, the

⁶⁸ Flescher, “Going beyond the Call of Duty,” 42.

⁶⁹ Heyd, “Supererogation.”

⁷⁰ Archer, “Beyond Duty,” 29.

⁷¹ Heyd, *Supererogation*, 143. For the Jewish community, giving an income tithe (taken to mean ten percent) is an observance that is required from faith members. It varies by synagogue and community as to if and how this obligation is enforced but nevertheless it exists. Social pressures exist beyond what is explicitly communicated either in written local policy or in verbal form from leadership. In some Christian communities, as part of membership to a local church, members are required to tithe, or at least pledge that they will. In both cases, giving moves into the realm of duty more so than supererogation.

individual gives their own money for a charitable cause.

There is an obvious complication when considering duty versus those above and beyond actions. However, we can derive from the brief examination of qualified and unqualified supererogation that the actions are morally optional, or at least partially so in all instances-qualified or otherwise. In most instances, charitable giving is unqualified, but in others, there is a component of obligation, as in the case of faith communities.

3.2.1.2 The Unavoidable Freewill Component

Inescapably, the freewill aspect colors all instances of supererogation from which moral agents can choose to participate in or not without penalty. Individual free will to choose is the primary factor that makes supererogation praiseworthy. When there is external pressure to act in a certain way, the true motive for the exemplary action comes into question and detracts from the admirability. This is Urmson's point in *Saints and Heroes*, "but free choice of the better course of action is always preferable to action under pressure, even when the pressure is but moral."⁷² Coercion and inference to compel someone towards a particular action violate the moral optional element of supererogation.⁷³ Supererogation writers typically guard the voluntariness and elective nature of supererogation with great care and "regard any attempt to make them matters of obligation as unacceptable as well as counter-intuitive."⁷⁴ Urmson describes such attempts in unambiguous contemptible terms.⁷⁵ Of such compulsion, he states, "there is something horrifying

⁷² James Opie Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," in *Essay in Moral Philosophy*, ed. JI Melden (Seattle, 1958), 216.

⁷³ Jon J. Scott, "Supererogation: Definitions, Features and Characteristics" (M.A., The Australian National University, 1989), 183.

⁷⁴ *Ibid*, 183.

⁷⁵ Urmson, "Saints and Heroes," 213.

in the thought of pressure being brought on [a person] to perform acts of heroism”⁷⁶ [underline mine].

Inner compunction is a different matter altogether. When a person is free to respond to an internal drive to perform a morally noteworthy deed, the action moves into the supererogation category. In these instances, there is an intrinsic motivation that forces an individual to act, but again, it is a violation of supererogation to pressure a person through duty, obligation, or some other form of compulsion. Though a person might feel intrinsically motivated to do a heroic deed, “it would be a moral outrage to apply pressure on him to such a deed as sacrificing his life for others.”⁷⁷ The principle need not only apply to matters involving significant physical risk or potential death for the moral agent but any situations that go above and beyond what duty calls. It is just as egregious to coerce someone to surrender one of their vehicles to a neighbor who needs a car than forcibly urge them to donate one of their kidneys to the same neighbor requiring a transplant.

3.2.1.3 Guilt and Moral Shame

Guilt can be leveraged upon a person towards a specific action. In such cases, external agents can use the power of inference and suggestion to help create an inner feeling of guilt that moves a person towards doing a deed that we would typically classify as supererogatory. Consider infomercials about child sponsorship and their use of scenes of depravity, poverty, and destitution from Third World landscapes that organizations specifically designed to invoke emotional responses from their audience. Some non-profit groups intend to capitalize on the sensibilities the images arouse to garner more participation in child sponsorship, volunteering, or

⁷⁶ Ibid, 214.

⁷⁷ Ibid, 214.

monetary gifting—all typically supererogatory actions—using the power of suggestion (and ultimately guilt) towards the desired outcome.

In a *Theory of Justice*, John Rawls has a section that addresses the power of moral shame and guilt. An individual can feel shame when character blemishes are highlighted and “that manifest the loss or lack of properties that others as well ourselves would find it rational for us to have.”⁷⁸ Knowing natural human proclivities, intuitively, when we perceive that others are acting supererogatory and, by comparison, we are not, our inner nature has a predisposition towards guilt because of this lack.⁷⁹ Whether or not the feeling is rationally justified is irrelevant; human nature is liable to moral shame “when he prizes as excellences of his person those virtues that his plan of life requires and is framed to encourage.”⁸⁰ By Rawls’ evaluation, moral shame and guilt do not apply in situations where the individual does not desire virtue excellence; it follows that such a person would be disinclined to involve themselves in volunteering, child sponsorship, and the like, despite an infomercial’s best efforts to the contrary.

3.2.2 Solidifying a Definition

From what we can glean from the supererogation discussion thus far, it is safe to settle on a working term. With the previous points in consideration, proposed here are the following conditions to meet the supererogation category:

1. The individual actor has the free choice to act
2. There is no extrinsic pressure (social, authoritative, or otherwise) to act
3. It is morally acceptable to act
4. It is morally acceptable not to act
5. The action is not required
6. The action and intentions are morally praiseworthy

⁷⁸ John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, Rev. ed. (Cambridge, Mass: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999), 390.

⁷⁹ *Ibid*, 390.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*.

This is a hybrid conglomerate of the Mellema, Heyd, Drummond, Archer, Chisholm, and Jackson's definitions (it should be noted that their definitions were similar enough in their own right) that accounts for the deficiency of each. Compared to the other author's definitions, the one novel condition added here is the consideration for external pressures upon the individual towards actions they are not obligated to perform. If a person is pressured to give charitably, donate their blood, volunteer their time, put their lives in imminent danger, and so on, it is not supererogation.⁸¹ External pressures—originating from either an individual, group, or community—leverage a sense of duty (however derived) upon the actor and thus appeal to it to get them to act. Where no duty (or perceived duty) exists, no such appeal can be made.

Other scholars would take little issue with the addition regarding the six supererogatory conditions. As one example, Heyd states the conditions we propose here but in a slightly more verbose form and without giving them as part of the definition he provides:⁸²

The decision to act beyond what is required is free not only from legal or physical compulsion, but also from informal pressure, the threat of moral sanctions, or inner feelings of guilt. It is purely optional. Such a freedom allows for the exercise of individual traits of character and for the expression of one's personal values and standards or moral behavior. Being purely optional, the supererogatory act is spontaneous and based on the agent's own initiative. Not being universally required (of everyone in a similar situation), supererogatory action breaks out of the impersonal and egalitarian framework of the morality of duty...supererogatory behavior can be realized under conditions of complete freedom and would be stifled under a more totalitarian concept of duty. Supererogation is necessary as providing an opportunity to exercise certain virtues.⁸³

The one departure from Heyd's explanation is the necessity for spontaneity that he states are

⁸¹ Urmson, Heyd, Rawls, and Mellema agree with this point either explicitly in the writing on supererogation, or it is inferred in the definition they use. Compulsion is a violation of the freewill condition of supererogation.

⁸² Heyd, "Obligation and Supererogation," 1917.

⁸³ Heyd, *Supererogation*, 175.

required for supererogatory deeds.⁸⁴ From an analysis of the literature on the subject, it seems reasonable to conclude a person can be intentional with supererogation and even so far as premeditative, and not violate Drummond-Young provides the consummate example in contradistinction to Heyd's requirement.⁸⁵ She articulates that God's goodness is best described in the phenomenon of supererogation.⁸⁶ God's goodness is continually and consistently observed in purposeful, premeditated acts that have specific intentions towards His created world and the inhabited beings therein. The culmination of God's deliberate supererogation comes in the form of Jesus Christ, who God sent specifically as a sacrifice for all of mankind despite humanity's hopelessly depraved state (Romans 5:8).

Given the six supererogatory conditions, offered here is the following definition—a **supererogatory act is a morally praiseworthy act born from good intentions that are right to do or not do, of which an individual voluntarily does of their own freewill devoid of external pressure and without a duty to perform.**⁸⁷ The definition provided here is slightly more robust and comprehensive than other authors' definitions writing on the subject.⁸⁸ The nuance here accounts for the external insistence that must be avoided to make an act truly

⁸⁴ Ibid, 175. There is a significant issue with Heyd's spontaneity requirement. It seems that Heyd take spontaneous to mean "with fore thought" as in a person supererogatorily acts instantaneously the moment the choice presents itself. There are occasions when a supererogation opportunity arises and then person decides to act yet delays it either momentarily or for an undetermined amount of time to initiate in the future. In such instances, it seems reasonable to conclude this also is supererogatory.

⁸⁵ Drummond Young, "God's Moral Goodness and Supererogation." Her article provides the consummate example in contradistinction to Heyd's requirement. She articulates that God's goodness is best described the phenomenon of supererogation. She

⁸⁶ Ibid, 83.

⁸⁷ This definition takes into account all six necessary supererogatory conditions.

⁸⁸ Archer, "Beyond Duty." Archer's attempt at defining supererogation does quite well to account for the strides made by David Heyd, Gregory Mellema, JO Urmson, and Roderick Chisholm in parsing out meaning of the term. On page 26, he offers the following definition: "An act, ϕ , is supererogatory for an agent A, at time t , if and only if ϕ -ing is better than the minimum that morality demands of A at t and there is no other obligation that forbids A from ϕ -ing or for which ϕ -ing is the minimum that morality demands of A."

supererogatory. As defined here, outside agents cannot coerce, intimidate, or compel a person towards a supererogatory act. Such pressures create a sense of obligation or requirement that violates the very essence of supererogation.

The military command structure in a combat environment illustrates the point well. Consider an intense kinetic engagement where soldiers are actively engaged in hostile fire from an enemy machine gun position. We find a young private paralyzed with fear, unwilling to leave their fortification to attack the enemy. The platoon sergeant notices the paralysis and threatens the soldier with court-martial and physical harm (from the sergeant's hand) if he does not act immediately. As a result of the verbal barrage, the private jumps from his foxhole and blindly fires in the enemy's direction. The private successfully neutralizes the enemy machine gun by chance and random indiscriminination.

In this illustration, which is not an altogether departure from reality-based upon World War I or World War II accounts, there are several elements in violation of supererogation given the six conditions; not the least of which is the compulsory nature present, obviously from the sergeant but from the tacit underlying obligation that it is a soldier's duty to fight. The fact that the soldier only left his foxhole to do the minimum necessary to avoid the negative consequences also underscores that there was nothing particularly praiseworthy about his actions.

The last point highlights an essential component of the supererogation definition—a person must be deliberate in their actions above and beyond. An individual cannot be an unwitting hero or saint and cannot simply stumble into supererogatory acts by mere dumb luck or random acts that just so happen to have an incredible outcome.⁸⁹ Necessary to supererogation

⁸⁹ Urmson, "Saints and Heroes." In Urmson's article, "saints" and "heroes" are the terms used for individuals who do supererogatory acts. They represent the different kinds of supererogation—"heroes" typify bravery, courageousness, valor, and gallantry whereas "saints" represent beneficence, charity beneficence,

is the underlying principle that the individual purposes to exceed what obligation requires; a deliberate act in earnest intended to do something of which no mandate exists. For this reason, Jackson declares that “supererogations are of greater moral worth than all other obligations.”⁹⁰

Underscored here is the intentionality principle essential to supererogation, and it is for this reason we shall seek to purposefully use supererogation as a precursor to apologetics. In a later section, we will examine how Christians can use generous, humble, and charitable actions—those virtues the military does not demand of its members and thus supererogatory—to initiate a greater project of demonstrating and sharing Christ with others. Actions such as this are part of living with intentionality, faithful to the Gospel, and consistent with military policy that restricts open evangelism but more on this approach later.

3.3 New Testament Origin of Supererogation: The Parable of the Good Samaritan

For Christians, Jesus’ Good Samaritan parable displays the very embodiment of supererogation and provides the consummate example for the Church to follow. Writing on the unparalleled contributions Christians have made to mankind in the last 1,900 years, David Bentley Hart remarks, “Christianity’s twenty centuries of unprecedented and still unmatched moral triumphs—its care of widows, and orphans, its almshouses, hospitals, foundling homes, schools, shelters, relief organizations, soup kitchens, medical missions, [and] charitable aid societies”⁹¹ are unequivocally tied to the Christian conviction to serve others, born from a deep sense of love for fellow humans created in God’s image; this service mentality is not rooted in dutiful obedience to command or mandate. The Luke 10 parable has served as the perfect

generosity, and abnormal altruism. In both heroes and saints, the actions are above and beyond the call of duty and are not required.

⁹⁰ Jackson, “The Nature of Supererogation,” 290.

⁹¹ David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (Kindle Edition: Yale University Press, 2009), 9.

exemplar for the Church to model itself after. Its formation is recorded in Acts and has been the archetype for Christians since their nascent inception. From the outset, the followers of the Way (Christians) were earmarked with uncommon beneficence (labeled “saintly” actions by Urmson) that would serve as a harbinger for the Church’s charitable activities that continue to this day. As it relates to our topic of supererogation and the definition provided earlier, the Good Samaritan parable unequivocally meets all six conditions. The parable is not a supererogatory example because it necessarily fulfills the six conditions of the definition instead, the six conditions are valid because they are consistent with what Jesus had in his supererogatory example.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, a Jewish man continues his journey after worshipping at the Temple. The narrow and treacherous road that descends from Jerusalem to Jericho was notorious for its hazards, not just for the rocky terrain but also for the numerous robberies that occurred along the path due to its isolation and the potential ambush sites for would-be thieves. The act of supererogation in Jesus’ was not simply in the Samaritan’s care for the stranger by attending to the wounds, providing for his safety, and ushering him to a place of respite. In his survey of middle eastern hospitality, Luke Bretherton notes that social norms of the culture and biblical era required one to assist those in need regardless of familiarity with the individual.⁹² The supererogatory actions in the Samaritan’s “care of his longer-term needs by paying the innkeeper a sum of money and promising to pay more if necessary to ensure his welfare.”⁹³

The Latin vulgate of the Luke 10 passage illuminates the meaning of supererogation and

⁹² Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness amid Moral Diversity* (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2006), 2-5.

⁹³ Jon J. Scott, “Supererogation: Definitions, Features and Characteristics” (The Australian National University (Australia), 1989), accessed February 15, 2022, <https://www.proquest.com/docview/2601435837/abstract/154BF93A0D814BB4PQ/1>, 6.

provides the genesis of the term. In English, Luke 10:35b reads, "... Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you" (NKJV, underline mine). The Latin vulgate of the same sections goes as follows, "'Curam illius habe; et quodcumque supererogaveris, ego cum rediero reddam tibi"'⁹⁴ (underline mine). Aside from answering the question, "Where does the term 'supererogation' originate?" the Luke 10 passage indicates what goes beyond the obligation of one's duty.

One can rightly argue that the Samaritan's hospitality was reasonably typical in Middle Eastern antiquity (this tradition continues in the region today).⁹⁵ So standard is the care for the traveler, stranger, and foreigner in the Middle East that hospitality can rightly fall into the "imperfect duty" category—morally required acts the individual has discretion over how to fulfill⁹⁶—due to societal norms. For imperfect duties, obligations persist for the agent, but there is considerable space for them to choose how to act on the maxim; it seems that hospitality can be classified as such because of its common practice across the culture.⁹⁷

Bretherton affirms the ubiquitous hospitality principle in *Hospitality as Holiness* and explains the behavior exemplified by the Good Samaritan in Jesus' parable is not altogether

⁹⁴ *Biblia Sacra Juxta Vulgatam Clementinam*, electronica. (Bellingham, Washington: Logos Bible Software, 2005).

⁹⁵ For a modern example see Marcus Luttrell and Patrick Robinson's *Lone Survivor: The Eyewitness Account of Operation Redwing and the Lost Heroes of SEAL Team 10*, 1st ed. (New York: Little, Brown, 2007). In the first-person account, a US Navy Seal team was stranded in Afghanistan deep in enemy Taliban territory. Through the hospitality and protection of local tribesmen, a severely injured Petty Officer Marcus Luttrell was provided a safe haven until his rescue by American military forces. He was the only survivor of his Seal Team.

⁹⁶ Heyd, *Supererogation*, 121. Individuals are obligated to perform imperfect duties, just the same as perfect duties, but how they are carried out is discretionary. On page 42 of Flescher's *Supererogation* publication he remarks, "...while imperfect duties *would be* perfect duties if there were not problems of agencies (e.g. lack of opportunity, lack of at-present resources, lack of awareness) that precluded their immediate and definite fulfillment, under no circumstances could supererogatory actions be considered duties."

⁹⁷ Th E. Hill, "Kant on Imperfect Duty and Supererogation," *Kant-Studien* 62, no. 1 (January 1, 1971): 55–76.

unique for that region and era.⁹⁸ For this reason, Jesus' listeners would have been appalled at the actions of the characters in His story. A Jewish priest sees the assailed man in his wretched condition and passes on the other side of the road (Luke 10:31), likely to avoid any risk of defilement that would preclude him from any near-term ministerial duties.⁹⁹ There are a couple of items that confound the priest's behavior. First is the inherent care for people, part and parcel of liturgical responsibilities that the priest of Luke 10 was too obtuse to recognize. The priesthood is a ministry on behalf of people as they worship God; neglect of the people for the sake of periphery or superfluous activity is worthy of harsh rebuke from God (such was the case of Eli the priest and his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, as recorded in 1 Samuel). In the Good Samaritan parable, the priest showed utter indifference at the very least, if not outright contempt.

The second confusing item is the priest's apparent lengths to avoid the downed man. The road traversing Jerusalem to Jericho is more appropriately labeled a walking path, a narrow dirt trail that two people could scarcely pass without bumping. The Luke 10 narrative describes the priest as crossing on the other side of the path, which simply means that he passed the man as far as was possible given the terrain constraints.¹⁰⁰ Against this geographical and topographical understanding, the priest's behavior is all the more grievous.

The Levite would have taken no fewer steps to avoid the bruised traveler than the derelict priest. There is a bit of unavoidable irony that presents itself in both the case of the priest and the Levite. At its foundation, the incontrovertible duties of each involve ministering to God and people, serving as intermediaries between the Divine and man through various means (Leviticus

⁹⁸ Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness*, 139.

⁹⁹ John A. Martin, "Luke," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, ed. John F. Walvoord and Roy B. Zuck (Wheaton, Ill: Victor Books, 1984), Luke 10 section.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew Henry and Leslie F Church, *Matthew Henry's Commentary: Genesis to Revelation* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan Pub. House, 1961), Luke 10 section.

4; Numbers, Deuteronomy 24). Whether offering sacrifices on the people's behalf (or preparing them in the Levite's case), teaching about God, or leading worship of Him in the form of song, their responsibilities are interpersonal and highly relational.¹⁰¹ The priest and Levite offices are for the benefit of the greater Israelite nation to lead the worship of God. They would have thousands of interactions with their fellow countrymen in their capacity.

In the case of this specific priest and Levite in the Good Samaritan narrative, their bizarre callousness towards the injured man is in contradistinction to their vocations. The man was likely either on his way to the Temple to worship or on his way back from it; that either the priest or Levite (and possibly both) interacted with the man is a possibility.¹⁰² We can only imagine how different their interaction would have been given a change in location and under different auspices.

Nevertheless, one of four possibilities about the disposition of the priest and Levite can be made: (1) they were obtuse to the implications of their neglect of the man; (2) their off-duty status exempted them from action; (3) they willfully denied the man help because of the inconvenience, danger, or personal cost to themselves; (4) they rationalized their inaction with an excuse tied to a technicality of the law and thus had no duty to act (at least in their mind);¹⁰³ (5) the unusualness of the circumstances gave them no reference as to what they should do in this dire situation.

Scott implies that the Samaritan's supererogatory actions come from his care beyond the immediate aid of tending to the man's wounds and ensuring his safety.¹⁰⁴ For both Scott and

¹⁰¹ Ralph Klein, "23:1-32 Levites," in *1 Chronicles a Commentary* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2016).

¹⁰² Henry and Church, *Matthew Henry's Commentary*.

¹⁰³ David Heyd et al., *Supererogation and Social Responsibility: A Response to Chris Durante, Religious Perspectives on Social Responsibility in Health towards a Dialogical Approach* /, vol. 9, Religious Perspectives on Social Responsibility in Health (Cham, Switzerland : Springer, 2018). On page 56, Heyd points out that the priest and Levite acted within the requirements of the strict law. He says, "Except for few legal systems today, most countries do not require by law to help a person in need or distress." For the ministers, there is no legal requirement to act.

¹⁰⁴ Scott, "Supererogation," 6-7.

Bretherton, the hospitality of the biblical era required the imperfect duty to help strangers and foreigners in need; thus, stopping to aid the man would not have been out of the norm. Since this is the case, the priest and Levite's disposition can only be either (1), (3), (4), or (5); however, their actions imply more egregious undertones than any of the four remaining choices. The narrative indicates that neither one actually tried to talk to the man or knelt to check his status but looked upon him as a spectacle and then went their way (Luke 10:31,32). A certain attribution of cold-heartedness to the two ministers would not be outside the bounds of reasonable.

It is against this backdrop that Jesus contrasts the priest and Levite's failure with the Samaritan's supererogation. Helping the man and tending to his wounds is noteworthy, but his payment of future services to the innkeeper exceeds any regular or implicit duties.¹⁰⁵ The last verse of the parable (Luke 10:35b) closes with the statement, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you." As previously mentioned, the Latin Vulgate states here "quodcumque supererogaveris" which means "whatever extra you pay" or "more than what is due."¹⁰⁶

As in the Samaritan's case, such an offer to the innkeeper would have been distinctly and uniquely outside the bounds of social mores of the time. It would have likely struck the innkeeper as wonderfully unusual given the extent of the generosity coupled with the racial animus between the Samaritans and their distant Jewish relatives that was not a factor in the supererogatory act.¹⁰⁷ Jesus' listeners understood both points as there is a sense of implicit "listener shock" woven into Luke's narrative; so much so that the when Jesus asked, "Of the three, who was the neighbor?" the Jewish lawyer could not even bring himself to say the word

¹⁰⁵ Scott, "Supererogation," 6-7.

¹⁰⁶ Heyd et al., *Supererogation and Social Responsibility: A Response to Chris Durante*, vol. 9, 52.

¹⁰⁷ Archer, "Beyond Duty," 13.

“Samaritan” (Luke 10:37).

The Samaritan’s extraordinary generosity arrests the attention of the observers and should prompt the question, “What would lead him to do that for a stranger?” In that space between the question and answer, a Christian can give a reason why when they do supererogatory acts—for the joyous obedience to love others after the example of Jesus Christ. After all, Christ—argued many theologians and philosophers across time—performed the perfect act of supererogation in giving his life for all mankind.¹⁰⁸

3.4 Challenges to Supererogation

The supererogation category is not without its concerns. Some authors on supererogation contend that someone can accidentally go above and beyond the call of duty in the commission of acts with sinister or nefarious intentions. A second potential problem is how (and if) supererogation works in a utilitarian system. The third issue is the personal benefit an individual may receive as a result of performing supererogation. The concerns with supererogation are legitimate, but they are resolvable; therefore, supererogation as an ethical class of moral action remains valid.

Paul McNamara expresses his reservation with the concept in discussing supererogation in the *Journal of Applied Logic*. He states, “One can do more than the minimum for the wrong reasons and not be praiseworthy at all.”¹⁰⁹ To illustrate his thought, he describes a scenario where he rescues an infant from a burning building only to preserve a plan to blow up a school bus the following day with bombs hidden in the baby’s diaper.¹¹⁰ In McNamara’s logic, running into the

¹⁰⁸ Scott, “Supererogation,” 7.

¹⁰⁹ Paul McNamara, “Praise, Blame, Obligation, and DWE: Toward a Framework for Classical Supererogation and Kin,” *Journal of Applied Logic* 9, no. 2 (June 2011): 168.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid*, 168.

building to save the infant constitutes supererogation but for the wrong reasons.¹¹¹ Most would agree that rescuing the baby is good above and beyond duty's requirements, but there is a dark motivation for doing so. However, McNamara's hypothetical does not fall into the supererogation category because it violates condition (6) and the good intention principle inherent to proper supererogation.

There is an issue of normative ethics related to supererogation because supererogation strains itself against specific ethical frameworks like consequentialism. Most philosophers agree that the normative ethical frameworks typically fall into one of three categories—consequentialism, deontological, or virtue ethics.¹¹² Utilitarianism (a subcategory of consequentialism) is concerned with the greatest good for the greatest number that can be achieved in a single act. It is through this perspective that Rawls identifies a potential issue with supererogation:

It would appear that we are bound to perform actions which bring about a greater good for others whatever the cost to ourselves provided that the sum of advantages altogether that of other acts open to us. There is nothing corresponding to the exemptions included in the formulation of natural duties. Thus some of the actions which justice as fairness counts as supererogatory may be required by the utility principle.¹¹³

Here, Rawls argues that if the option to achieve a maximal good exists in a given act, an individual has a duty to perform it; the end objective is towards the greatest good, even if there is a sacrifice involved. The colloquialism “the greatest good for the greatest number” has been used synonymously with the utilitarian ethical system despite an over-simplified and unhelpfully

¹¹¹ Ibid, 168.

¹¹² A concise but adequate summary of these frameworks can be found in a number of easily accessible sources. A few such publications are the Feinbergs' *Ethics for a Brave New World* (2010), Rhodes' *An Introduction to Military Ethics* (2009), Hollinger's *Choosing the Good: Christian Ethics in a Complex World* (2002), Holmes' *Ethics: Approaching Moral Decisions* (2007), and Scott Rae's *Moral Choices: An Introduction to Ethics* (2018) to name a few.

¹¹³ Rawls, *A Theory of Justice*, 100-101.

reductionistic understanding of the framework. Utilitarianism is more than a simple equation whereby the analyst calculates all of the bad in a given situation, does the same for good, and decides on the correct choice. There is some truth here, but it is much more nuanced than this because it is difficult to determine all the good (and bad) that may arise from a specific choice.

It is on this point that Rawl's contention with supererogation is problematic. In Rawl's calculus, the "sum of advantages" creates an obligation for an individual to act.¹¹⁴ For him, if you can determine that the total benefits outweigh the perceived disadvantages, there is an obligation to act—this nullifies supererogation. The issue with Rawl's point, and the utility principle writ large, is that it is difficult to obtain an accurate sum of both advantages and disadvantages without subsuming omniscience. Omniscience is what is required to precisely know the total sum of effects of a moral choice. A single decision, both significant and insignificant alike, has tremendous and incalculable after-effects that resonate long into the future past the decision juncture. It seems reasonable to conclude that applying the utilitarianism framework to supererogation would be ambiguous at best; the only consolation would be to acutely implement the utility principle to a predetermined time span and calculate the advantages and disadvantages. Rawl's point holds within these constraints; otherwise, his reservation with supererogation is easily answerable.

A second possible issue with supererogation is the inherent praiseworthiness and nobility aspect that is part and parcel of moral actions that go above and beyond what is required of a person. When a community learns of heroic and saintly acts, it is common for the collective to highlight the individual's actions with a congratulatory note or proclamation, an award, a monetary gift, or some other form of recognition. Consider Medal of Honor awardees and the

¹¹⁴ Ibid. 101.

incredible self-sacrifice that precedes accolades from a grateful nation and presidential commendation.¹¹⁵ These awardees receive lifelong privileges and benefits (and their families) for receiving the nation’s highest military medal.¹¹⁶ The honor and recognition that often accompanies the supererogation alter the nature of the act says Roger Crisp. Supererogatory actions bring glory and praise to the agent, even posthumously, as in the case of many Medal of Honor recipients.¹¹⁷

From this perspective, supererogation—the highest form of altruistic heroism or saintly action—is ultimately a “self-serving moral duty.”¹¹⁸ Even though it is a duty, according to Crisp— supererogation is the ultimate moral ideal and directly related to the virtue that man seeks to attain according to an Aristotelean virtue ethics framework. Supererogation demonstrates the highest level of virtue; therefore, it is one’s duty to perform these actions when opportunities present themselves—duty and supererogation are inextricably connected. Heyd sees the dilemma and points out that “this makes virtue ethics either astonishingly demanding or excessively self-centered.”¹¹⁹

3.5 Conclusion and Resolution

Crisp and Heyd’s flaw is the assumption that individuals perform supererogatory acts for

¹¹⁵ The Medal of Honor is the US military’s highest and most prestigious award. The President signed the medal’s requirements into law through Public Law 88-77 in July 25, 1963 stating that the recipient must “distinguish himself conspicuously by gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while engaged in an action against the an enemy of the United States.” <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CFR-2002-title32-vol3/html/CFR-2002-title32-vol3-sec578-4.htm>.

¹¹⁶ Among the lifelong benefits Medal of Honor winners receive the most notable are: (1) a monthly stipend in addition to regular military pay; (2) preferred admissions acceptance to the military service academies; (3) exemption from medical care co-payments, (4) special license plates; and (5) a special Medal of Honor flag.

¹¹⁷ Roger Crisp, “Supererogation and Virtue,” in *Oxford Studies in Normative Ethics*, ed. Mark Timmons, vol. 3 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 13–34.

¹¹⁸ David Heyd, “Can Virtue Ethics Account for Supererogation?,” *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 77 (October 2015): 25–47.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid*, 39.

egotistical ends, even if subconsciously. It may be the case that some who go above and beyond do so for vain reasons like self-promotion, aggrandizement, and recognition (even if there are good outcomes to their acts), but that cannot be assumed for all supererogatory deeds. Medal of Honor winners are notorious for their level of humility and reticence to receive praise. Charitable donors, like the Evangelic Christian, often give anonymously without the motivation to earn special favor or benefit from the community. Many Chinese citizens across the Tumen River on the northern border of North Korea receive and care for asylum seekers at tremendous personal risk—they do so anonymously without hope of repayment.¹²⁰

In this regard, these brave Chinese citizens are like modern-day Samaritans who truly go above and beyond what is required to help a neighbor in need. Interestingly enough, underground Christians and missionaries carry out these supererogatory deeds for the wayward travelers. Demick records one such individual who Christian missionaries helped to defect to South Korea by way of China then Mongolia, there are many others.¹²¹ The Christian missionaries exemplify the supererogatory definition—a morally praiseworthy act born from good intentions that are right to do or not do that is voluntarily done without external pressure or duty to perform. The difference between Crisp’s supererogation understanding and the definition offered in this chapter is—self-service is the motivation in the former and potential personal benefit is a periphery by-product in the other. In subsequent chapters, we will make the case that Christians

¹²⁰ Barbara Demick, *Nothing to Envy: Ordinary Lives in North Korea*, Spiegel & Grau trade pbk. ed. (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2010). Not all across the border aid the defecting North Koreans for altruistic reasons. Demick records a lucrative black-market industry involving the trafficking of North Koreans across the border into China. Getting people across the border often involves bribes, a guide, a safe house and forged documents. Asylum seekers can go into tremendous debt if they do not have the means to pay and can end up in forced servitude in order to pay an insurmountable loan.

¹²¹ Ibid, 256-265. Demick spoke to Kim Hyuck after his arrival and integration into South Korea after his successful defection from North Korea. Christian missionaries hid Mr. Hyuck for five months until surveillance by Chinese police forced a move to get Hyuck and six other North Koreans to safety before their certain arrest.

can use supererogatory acts as a precursor to apologetic discussion with unbelievers so in that sense there is motivation beyond the benevolent act itself. However, the intention is not for personal advantage but for the sake of the One who calls them to share their faith.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 The Common Standard: Navy Core Values

As defined in the previous chapter, supererogation actions are morally praiseworthy acts born from good intentions that are right to do or not do, irrespective of external pressures and of which there is no duty to perform. Supererogation, by definition, seeks to go above and beyond the requirement in its action; a logical question arises, “What is the requirement?” In the Navy, there are three specific traits called Navy Core Values—honor, courage, and commitment—that are the institutional requirements for all members.¹²² “Requirement for all members” is both meant in the positive and negative sense. On the positive, there is an explicit expectation for each Navy Sailor to act honorably and courageously with commitment in the conduct of their duties and their personal lives when in an off-duty status. In the negative, members understand failure to demonstrate these values, as determined by the Navy, can result in an adverse response from the organization, not the least of which is administrative or punitive action taken against the service member. Beyond the possible repercussions from the institution is the harm one inflicts upon themselves, whatever form or fashion that may be. Potentially irreversible damage is a logical consequence of living a non-virtuous life, irrespective of societal penalties for ethical violations. There is no indication from the Navy that value demonstration by Sailors more than honor, courage, and commitment are discouraged so long as they are not in conflict with the Navy Core Values. In the gap between the Navy Core Values and allowed actions is the space for supererogation with the purpose of apologetic discourse that can fit into the Navy ethical framework without encountering legal or administrative roadblocks.

¹²² Department of the Navy, “Core Values Charter,” 2022, <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/ethics/pages/corevaluescharter.aspx>.

The Navy has such regard for its Core Values that it is introduced to all candidates and recruits at the various accession points¹²³ and reiterated throughout their entire tenure; this happens through periodic ethics training, formal and informal classes, regular reciting of the *Sailor's Creed*, and reaffirmation by leadership at meetings and public addresses. The *Creed* is interconnected and reinforced with other documents, including the Navy Core Values Charter, the Uniformed Code of Military Justice, and the Oath of Office, which “lay out an unparalleled personal standard of conduct.”¹²⁴ There is no ambiguity among the Navy ranks regarding the Core Values and their associated expectations. In this chapter, we explore how the Navy adopted the Core Values, the historical context of its development, the Core Values themselves, and the personnel issues that continue to plague the Navy despite an organizational effort to institute those values.

A potential problem arises at the intersection between supererogation and Navy Core Values—how can someone go above and beyond honor, courage, and commitment toward supererogation? Can a Sailor act more than honorable? Can they demonstrate commitment beyond their complete dedication to a pledge they devote themselves to? Is a category of super-courage even possible? The pursuit to prove that such ethical categories exist would be a tenuous

¹²³ Accession points are basic training locations whereby candidates (potential officers) and recruits (potential enlisted personnel) make the transition from civilian to military should they successfully complete the course requirements. For enlisted Sailors, the only accession point is Great Lakes Recruit Training Center (aka Navy boot camp); officers have three accession points: Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), Service Academies (i.e. Naval Academy) or Officer Candidate School (OCS) for college graduates.

¹²⁴ VADM Thomas J Kilcline, CAPT Irv Elson, and CDR Carlos Sardiello, “Developing the Whole Sailor,” in *The U.S. Naval Institute on Leadership Ethics*, ed. Timothy J. Demy (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 202. In regards to the Oath of Office Both officers and enlisted Navy members make the pledge before a commissioned officer upon entry, reenlistment, or promotion. The Oath is similar with slight differences—the enlisted Oath has the phrase “that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me, according to regulations and the Uniform Code of Military Justice.” The Oath naval officers recite omits this phrase but includes “that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; and that I will well and faithfully discharge the duties of the office on which I am about to enter.”

project, but even still, the argument here is not to establish a new ethical subclass. Instead, the work here is to clearly explain the Core Value so that Christian service members can know the parameters of their duty so they can go above and beyond it for a specific task and purpose. In Chapter Five, we will examine, humility and hospitality as specific virtues not required of the Navy but a Christian can demonstrate in the form of supererogation. In Chapter Six, we will discuss those values so that a Christian serving in the Navy can construct an apologetic approach that uses supererogatory behavior traits and deeds not mandated by the institution.

4.2 Sailor's Creed

The Navy Core Values are succinctly summarized in a five-sentence dictum colloquially entitled the *Sailor's Creed*. The statement is a pronouncement concerning each Sailor and the expectations upon them as Navy members; it doubles as a pledge they swear to demonstrate their commitment to the unique vision, mission, and values of US naval service. It reads:

I am United States Sailor.

I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States of America and obey the orders of those appointed over me.

I represent the fighting spirit of the Navy and those you have gone before me to defend freedom and democracy around the world.

I proudly serve my country's Navy combat team with Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

*I am committed to excellence and the fair treatment of all.*¹²⁵

The *Sailor's Creed* applies equally to all Sailors, from the most junior enlisted members to the highest-ranking Navy officer, the Chief of Navy Operations (CNO).¹²⁶

¹²⁵ Naval History and Heritage Command, *The Sailor's Creed* (United States Navy, 2018), <https://www.history.navy.mil/browse-by-topic/heritage/customs-and-traditions0/the-sailor-s-creed.html>.

¹²⁶ The Chief of Naval Operations (CNO) is the most senior Navy member in the organization. The individual is an Admiral, or an O-10, on the military pay scale. The CNO wears four-star rank insignia on their collar indicating their rank as Admiral. Occasionally, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) is a Navy officer in which case that individual is higher ranking than the CNO (the CJCS is the highest-ranking military member in the entire Armed Forces of America). The current CNO is Admiral Michael M. Gilday.

A special commission originally drafted the *Creed* in the 1990s; Navy historians definitively conclude, however, that the words accurately capture the traditions and values guiding the US sea service since its establishment in October of 1775.¹²⁷ In this regard, the *Sailor's Creed* is both new and old regarding Navy tradition and usage. The development of a succinct statement that embodied the Navy's values began in 1987—under Admiral James Watkins (CNO at the time)—that was “meant to define an ethos for the enlisted ranks.”¹²⁸ With the first iteration of the *Creed*, Admiral Watkin's target audience was exclusively and specifically enlisted personnel and not the Navy's officer core.¹²⁹ From its inception, officers “plainly understood that the *Sailor's Creed*” was not aimed at them.¹³⁰

Contributing to this ambiguity was the verbiage of the *Creed's* early versions. The original *Sailor's Creed* had “Bluejacket” instead of “Navy.”¹³¹ The term “Bluejacket” referring to enlisted Sailors below the rank of E-7.¹³² Many Navy officers initially balked at the institution's change to refer to all Navy military service members as “Sailors” and not just the enlisted personnel, but now all personnel (officer and enlisted) learn and recite the *Creed* at either Recruit Training Command, the Naval Academy, Officer Candidate School, or the Naval Reserve

¹²⁷ Lesa A. McComas and William P. Mack, *The Naval Officer's Guide*, 12th ed. (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 2011), 9.

¹²⁸ Kevin Eyer, “Are We All Sailors?,” *United States Naval Institute. Proceedings* 142, no. 9 (September 2016): 16.

¹²⁹ Mark D Faram, “Who, Exactly, Is a ‘Sailor’? Commander's Order to Recite Creed Has Officers, Enlisted Debating Boundaries of 'S' Word,” *Navy Times*, April 4, 2005.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Naval History and Heritage Command, *The Sailor's Creed*.

¹³² Thomas J. Cutler, *The U.S. Naval Institute on Women in the Navy: The Challenges*, U.S. Naval Institute Chronicles (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2015). Navy ranks E-7 thru E-9 are referred to as Chief Petty Officers (or “Chiefs” for short). Once a Sailor reaches this rank, they exchange the blue uniform (hence the term “Bluejacket”) for khaki colored uniforms nearly identical to their naval officer counterparts. E-1 thru E-6 Sailors don a dark navy blue uniform after the tradition of the first US Sailors who also wore blue double-breasted jackets.

Officer Training Corps.¹³³ Also missing from the early *Sailor's Creed* was the phrase “I proudly serve my country’s Navy combat team with Honor, Courage, and Commitment,” this specific phrasing would be subsequent to the Marine Corps’ introduction of their Core Value’s in 1992.¹³⁴

While serving as the Chief of Naval Operations, Admiral Frank Kelso formally published the *Sailor's Creed* in 1993 with assistance from a commissioned stakeholder panel;¹³⁵ he created the group to articulate a short statement that summarized the vision, mission, values, and expectations of US Navy Sailors.¹³⁶ According to Navy historical records, Admiral Kelso was intimately involved in editing the board’s proposal and served as the final approval authority on the finished product.¹³⁷ Admiral Kelso’s CNO successor, Jeremy Boorda, is credited with changing from “Bluejacket” to “Navy” in 1994, two years before his suicide.¹³⁸ Boorda’s version of the *Sailor's Creed*, so far, is the final draft that still serves the US Navy today.¹³⁹

4.3 Honor, Courage, and Commitment

“Values such as personal honor are not simply a part of the Naval Service. They are the Naval Service. All the ships, all the aircraft, all the submarines, all the weapons mean absolutely nothing without men and women of integrity and honor. We are not a Navy of weapons.

We are a Navy of values.”

Honorable John H. Dalton, Secretary of the Navy from July 1993-November 1998

¹³³ Faram, “Who, Exactly, Is a ‘Sailor’? Commander’s Order to Recite Creed Has Officers, Enlisted Debating Boundaries of ‘S’ Word.”

¹³⁴ Timothy J. Demy, ed., *The U.S. Naval Institute on Leadership Ethics*, U.S. Naval Institute wheel books (Annapolis, Maryland: Naval Institute Press, 2017), 117.

¹³⁵ Karin Duggan and Peter M. Swartz, *The U.S. Navy in the World (1991-2000): Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts* (Alexandria, Virginia: Center For Naval Analyses, March 1, 2012).

¹³⁶ Naval History and Heritage Command, *The Sailor's Creed*.

¹³⁷ McComas and Mack, *The Naval Officer's Guide*, 9.

¹³⁸ William B Breuer, *War and American Women: Heroism, Deeds, and Controversy*. (Santa Barbara: ABC-CLIO, 1997), accessed June 12, 2022, <http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=496935>.

¹³⁹ Naval History and Heritage Command, *The Sailor's Creed*.

The *Creed's* centerpiece is the specific virtues that undergird a Navy servicemember's thoughts, actions, and motivations on and off-duty. Honor, courage, and commitment are foundational in this regard and bind the rest of the oath's declarations together. Without any one of the three Navy Core Values, the *Sailor's Creed* would lack internal sustainability and coherence to perform tasks such as "supporting and defending the Constitution," "obeying orders," "treating others fairly," and a "commitment to excellence." Former Secretary of the Navy, the Honorable John Dalton, says this of the Core Values, "Honor, courage, and commitment are not in name only, or in relationship to other supposedly alternative values. They are core to our very existence as a Naval Service."¹⁴⁰ While developing the core values, the matter was not ultimately settled on adopting honor, courage, and commitment as the organizational virtues to base the entire Navy upon—there was much discussion among senior leadership, chaplains, and other interested interlocutors on what they would be before settling on these three.

4.3.1 Adopting the Core Values

Early in the draft process, disputes arose regarding which attributes the Navy would adopt as its Core Values and how many there should be. Previous to the *Sailor's Creed*, the Navy value charter was "Tradition, Professionalism, and Integrity."¹⁴¹ But after the 1991 Tailhook scandal when the Chief of Naval Education and Training, Vice Admiral Jack Fetterman, tasked thirty training specialists to create a tailored education program;¹⁴² the purpose was meant to

¹⁴⁰ Honorable John H. Dalton, "Secretary of the Navy Addresses Cheating Scandal" (US Naval Academy, Annapolis, Maryland, April 29, 1994).

¹⁴¹ Mark D Faram, "Pledge Had Found Place in Boot Camp, Academy and Training School," *Navy Times*, April 4, 2005.

¹⁴² James Hugh Toner, *True Faith and Allegiance: The Burden of Military Ethics* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1995), 108-110. At a Navy and Marine Corps aviation conference entitled the Tailhook Convention in Las Vegas, drunken military officers sexually harassed, fondled, and, in some cases partially, stripped

develop moral principles and behavior of Navy personnel that they thought were lacking.¹⁴³ The United States Marine Corps—a US military service within the Department of the Navy but not subordinate to it— took a different tack at the influence and direction of Lieutenant General Matthew Cooper, Brigadier General Charles Krulak, and Navy Captain Eugene Gomulka, a chaplain, and derived honor, courage, and commitment.¹⁴⁴ The virtue trio not only became the organization’s charter to guide all US Marines, but it would also serve as a rememberable and catchy slogan used in recruiting ads that easily connected with the US civilian populous.

While the Marine Corps first adopted honor, courage, and commitment, CNO Admiral Kelso officially instituted them across the Navy in October 1992¹⁴⁵ and then integrated them with the *Sailor’s Creed* in 1993,¹⁴⁶ which is still in use today.¹⁴⁷ Through the *Sailor’s Creed*, the Navy introduces, teaches, and indoctrinates its personnel to the Core Values. A Navy Core Values charter exists and is published on the official Navy website, but the official introduction begins at one of the accession locations where volunteer civilians make the transition to become a military service member.¹⁴⁸

Policy requires that all personnel within the Department of the Navy—Sailors, Marines, and attached civilians—recognize and adhere to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and

their female counterparts. The investigation and subsequent repercussions tarnished the Navy’s image, and greater military’s writ large, for years after.

¹⁴³ E. T. Gomulka, “Honor, Courage, Commitment,” *United States Naval Institute. Proceedings* 130, no. 4 (April 2004): 44–45.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid. BGen Charles Krulak would eventually become a 4-star general and the 31st Commandant of the Marine Corps, serving in that position from July 1995 until June 1999.

¹⁴⁵ Demy, *The U.S. Naval Institute on Leadership Ethics*, 117.

¹⁴⁶ Duggan and Swartz, *The U.S. Navy in the World (1991-2000): Context for U.S. Navy Capstone Strategies and Concepts*.

¹⁴⁷ Naval History and Heritage Command, *The Sailor’s Creed*.

¹⁴⁸ Department of the Navy, “Core Values Charter.” The Navy Charter is available here <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/ethics/pages/corevaluescharter.aspx>.



Commitment.¹⁴⁹ Concerning the values, the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV) states, “They shape our standards and define our ethos...[they] serve as the cornerstone of our tradition of strong character and ethical behavior.”¹⁵⁰ The SECNAV’s vision is for these values to serve as the ethical framework for decision-making “at every level of the career continuum for all DON personnel.”¹⁵¹ The dictum is not strictly exclusive to one’s professional “life” but is meant to extend to the personal as well; they are intended to “impact how we work, how we fight, and how we live.”¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Secretary of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*, SECNAVINST 5350.15D (Washington, DC: Department of the Navy, 2018), 1.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 1.

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, 1.

Department of the Navy
CORE VALUES CHARTER

As in our past, we are dedicated to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment to build the foundation of trust and leadership upon which our strength is based and victory is achieved. These principles on which the U.S. Navy and the U.S. Marine Corps were founded continue to guide us today. Every member of the naval service - active, reserve, and civilian, must understand and live by our Core Values. For more than two hundred years, members of the naval service have stood ready to protect our nation and our freedom. We are ready today to carry out any mission; deter conflict around the globe; and, if called upon to fight, be victorious. We will be faithful to our Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment as our abiding duty and privilege.

~ **HONOR** ~

I am accountable for my professional and personal behavior. I will be mindful of the privilege I have to serve my fellow Americans.

I will:

- *Abide by an uncompromising code of integrity, taking full responsibility for my actions and keeping my word.*
- *Conduct myself in the highest ethical manner in relationships with seniors, peers, and subordinates.*
- *Be honest and truthful in my dealings within and outside the Department of the Navy.*
- *Make honest recommendations to my seniors and peers and seek honest recommendations from junior personnel.*
- *Encourage new ideas and deliver bad news forthrightly.*
- *Fulfill my legal and ethical responsibilities in my public and personal life.*

~ **COURAGE** ~

Courage is the value that gives me the moral and mental strength to do what is right, with confidence and resolution, even in the face of temptation or adversity.

I will:

- *Have the courage to meet the demands of my profession and the mission entrusted to me.*
- *Make decisions and act in the best interest of the Department of the Navy and the nation, without regard to personal consequences.*
- *Overcome all challenges while adhering to the highest standards of personal conduct and decency.*
- *Be loyal to my nation by ensuring the resources entrusted to me are used in an honest, careful, and efficient way.*

~ **COMMITMENT** ~

The day-to-day duty of every person in the Department of the Navy is to join together as a team to improve the quality of our work, our people, and ourselves.

I will:

- *Foster respect up and down the chain of command.*
- *Care for the professional, personal, and spiritual well-being of my people.*
- *Treat all people with dignity and respect.*
- *Always strive for positive change and personal improvement.*
- *Exhibit the highest degree of moral character, professional excellence, quality, and competence in all that I do.*

Figure 1, 2022 Navy Core Values Charter¹⁵³

¹⁵³ Ibid, 4.

4.3.2 Honor

Of honor, the Navy Core Values Charter gives one's service to America and its citizens preeminence. This is not a departure from US tradition; there is distinct honor in serving one's country at the sacrifice of the self for the benefit of the whole, as has been the case throughout our nation's history. In *A Sailor's History of the US Navy*, Cutler remarks that honorable Sailors are those who "conduct themselves in the highest ethical manner...never compromising the high ideals of the great nation they serve."¹⁵⁴ Patriotism and devotion to one's country are components of honor. But more than a mere duty to country, there is an incontrovertible truth component tied to honor whereby speaking honestly with forthrightness is part and parcel to honor as a whole. In other words, an individual cannot have honor if they proclaim untrue statements in either written or verbal form. Of the six statements on honor, four explicitly address honesty in some form or fashion with phrases that direct Sailors to "keeping my word," be honest and truthful in my dealings," "make honest recommendations," "Seek honest recommendations," and "deliver bad news forthrightly."¹⁵⁵ The strong emphasis on honesty and truth-telling could be a signal of concern from leadership that this is an area they need to address because of a perceived—or actual—deficiency among Navy personnel (later in this chapter, we will highlight some known problem areas within the ranks that underscore character issues).

The Navy's attention to honesty, as it relates to honor, is not a departure from the traditional understanding of it. Latin derivative languages like French translate words like *deshonneur* and *honneste* into English to mean "dishonor" and "honesty," respectively, and serve

¹⁵⁴ Thomas J Cutler, *A Sailor's History of the U.S. Navy* (Annapolis, Md.: Naval Institute Press, 2005), 2.

¹⁵⁵ Secretary of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*.

as “very important notions for judging someone’s honorability.”¹⁵⁶ The definition is intuitive; upon close examination, it is easy to notice the character similarities (in terms of alphabet letters) between “honor” and “honesty”; indeed, both words come from the same root word family.¹⁵⁷ Wieczorek discovered that in all the ancient writings on “honor” he researched—from Titus Livius, Valerius Maximus, Aulus Gellius, Plautus, Quintilian, and Tacitus among others—the word “honesty” was a common theme to them all.¹⁵⁸ The second common inference found in the writings was “respect.”¹⁵⁹

A strong point of focus in the Navy’s definition of honor is the need for ethical behavior in interpersonal relations with peers, subordinates, and seniors in the workplace as well as with those outside work—family, friends, neighbors, acquaintances, strangers in public, and so on. The Navy’s honor statements are sweeping, indicating no room for unethical dealings in any sphere of a Sailor’s life. In this regard, this is a tremendous ethical and moral burden the Navy places upon its personnel that is Bible-esque in its imperatives. When an individual joins the Navy, they are not enlisting for a job in the traditional sense but rather committing themselves to a complete and total lifestyle that remains for the duration of their tenure in the service.

The Navy’s explanation of honor is commendable but marginally complete and not comprehensive. In writing on the Latin origins of the term, Jon Stone remarks, “honor is the reward of virtue.”¹⁶⁰ This is consistent with Platonic and Aristotelian rendering of *honor*; *the*

¹⁵⁶ Dawid K. Wieczorek, “Defining Honor. A Look at Modern Lexicographical Works,” *Orbis Idearum* 4, no. 1 (2016): 126.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 119-132.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid, 120.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, 120.

¹⁶⁰ Jon R. Stone, ed., *The Routledge Dictionary of Latin Quotations: The Illiterati’s Guide to Latin Maxims, Mottoes, Proverbs and Sayings* (New York: Routledge, 2005), 167.

former regarded honor as the “prize of virtue.”¹⁶¹ For Aristotle specifically, individuals obtain virtue through the pursuit of the Golden Mean, the midpoint between two value excesses.¹⁶² In the aggregate, a person who can effectively live within the Golden Mean is both virtuous and honorable; for Aristotle, a person cannot be the latter without mastering the former.¹⁶³ Virtue is a precursor to honor, a state of being in which one enjoys a deep sense of satisfaction that is superior to happiness through material possession or otherwise.¹⁶⁴

Wieczorek identifies ten unique subtleties (although only five relevant meanings are mentioned here) to the word “honor” that expand the understanding of the term beyond the Navy’s definition. First, it means “respect, esteem or glory, especially when referring to a high social rank, position or title.”¹⁶⁵ Honor, in this sense, takes a passive and active nuance—an individual can either earn it (like in battlefield accomplishments) or receive it from a person or organization of high social status (like an award or reward for a heroic achievement). The honoree is a person of reputation and respected name—or in other words, an honorable person.

The second feature of honor is much like the first and refers to an individual’s good name. In states and countries that function in monarchies, this is especially prominent in using titles to refer to one’s position. In the United Kingdom, titles such as Duke, Lord, and Earl indicate an honor that an individual has received and thus grant them high social status. In the United States, we attach “Honor” or “Honorable” to the names of individuals who hold a

¹⁶¹ Aristotle, Jonathan Barnes, and Anthony Kenny, *Aristotle’s Ethics: Writings from the Complete Works* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2014), 289.

¹⁶² Ibid.

¹⁶³ Aristotle and Joachim Aufderheide, *Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics Book X* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2020).

¹⁶⁴ Aristotle, Barnes, and Kenny, *Aristotle’s Ethics*, 289.

¹⁶⁵ Wieczorek, “Defining Honor. A Look at Modern Lexicographical Works,” 124.

cabinet-level position in the government (i.e., Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, etc.) or judges who sit upon the local, state, and federal judicial benches that comprise the US court system. An exclusive character is associated with members who receive such honored titles. This implies a knowledge of handling delicate situations, behaving appropriately, and following honor codes exclusive to this class of people. Within such groups, honor is essential; “it means a statement or promise without any backing in legal acts or contracts but the spoken word.”¹⁶⁶ Fulfilling one’s promises is a unique function of trustworthy gentlemen.

As honor applies specifically to women, it takes on the meaning of chastity. Although this is viewed from a traditional male perspective, value in this sense is the highest value appreciated among women.¹⁶⁷ When chastity is lost, the honor is as well. On unfortunate occasions when innocence is taken by force, society typically delivers severe consequences to individuals who dishonor women in such ways, not the least of which is negative stigmatization. In certain religious cultures, a woman’s honor is deadly serious in the most literal sense; their own family can take a woman’s life in an “honor killing” if sexual impropriety outside marriage is discovered.

Honor has a long tradition in the hierarchical military structure from antiquity to the modern era that the Navy’s definition in the Core Values Charter does not capture. In the military, honor has meant, and remains, a form of courtesy based upon recognition of position, rank, or status.¹⁶⁸ When military members pass a senior officer, custom and tradition dictate that they render honors in the form of a greeting and a salute (if outdoors). When a US flag is raised to mark the beginning of the day (Colors) or lowered to signify the day’s conclusion (Taps),

¹⁶⁶ Ibid, 124.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid, 124.

¹⁶⁸ McComas and Mack, *The Naval Officer’s Guide*, 44-47.

service members give honors by standing at the position of attention and giving a hand salute. The same is required at military funerals to honor the dead during the 21-Gun Salute and playing of Taps as the ceremony ends. Honor of this type is not exclusive to the military but is observed at official ceremonies, celebrations, convocations, and commissionings.¹⁶⁹ For instance, a reputable guest speaker at a university commencement may receive an “honorary” doctorate to recognize the individual’s contribution to the academic community.

Honor can also mean a monetary gift; this is often seen in Christian communities who gift money to their resident pastor, or a visiting speaker, on special occasions. The church often refers to this as “honoring” their pastor or “honoring” their guest preacher. Churches may give an honorarium to missionaries from abroad who visit local congregations to testify to the fieldwork they have been doing.

Honor includes the aforementioned nuances and then some. What is not discussed here is the biblical use of “honor,” which has a wide range of expressions—integrity, respect, reputation, a good name, honesty, chastity, and the like—but specifically, as it relates to the Divine, His Son, and His representatives. Jesus remarks, “A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country” (Mark 6:4, NKJV). The oft-quoted Exodus 20:12 gives the imperative to each person to “honor your father and your mother.” The Apostle John gets a glimpse of how God is worshiped in heaven as the twenty-four elders proclaim, “You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power” (Revelation 4:11). This is only a fraction of the Bible’s use of “honor,” it is only mentioned here to illustrate that a true sense of the word is much more robust than the explanation provided above.

¹⁶⁹ Wiczorek, “Defining Honor. A Look at Modern Lexicographical Works,” 124-125.

4.3.3 Courage

Chaplain Gomulka, an original Core Value author, selected courage above all other attributes based upon Winston Churchill's high esteem of it.¹⁷⁰ An attributed quote of Churchill goes, "Courage is rightly esteemed the first of human qualities, because, as has been said, it is the quality which guarantees all others."¹⁷¹ Under the umbrella of courage, there are two types: moral and physical. In the Navy Charter, there is a particular emphasis on the internal, non-physical component of courage—the moral side. The Charter states, "Courage is the value that gives me the moral and mental strength to do what is right, with confidence and resolution, even in the face of temptation or adversity."¹⁷² As the Secretary of the Navy Instruction (SECNAVINST) 5350.15D parses the definition, there are four applications to courage in the Navy Sailor's life. The first is fulfilling the duties the Navy requires of its members.¹⁷³ Military duty can be inherently dangerous, especially if a service member's job is within one of the combat arms specialty fields. Even members not technically in combat arms can still serve in combat zones alongside and in support of those who are pulling triggers, dropping ordinance, and physically engaging the enemy. The Department of Defense recognizes the physical and mental demand and the associated danger of serving in combat zones; the DoD offers special pay and benefits for members who do.¹⁷⁴ This, however, is typically only a minute portion of the total reserve and active military force. To illustrate the point, a Defense Finance quadrennial review

¹⁷⁰ Gomulka, "Honor, Courage, Commitment."

¹⁷¹ Winston Churchill, "Unlucky Alfonso," in *Collier's Weekly* (New York, NY: Collier & Son, 1931), 49.

¹⁷² Secretary of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*, 4.

¹⁷³ *Ibid*, 4.

¹⁷⁴ Department of Defense, *Financial Management Regulation*, DoD 7000.14-R (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2017). This is the authority on all DoD pay-related items. The regulation identifies special pay situations when the military orders service members to dangerous situations as a function of official duty. Such pay includes hazardous duty pay, imminent danger pay, and combat zone tax exclusion (CZTE). CZTE grants service members who serve in designated combat zones exemption from paying tax while assigned there.

reports that of the roughly 1.4 million active-duty members in 2000, only 73,573 received hazardous duty or imminent danger pay.¹⁷⁵

Throughout a typical workday, Navy Sailors make hundreds of decisions that positively or adversely impact their assigned unit's mission. The Navy expects that country and corporate interest supersede personal motivation when making those decisions—this is the second application of courage in the Core Values Charter. When given a choice between unknown outcomes, it can be debilitating for Navy officers to make decisions especially given the severe punishment the Navy administers for making an incorrect one. This is particularly true at the Commanding Officer level, where officers spend their entire career endeavoring to earn the privilege of leading a unit, yet the Navy can unceremoniously relieve them from it based upon a single incorrect decision.¹⁷⁶ Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) II students at the Joint Forces Staff College¹⁷⁷ discuss the seriousness of decision-making and its impact in the “Ethics and Profession of Arms” class all students must take. Nearly half of the two-hour instruction block is devoted to working through ethical scenarios; one in particular examines the ethical implications surrounding a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier’s (USS Roosevelt, CVN-71) commanding officer (CO) and his response to a COVID-19 outbreak on the ship.¹⁷⁸ The acting

¹⁷⁵ Brandon R. Gould and Stanley A. Horowitz, “History of Combat Pay,” in *The Eleventh Quadrennial Review of Military Compensation* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2012), 256.

¹⁷⁶ In the Navy, these are senior officers at the Commander (or O-5 rank) who typically have fifteen or more years of experience and have served in subordinate levels of authority at the Division Officer, Department Head, and Executive Officer level. Navy officers do not ask to be in command, they are selected for it by an administrative board that scrutinously reviews their record and experience to make a recommendation to the Navy. Even still, the Navy does select all board recommended for command.

¹⁷⁷The Joint Forces Staff College (JFSC) located in Norfolk, Virginia is a graduate-level military school within the National Defense University system. The main purpose of the school is to teach and certify graduates in JPME II, a collection of joint military learning objectives identified by the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs as an education requirement for all officers taking the course. The ranks of students range from E-8 to O-8, and are typically on the more senior side of rank as compared to the rest of the US military force. More than half of all US military who are JPME II graduates attend JFSC for this requirement.

¹⁷⁸ Commander Donald Anthony Baker, “Ethics and the Profession of Arms” (Presented at Joint Professional Military Education II, Joint Forces Staff College, April 12, 2022). US Navy CAPT Brett Crozier was

Secretary of the Navy personally fired the CO, Captain Crozier, after losing trust and confidence in his ability to lead the ship.¹⁷⁹ Even still, the USS Roosevelt crew hailed their CO as a hero upon his departure in a raucous display of affection for him; the boisterous cheers from the crew also served as an open display of contempt towards the Navy for Crozier's firing.¹⁸⁰ While the Navy relieved him for exercising poor judgment in handling the COVID-19 outbreak, many JPME-II students who discussed this case agree that Crozier demonstrated a remarkable amount of courage in handling the situation, prioritizing the health and welfare of the USS Roosevelt crew.¹⁸¹ If courage "is the value that gives [an individual] the moral and mental strength to do what is right, with confidence and resolution," then CAPT Crozier's decision as CO was not inconsistent with the Navy Core Values.¹⁸²

After reading the unclassified material on CAPT Crozier and USS Roosevelt case, it does not appear that he violated the third meaning of courage in the Navy Charter either: "[To] overcome challenges while adhering to the highest standards of personal conduct and decency."¹⁸³

the commanding officer of the USS Roosevelt during the Spring 2022 when COVID-19 was a nascent phenomenon the world was just beginning to accept and understand. CAPT Crozier purportedly sent an email to civilian news outlets, and on an unsecure address, with a letter he wrote and signed to his chain of command outlining his concerns for the Sailors aboard the Roosevelt. The letter itself was not the issue but rather the letter's contents indicated the aircraft carrier's degraded personnel readiness status. US enemies, adversaries, and competitors could have potentially leveraged that information to harm the nation's interest. In this regard, CAPT Crozier's letter posed a national security issue.

¹⁷⁹ William M. Arkin, "Firing the USS Theodore Roosevelt's Commander Exposes the Military's Deep Culture of Secrecy Even in a Pandemic," *Newsweek*, April 3, 2020.

¹⁸⁰ Ewan Palmer, "Videos Show Navy Captain Brett Crozier's Crew Cheering Him Off Ship After He Was Relieved for Sounding Alarm on COVID-19," *Newsweek*, April 3, 2020.

¹⁸¹ Baker, "Ethics and the Profession of Arms."

¹⁸² Secretary of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*.

¹⁸³ Department of the Navy, "Core Values Charter."

Rather quite the opposite, all indications demonstrate that the CO was courageous in his decision-making, even in the face of inevitable backlash that would irretrievably damage his career.¹⁸⁴ This is courage par excellence—even by the military’s definition. *Joint Doctrine for the US Armed Forces* (Joint Publication 1 or JP-1) states this of courage: “It is the ability to confront physical pain, hardship, death, or threat of death.”¹⁸⁵ Courage is also “the ability to act rightly in the face of popular opposition or discouragement.”¹⁸⁶ In this way, there is a moral and physical component to courage—the former is the virtue in a leader expressed in the willingness to act in uncertain, perilous situations, and the latter is standing up “for what one believes to be right even if that stand is unpopular or contrary to conventional wisdom.”¹⁸⁷

The JP-1 explanation of courage is consistent with the third bullet in the Navy Core Value Charter “Overcome all challenges while adhering to the highest standards of personal conduct and decency.”¹⁸⁸ What is curious is the Charter’s fourth and final application of courage, “Be loyal to my nation by ensuring the resources entrusted to me are used in an honest, careful,

¹⁸⁴ Many aircraft carrier CO’s promote to the prestigious flag-level rank in the Navy (Admiral). The Navy highly vets individuals before and during their selection for the nuclear-powered aircraft carrier career track. A successful and scandal-free tour means that these accomplished naval officers are highly competitive for selection and promotion to Rear Admiral. The prospects for CAPT Crozier to progress in rank would have been very good—the previous Roosevelt CO (CAPT Carlos Sardiello) did promote to Rear Admiral— yet two crew members I spoke to (one of them the command chaplain) during the 2019-2020 deployment when the incident occurred testify that he acted courageously, in their opinion, by concerning himself with the health of the Sailor’s first above any other consideration. In February 2022, Brett Crozier retired as Navy Captain (O-6) without having been selected to Rear Admiral.

¹⁸⁵ General Martin Dempsey, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, Joint Publication 1 (Washington, DC: Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, 2013). JP-1 is “the capstone publication for all joint doctrine, presenting fundamental principles and overarching guidance for the employment of the Armed Forces of the United States” (introduction). All military service doctrine is subordinate to this publication. If there is a discrepancy between service specific doctrine and the JP-1, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces* supersedes the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Space Force publication.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ McComas and Mack, *The Naval Officer’s Guide*, 11.

and efficient way.”¹⁸⁹ It seems like this would be more appropriate as a sub-bullet under “Commitment,” but this may be precisely what the Honorable John Dalton (Secretary of the Navy from 1993-1998) had in mind in his address at the Naval Academy after he expelled twenty-four midshipmen for their involvement in a cheating scandal that tarnished the school’s reputation.¹⁹⁰ The lack of courage (not taking the more time-consuming and difficult route by personally preparing for the exam) was the ultimate cause of the midshipmen’s duplicity and thus demonstrated a fundamental character flaw incompatible with a commissioned officer.¹⁹¹ In contrast, it could be said that Dalton showed courage with his decision to dismiss the Sailors when another verdict would have likely garnered less publicity and push-back: giving a minor punishment and allowing them to finish their degree.

Commitment

Proponents of Dalton’s decision could argue that it was his duty as Secretary of the Navy to make the difficult call to expel the students. As the SECNAV, the solemn duty to ensure the integrity of the organization and its core values belongs to him first and foremost as the head of the Navy. In this way, an inextricable link between duty and commitment to that duty is observed. In its description of “commitment,” the Navy Charter uses “duty” to define the core value, “The day-to-day *duty* of every person in the Department of the Navy is to join together as a team to improve the quality of our work, our people, and ourselves”¹⁹² [italicized mine]. Similarly, Joint Publication 1 uses “commitment” to explain “duty”; it states, “It [duty] binds us

¹⁸⁹ Secretary of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*.

¹⁹⁰ Paul W. Valentine, “Two Dozen Midshipmen Expelled,” *The Washington Post* (Washington, DC, April 29, 1994).

¹⁹¹ Karel Montor, ed., *Naval Leadership: Voices of Experience*, 2nd ed. (Annapolis, Md: Naval Institute Press, 1998) 519-524.

¹⁹² Secretary of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*.

together and conveys our moral *commitment*...as defenders of the Constitution and servants of the nation”¹⁹³ [italicized mine]. What is apparent is that understanding commitment, and all that it entails, is difficult to articulate in words and better comprehended by observing an example of it.

The Merriam-Webster dictionary provides three subtle aspects in the definition; a commitment is: (1) “an agreement or pledge to do something in the future”; (2) “something pledged”; and “the state or an instance of being obligated or emotionally impelled” (i.e., a commitment to a cause).¹⁹⁴ By this definition, a commitment is an individual’s promise—whether verbal, written, or otherwise— on an action, situation, circumstance, condition, or event that has not, and may not, come to pass. When a man commits to be faithful to a potential spouse for the duration of their marriage, the pledge binds him to his promise, if and only if there is a commitment to the verbal guarantee. The commitment to the pledge is no longer binding once the marriage ends. A commitment can also be for an event that may not occur. Firefighters commit themselves to save community members in the unfortunate circumstance of a fire or emergency; this may or may not happen (and hopefully not), yet the commitment to act remains. Understanding commitment this way logically connects to virtues like duty, faithfulness, devotion, loyalty, resilience, perseverance, and integrity. The original authors of the Navy Core Values contemplated such virtues in lieu of “commitment” as they wrote the first drafts.¹⁹⁵ It is not a departure from the spirit of commitment to see it through the lenses of faithfulness, duty, devotion, etc., when applying it to day-to-day living. In the description of commitment in the Charter, the Navy uses the values mentioned in the previous sentence the same way; the five

¹⁹³ Dempsey, *Doctrine for the Armed Forces of the United States*, B-1.

¹⁹⁴ Frederick C. Mish, “Commitment,” *Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary (Eleventh Edition)* (Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster, Inc., 2003).

¹⁹⁵ Gomulka, “Honor, Courage, Commitment.”

descriptive statements connect to devotion (“care for the well-being of my people”), integrity (“exhibit the highest degree of moral character”), resilience (“strive for positive change and personal improvement”), loyalty (“treat all people with dignity and respect”), and faithfulness (“foster respect”).¹⁹⁶

Social science is a helpful discipline for understanding the particularities of commitment. Writing about the institute of marriage, Stanley and Markman remark that two primary elements comprise commitment in relationships—dedication and restraint.¹⁹⁷ Dedication refers to a person’s desire to be in the relationship long-term, to have their identity connected to their partner, and to make the relationship a priority.¹⁹⁸ Constraint “denotes the forces or costs that serve to keep couples together even if they would rather break up.”¹⁹⁹ Constraint keeps a person dedicated to the other even when feelings, preferences, or other motivating factors lead them in a different direction; in other words, the person remains committed to their partner regardless of sentiments.²⁰⁰

Viewing the obligation between a service member and the Navy organization through the simile of an interpersonal relationship contextualizes Stanley and Markman’s constraint and dedication explanation. Dedication refers to the service member desiring to be in the Navy long-term, to be identified as Sailor, and to make their service a top priority. In like manner, constraint

¹⁹⁶ Secretary of the Navy, *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*.

¹⁹⁷ Scott M. Stanley, Sarah W. Whitton, and Howard J. Markman, “Maybe I Do: Interpersonal Commitment and Premarital or Nonmarital Cohabitation,” *Journal of Family Issues* 25, no. 4 (May 2004): 496–519.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 498.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 498.

²⁰⁰ Julia Carter, “What Is Commitment? Women’s Accounts of Intimate Attachment,” *Families, Relationships and Societies* 1, no. 2 (June 2012): 137–153.

in the Sailor-Navy relationship precludes the possibility of ending the connection prematurely before the contractual service ends.²⁰¹

4.4 When Sailors Lack Virtue

Commitment may be the most challenging core value for Sailors to exhibit because part and parcel of commitment is the inseparable connection to individual resiliency and perseverance. Both are essential to commitment, yet a significant number of Navy members, and soldiers military-wide, manifest a lack of them in alarming and destructive ways; two apropos illustrations of the lack of commitment are the available data on suicide and divorce within the DoD. A top military issue is the high number of suicide incidences in recent years. The DoD readily admits that suicide is a top concern in the military and has been for almost a decade.²⁰² It is a leading cause of death in non-combat-related situations, second to “accidents.”²⁰³ In the last five years, the suicide trend has been increasing with no indication of relief; the 2016 total suicides jumped from 482 (62 in the Navy) to 580 DoD-wide (79 Navy).²⁰⁴ The same report also demonstrates that military members—particularly enlisted males under 30—were “at higher risk for suicide compared to the population average.”²⁰⁵ Fundamentally, suicide indicates a lack of

²⁰¹ Enlisted service members obligate themselves to the military in specified enlistment terms that as short as two years and as long as six; this in addition to inactive reserve time. Officer obligated time is different depending on which program they are in. For instance, Judge Advocate General (JAG) officer—the Navy’s lawyers—have an initial 8-year service period after which they may serve indefinitely as long as they reach certain rank milestone. If an individual graduated from the Naval Academy, or another service academy, they will owe five years of active duty time upon graduation before they can voluntarily resign; they can continue to serve if there is a need for their service. Enlisted members and officers can only serve a maximum of 30 years under certain conditions but there are rare occasions where a situation will take them beyond the statutory limits.

²⁰² Honorable Church Hagel, “Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel’s Message to the Force on Suicide Prevention Month” (Department of Defense, September 2, 2014).

²⁰³ Christopher T. Mann and Hannah Fischer. *Trends in Active-Duty Military Deaths Since 2006*, Congressional Research Service (Washington, DC: Office of Congressional Information and Publishing, May 17, 2021).

²⁰⁴ Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness, *Annual Suicide Report: Calendar Year 2020* (Washington, DC: Department of Defense, 2021), 14-15.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid*, 6.

commitment to the process of life—the individual experience of emotional highs and lows, disappointments and joys, successes and failures, and physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual maturation that is typically common to all humans. Suicide unnaturally derails the life journey, whereas a commitment to living can see a person through the situation that caused the contemplation of self-harm in the first place.

A second area of concern is the high divorce rate among military members. Sociologists attribute “lack of commitment” specifically as a primary reason for divorce.²⁰⁶ A 2020 DoD demographics study showed that of the 341,996 married active duty Sailors (enlisted and officer) (from a total of 1,333,822 soldiers), 8,8891 (or 2.6 percent) divorced their spouses that year.²⁰⁷ While only a tiny amount, that only accounts for a single year; given a static divorce rate over a decade, more than a quarter of all military marriages will end in divorce.²⁰⁸ Professionals in marriage and family counseling observe that between forty and fifty percent of all marriages—military, civilian, or otherwise—will end in divorce.²⁰⁹ Even still, the military divorce rate is not markedly different than the civilian population, but it does indicate that a professional vocation such as the US Navy is no more virtuous than society; this despite a well-defined code of ethics as articulated in the Core Values Charter.²¹⁰ At its core, divorce is the end of one or both

²⁰⁶ Carter, “What Is Commitment?”

²⁰⁷ Department of the Defense and Office of the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Military Community and Family Policy, *2020 Demographics Profile of the Military Community*, Demographics Profile (Washington, DC: DoD, 2020), vi.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Timothy E. Clinton and Gary Sibcy, *Why You Do the Things You Do: The Secret to Healthy Relationships* (Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, 2006).

²¹⁰ Philip N. Cohen, “The Coming Divorce Decline,” *Socius* (January 2019).

spouses' commitment to the marriage; this is in direct disagreement with their pledge of commitment on the wedding day.²¹¹

While divorce and suicide can demonstrate an individual's level of commitment—either to their marriage or life, respectively—the other Navy Core Values come to bear in the discussion on these two topics. It is arguable that suicide is both dishonorable and cowardly, in contradistinction to honor and courage, and is no less a violation of the ideal Navy virtue. The Navy defines “Courage” as the moral and mental strength to do what is right in the face of adversity and to “overcome all challenges.”²¹² Honor includes “an uncompromising code of integrity, taking full responsibility for my actions and keeping my word.”²¹³ That divorce and suicide continue to stain Navy culture underscore the reality Navy Core Values are something to strive towards but not necessarily achieved.

After the 1991 Tailhook scandal that exposed fundamental character flaws within Navy culture, Vice Admiral Fetterman, the Chief of Naval Education and Training, offered seventeen reasons to substantiate a core values overhaul and a specified training program for Navy personnel. He offered these reasons:

1. Absence of firmly rooted goals in life
2. No self-respect
3. Self-destructive lifestyles
4. Racism
5. No clearly defined family structure
6. Notions that American freedoms mean only individual liberty
7. Failure of schools to educate adequately
8. Alcohol and drug abuse
9. Violence and other forms of criminal behavior

²¹¹ Carter, “What Is Commitment?” Some situations necessitate marriage dissolution for any number of safety, health, and well-being reasons. The point here, and sociologist, family therapists, counselors, pastors, chaplains, behavioral health experts attest, is that many married couples seek divorce unnecessarily when counseling, perseverance, patience, time, or a combination of the aforementioned would remedy the situation.

²¹² Department of the Navy, “Core Values Charter.”

²¹³ Ibid.

10. Self-indulgent sexual activity and concomitant ills
11. No adult role models
12. Loss of commitment to long-term relationships
13. Economic hard times
14. Teenage pregnancies
15. Attitudes that consider material possessions more important than service to country
16. Absence of personal commitment
17. Tendency to accept double-standards²¹⁴

The Navy is now twenty years removed from the Core Values Charter and program introduction to the Fleet, yet nearly all of the destructive behaviors and attitudes from Admiral Fetterman’s list have not been assuaged in any distinguishable or meaningful way. Divorce and suicide are continued areas of concern, but so is substance abuse, mainly alcohol.²¹⁵ Unintended and unwanted pregnancy among military members are roughly equivalent to their civilian counterparts.²¹⁶ Unique to the military is desertion which research studies demonstrate has increased in recent years.²¹⁷ Other deviant behavior that spans from the ambivalent—late to work, laziness—to the malevolent that includes spousal abuse, exorbitant credit card debt, and even human trafficking.²¹⁸

²¹⁴ Gomulka, “Honor, Courage, Commitment,” 3.

²¹⁵ Sarah O. Meadows et al., *2015 Health Related Behaviors Survey: Substance Use Among U.S. Active-Duty Service Members* (Santa Monica, CA: Rand, 2018). This study demonstrates the high alcohol and tobacco use among the United States military that outpaces civilian counterparts of the same age and gender.

²¹⁶ MAJ Ryan J. Heitman et al., “Unintended Pregnancy in the Military Health Care System: Who Is Really at Risk?,” *Military Medicine* 181 (2016): 1370–1374. This study written by ten Army Medical Corps doctors concluded that military women “have an age-standardized rate of unintended pregnancy up to 50% higher than the general population with higher rates among less educated, nonwhite, and married or cohabiting women.”

²¹⁷ Dustin Jones, “A Surge in Navy Deserters Could Be a Sign of a Bigger Problem for the Military,” *National Public Radio* (Washington DC, May 21, 2022), sec. National Security. In 2021, 157 Sailors abandoned their appointed place of duty as compared to 63 in 2019. Even though penalties for desertion are severe and can include reduction in rank, forfeiture of pay, confinement, and a Dishonorable Discharge from the Navy, many Sailors are not discouraged from making the attempt.

²¹⁸ Geoff Ziezulewicz, “Operation High Tide: Inside the Navy’s Effort to Sting Sex-Trafficking Sailors in Bahrain,” *Navy Times*, January 21, 2021, sec. News. Operation High Tide was a Naval Criminal Investigative Service initiative to catch Navy personnel attempting to engage in human trafficking. The sting operation netted sixteen Sailors between 2017 and 2018.

4.5 Towards the Navy Core Values and Beyond

When the new Secretary of Defense, Honorable Lloyd Austin, took his post in 2021, he vowed to root out extremism in the military in his confirmation hearing before US Congress, a problem he considered a top priority.²¹⁹ So much so that Secretary Austin ordered a DoD-wide mandatory stand down to address the issue with all units across the DoD, pausing their normal work activities to receive training on policy and procedure on extremism.²²⁰ Despite the increased effort and vigor to the contrary, the results have been scant—of forty-four allegations of extremism of any kind²²¹ within the Department of the Navy, only three Sailors received administrative or punitive punishment.²²² There are several plausible explanations for the low number of known incidents. One could be that many have simply not been caught; as the DoD intensifies the effort to expose extremism, more will be convicted and processed out of the military. Also, it could be as the mandatory training takes effect and Sailors know better how to identify ideology that is incompatible with the military, the full breadth and scope of extremism within the ranks will be fully understood.

One reason could be that extremism is not as widespread as the DoD purports. Secretary Austin infers as much, recognizing in his 2021 memo that “the vast majority of those who serve

²¹⁹ Meghann Myers, “Defense Secretary Nominee, Offering Scant Details, Commits to Rooting out Extremism, Sexual Assault in the Force,” *Military Times*, January 19, 2021, sec. Your Military.

²²⁰ Secretary Lloyd Austin, *Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department (Memo)* (Washington DC: Department of Defense, 2021).

²²¹ The DoD Inspector General classifies extremism allegations into seven categories: Racially Motivated Violent Extremism; Anti-Government/Anti-Authority Extremism; Domestic Violence Extremism Participation; Violating Service Standards, Political Involvement, Disobeying an Order, Reprisal, and Restriction; Criminal Gang Activity/Affiliation; Trespassing at the US Capitol; Contempt Toward Public Figure.

²²² DoD Inspector General, *Department of Defense Progress on Implementing Fiscal Year 2021 NDAA Section 554 Requirements Involving Prohibited Activities of Covered Armed Forces* (Alexandria, Virginia: Department of Defense, 2021), accessed July 9, 2022, <https://media.defense.gov/2021/Dec/02/2002902153/-1/-1/1/DODIG-2022-042.PDF>.

in uniform and their civilian colleagues, do so with great honor and integrity.”²²³ The same could be said of each destructive issue discussed here—suicide, divorce, substance abuse, desertion, and the like. The relatively low number of incidences disabuse the notion that the Navy is wrought with dishonorable morals, virtues, and values, but quite the opposite—the preponderance of Sailors act within the military’s ethical and legal boundaries.

But a curious item rises to the surface—why is the Navy no more virtuous than the general population? A perfunctory examination of comparable data shows that the military is at or higher than their civilian counterparts in terms of suicide rates, DUI, divorce percentage, and extremist ideology. A cross-sectional deep dive analytical study would be required to arrive at a coherent theory as to why this is, but on the surface, there does not seem to be much distinction between military and civilian in terms of the issues mentioned here. Even more confounding is the notion that the Navy has a specific codified set of ethics to abide by, whereas the civilian population does not. It seems that with an emphasis on honor, courage, and commitment through the *Sailor’s Creed* and the Navy Core Values, there would be a demonstrable impact on issues like divorce, suicide, and the like; perhaps not to the point where the military eradicates all dishonorable behavior (if even possible) but have such low incidence rates that it is remarkable and noteworthy. Unfortunately, such conclusions cannot be made.

Here is where Navy Sailors, and uniformed military personnel as a whole, do demonstrate an extraordinary amount of honor, courage, and commitment—in their voluntary service to the United States and its citizenry. The inherent danger and sacrifice that is part and parcel of military service signify that someone who willingly volunteers performs a praiseworthy act and demonstrates more than a modicum of honor, courage, and commitment. But this

²²³ Austin, *Immediate Actions to Counter Extremism in the Department (Memo)*.

observation only holds true if someone joins the military for altruistic and unselfish reasons. Surveys and studies report that people join the military for any number of reasons, not the least of which is for personal gain: educational benefits, nothing better to do, not want to go to college, travel, steady income, an opportunity for advancement, technical training, or some combination of the aforementioned.²²⁴ Some primarily consider a sense of patriotism and service, but others view it through a transactional lens—a unit of work for a promised wage or benefit. This is no different from a civilian's relationship with their employer and vice versa.

4.5.1 Space for Christians

How Christians approach their service and conduct themselves in the Navy creates an opportunity to demonstrate Christ-likeness to their fellow Sailors and potentially fosters conditions for evangelistic discourse. The apologetic approach we will examine in Chapter 6 is predicated upon virtuous Christian, unique and distinct from others, living above and beyond the behavioral standard. As the approach is applied to the Navy, it is supererogatory acts above the paragon of virtue articulated in the *Sailor's Creed* and Navy Core Values.

Against the backdrop of common societal problems prevalent in the Navy and military (desertion, alcohol, suicide, etc.), it would appear a Christian who acts honorably and courageously with commitment sets conditions to set themselves apart from the average service member. The values the Charter describes and how the Navy defines them create an incredibly high standard that requires consistent and steady daily practice over time that most people would have difficulty abiding by. It is easily within the realm of the possible that Christians serving in the Navy can adhere to this standard, but virtuous living for the sake of virtue presents its own

²²⁴ Andrea Asoni et al., “A Mercenary Army of the Poor? Technological Change and the Demographic Composition of the Post-9/11 U.S. Military,” *Journal of Strategic Studies* (January 30, 2020): 1–47.

challenges. A Christian maintaining the high standard outlined in the Navy Core Values Charter can be mistaken for a moral person or a “squared away” Sailor.²²⁵ A Sailor does not need to be a Christian to be virtuous, nor do they need to be a follower of Christ to be a strict adherent to honor, courage, and commitment. Living up to the Core Values is exemplary in its own right and for the Christian is a testimony to their conviction towards a biblical ethical. Something more is needed, however, to avoid ambiguity, and this is where supererogation is necessary. In the next chapter, we will discuss humility and hospitality as Christian virtues that a follower of Christ can emulate above and beyond the Navy Core Value Charter demands of honor, courage, and commitment. Since humility and hospitality are not required by the Navy, these demonstrations formulate supererogatory behavior.

²²⁵ “Squared away” is a common military idiom to mean a service member who has exemplary military bearing, performs assigned tasks, is reliable, on time, and demonstrates desirable leadership traits.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Salt and Light Navy Sailors

“You are the salt of the earth... You are the light of the world....”
 Jesus Christ, *Sermon on the Mount*

The previous chapter discussed in detail the values that the Navy expects of each of their military members and civilians; it is published officially in Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5300.15D (or *Department of the Navy Core Values Charter and Ethics Training*) or customarily recited in the *Sailors Creed*. Honor, Courage, and Commitment form the Navy’s essential virtues (among several others appropriate for military service) and thus are the organizational standard required of all within the Department of Navy (DoN). The goal in the corpus of this project is to use supererogation—morally praiseworthy acts above and beyond the call of which there is no duty to perform—within the Navy and towards fellow co-workers to create conditions for apologetic and evangelistic dialogue to occur. Supererogation requires distinct and unique virtues and behaviors that set themselves from the standard; a Christian is well-poised to demonstrate such mannerisms because within the proverbial DNA of a Christ-follower are peculiarities that are not found in other people, according to what the Bible has to say about a believer. Jesus says as much in the Matthew 5-7 Scripture passage colloquially known as the Sermon on the Mount:

You are the salt of the earth. If salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket but rather on a lampstand and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (5:13-16, NKJV).

In this biblical narrative, Jesus not simply addresses a general audience but disciples; this includes the Twelve as well as unnamed others who willingly ascended the mountain to listen to

the Rabbi's revolutionary teaching (Matthew 5:1).²²⁶ Jesus informs His disciples that they *are* the salt of the earth. They *are* the light of the world. Christians are salt and light, not *like* salt and light. In other Gospel passages, Jesus uses the simile linguistic device to describe the life of a believer. For instance, in Matthew 18, He says unless you become “like little children,” you will by no means enter the kingdom of Heaven (verse 3). Elsewhere Jesus declares of the scattered and disorganized crowd that they are “like sheep without a shepherd” (Mark 6:34). Not that potential followers must *be* little children to become His followers or that the multitude of people were actually sheep; instead, these were comparisons Jesus made to convey a spiritual truth. As the Gospels record, Jesus exclusively uses similes in the parables (“The Kingdom of Heaven is like...”).

With the “salt” and “light” usage, Jesus unambiguously communicates the reality that Christians are like no other people group in the world. There is something unique and distinctive about His followers that cannot be ascribed to any other belief system, religion, worldview, culture, society, or demographic. Christians, followers of Christ, disciples of Christ, and followers of the Way have collectively been known as the Church since its nascent First Century beginnings until the present day. In Revelation, which depicts future events yet to unfold, Christians are still referred to as the Church.

The etymology of the word “church” underscores the foundational principle that Christians are unique and set apart from the general masses. Understanding “church” elucidates Jesus’ salt and light reference from the Sermon on the Mount. New Testament usage of “church”

²²⁶ The word used for “disciple” in English translations of the Bible is μαθηταὶ (*mathētēs*) in Greek. The Hebrew inference of “disciples” connotes not just knowing what the Rabbi knows but being as the Rabbi is. In other words, the disciple models their own life after the example of their teacher. For more, see μαθηταὶ (*mathētēs*) in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley.

is a combination of two Greek phrases κολέω (kaléō), meaning “to call,” and ἐκκ (ex), or “out of” to form ἐκκλησία (ekklēsia) which literally translates as “called out ones.”²²⁷ Christians are “called out” to the Church from the world—the “world” an idiom referring to those not part of the Church—to live a life markedly different from those in the world. Christians are the Church, and the Church is Christians.²²⁸ The Church “gathers together” out from the greater masses of people to form an incomparable group, distinguished in manner, form, countenance, and behavior; in other words, dissimilar to all others. Jesus refers to his followers as salt and light. The inference is that those who are not His disciples are neither salt nor light, nor can they be.

Christians serving in the Navy are salt and light by virtue of their uniqueness so categorized by Jesus. Since this is true, the question is, “How are Christian Sailors distinct from the rest of Navy personnel?” It cannot be by *only* exemplifying honor, courage, and commitment—the behavioral standard expected of all Sailors as directed by the Secretary of the Navy Instruction 5300.15D. Christians are called to obey the leaders appointed over them (Romans 13:2 and Hebrews 13:17), demonstrating consistency to these biblical mandates

²²⁷ Karl Ludwig Schmidt, “Ἐκκλησία (Ekklēsia),” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

²²⁸ A synthesis between Jesus’ teaching in Matthew 16:18 and the Apostle Peter’s letter in 1 Peter 2 clearly and unequivocally present this truth. The confession and the belief that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ), the Son of the Living God, is the central component for becoming a Christian. The confession is the rock, or πέτρα (petra), upon which Jesus says He will build the Church (Matthew 16:18). In Peter’s own commentary on this confession in 1 Peter 2, he writes that each Christian is a living stone, or λίθος (lithos), that are built together to form a spiritual house (the Church). πέτρα (petra) is a large rock suggesting immovability, firmness, and hardness. Λίθος (lithos) means “stone” about the size of an object that can be thrown or heaved not the size of a πέτρα (petra). The imagery is that a vast number of Christians—those that confess that Jesus is the Christ and Son of the Living God—form the spiritual house or the Church. Any inference that Jesus would build His Church upon Peter cannot be assumed—it is the confession that is the rock. Peter would certainly have a unique apostolic work to establish the Church as its leader, along with Paul, during his lifetime but to assert that Peter is the rock upon which it is built contradicts other Scripture which clear states otherwise. For more, see Λίθος (lithos), μαθηταὶ (*mathētēs*), πέτρα (petra) in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* edited by Gerhard Kittel, Gerhard Friedrich, and Geoffrey William Bromiley.

constitutes a testimony in and of itself. But the danger here is for others to confuse them as a virtuous people devoid of any faith component and not recognize that the reason for action is that the love of Jesus compels them to do so. A moral person can easily be mistaken for a Christian, but one cannot be a Christian without being moral. A person can be moral without being a Christian; it is not a requirement for virtue. Even still, there has to be a way to differentiate between a Christian and a moral, virtuous person according to Jesus' salt and light demarcation bestowed on all His followers (Matthew 5:13-16).

For the purposes of the Navy, supererogation is a vital aspect of demonstrating Christianity for believers serving in the military. Not only should Christians embody honor, courage, and commitment for the two-fold purpose of being model Sailors and obedience to orders but primarily to do all things as to the Lord (Colossians 3:23) because all tasks and activities—workplace, privately, or otherwise—are first and foremost to God. Beyond and above adherence to the Navy Core Values is the realm of supererogation—those exemplary virtues and behavior of which there is no duty to perform. There is a plethora of all manner and types of virtues that the Bible approves and encourages. But what specific virtues and behaviors can a Christian Sailor demonstrate while serving in the Navy that is above and beyond the Core Value standard? Any supererogatory act can foster conditions for evangelism and apologetic discourse by creating a positive impact on its recipient that causes them to give Christianity serious consideration. In this chapter, however, we will explore how Christians serving in the Navy can use humility and hospitality—virtues not required or exalted by the Navy—as supererogatory acts. Of the virtues that could be leveraged for apologetic purposes, here we will look at humility and hospitality because they stand distinct from honor, courage, and commitment (or at least how the Navy defines the latter virtues).

Christians perform supererogatory actions not just for the goal of winning converts to Christ. While any Christian would unequivocally proclaim that a soul transformed by a personal encounter with Christ is good and thus not in violation of the supererogatory definition formulated in Chapter Three, Christians go above and beyond for others because of a genuine and sincere love of neighbor. Loving one's neighbor is for the here and now in the present reality, not dependent or predicated on any other motivation than the compelling love of Christ. Hospitality and humility are supererogatory pathways to loving neighbors and opening the doors to evangelism and apologetic discourse while serving in the Navy.

5.2 Hospitality

Fundamentally, hospitality is making space in our lives for others.²²⁹ "Making space" is in a physical sense (like adding another chair at the dinner table for a guest) but also from a time, resource, and monetary perspective. Hospitality includes creating margin in one's schedule to devote to another and similarly opening our wallets to spend for the benefit of the outsider. Hospitality is tangible, such as physical space and actual resources, like money and food, and intangible, in terms of minutes and days. Christian hospitality instead is centered around God and relies upon "an understanding of time and space as given and redeemed by God."²³⁰ In no uncertain terms, God is the owner of hospitality for the Christian. He alone has the ability and authority to redeem the three essential components of hospitality—time, space, and resources. For the Christian, the occasion of hospitality is a gift from the Lord, and Christians have the opportunity to pass the gift on to others and a chance to demonstrate salt and light.

²²⁹ Aaron M. Kauffman, *Thriving: Effective Strategies for the Evangelism and Discipleship of Emerging Adults* (Kentucky, US: Asbury Theological Seminary, 2019), 125.

²³⁰ Elizabeth Newman, "Untamed Hospitality," *The Christian Reflection Project* (2007), 13.

Suppose the concept of hospitality presented here is considered improperly; someone may conclude that a reluctant acquiesce to an uninvited guest at a private gathering is worthy of the hospitality definition—not so. Hospitality is an act of friendship shown to a visitor or stranger.²³¹ The inference is an eager willingness to welcome an outsider—i.e., one who is not a part of the group, a stranger, or a foreigner. The key here is an earnest and sincere invitation to the outsider. The New Testament usage of “hospitality” is along this same vein; it is translated from the Greek word φιλόξενος which is a combination of φίλος (friend) and (ξένος) (stranger or foreigner) taken together to mean literally “friendship to strangers.”²³²

How Christians welcome all people is a critical identifier of their distinctive as a group, modeling hospitality after the life of Jesus. David Gushee, professor of Christian ethics, says, “A key element both of the kingdom of God and of human dignity is its expansive inclusiveness, its hospitable universality.”²³³ Every person matters due to their intrinsic value and importance conferred to them by the Creator; for this reason, no created person can minimize or violate that value in another. Because of universal human value, all are welcome and invited, and none are excluded from the invitation. This Christian practice of hospitality should reflect God’s gracious welcome because “God is host, and we are all guests of God’s grace.”²³⁴

²³¹ Bruce J. Malina, “Hospitality,” in *Harper’s Bible Dictionary*, ed. Paul J. Achtemeier (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1985), 408.

²³² Gustav Stählin, “ξένος (Foreigner),” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), 15. Interestingly enough, another derivative of φίλος is another similar Greek word φιλέω meaning “love.” Φιλαδελφία, also from the same root family, translated “brother love.” Taken together, the nuances φιλόξενος (hospitality) are better understood. According to Stählin, the verb χενίζω can be understood in the NT both “to surprise,” “to be strange to” (Ac. 17:20; 1 Peter 4:4, 12) and also “to entertain,” “to lodge” (Acts 10:23; Hebrews 13:2). The other variants found in the NT (ξενία, ξενοδοχέω, φιλοξενία, φιλόξενος) belong exclusively to the hospitality domain.

²³³ David P. Gushee, “Nothing Human Is Merely Human,” in *Why People Matter: A Christian Engagement with Rival Views of Human Significance*, ed. John Frederic Kilner (Grand Rapids, Mich: Baker Academic, 2017), 175.

²³⁴ Chistine D. Pohl, *Making Room: Recovering Hospitality as a Christian Tradition* (Chicago, US: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1999), 123.

Christians follow the example of Jesus demonstrated in His three years of earthly ministry. Women, children, tax collectors, prostitutes, lepers, the unclean, Gentiles, Romans, and Samaritans—all groups Jews typically avoided—were ministered to and welcomed by Jesus. This example has compelled Christians throughout history toward "the development of love for each and every human being, without exception, as a fundamental element of a Christ-following way of life."²³⁵ Common love and general acceptance of people as beloved of God is a way of dignifying each person and treating them with honor and worth—a powerfully relational exchange, especially to a person who feels undervalued and underappreciated by an organization.

Hospitality is not distinctly Christian. Luke Bretherton in writing about hospitality observes, "the practice of hospitality is central to most cultures."²³⁶ An ancient custom of hospitality found in both the Greek and Roman culture serves as a backdrop for the biblical narrative. Beyond the borders of ancient Palestine and southeast Europe, hospitality is indicated worldwide, mainly because temples and alters were often designated as places of asylum for foreigners and estranged citizens.²³⁷ Even though accommodating the foreigner is ubiquitous cross-culturally, when Christianity emerged from ancient Judea, the perfect picture of hospitality arrived with it after the example of Jesus. Christianity hospitality is founded upon "unrestricted and unconditional love for the ξένος" that is uniquely demonstrated and defined by Christ alone.²³⁸ Christ's love and that of His followers replaced "the imperfect and often distorted

²³⁵ Gushee, "Nothing Human Is Merely Human."

²³⁶ Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness amid Moral Diversity* (Aldershot, England: Ashgate Pub, 2006), 126.

²³⁷ Stählin, "ξένος (Foreigner)," 15

²³⁸ *Ibid*, 16.

hospitality for strangers in the contemporary New Testament world” because of the self-sacrificial love extended to strangers.²³⁹

ἀγάπη is a unique feature of Christian hospitality but truly revelatory is the concept that stranger and neighbor are the same and, as such, are to be welcomed the same. Jesus’ narrative in the Good Samaritan Parable (Luke 10:30-35) makes this clear. The commandment in question is “love your neighbor as yourself,” yet Jesus applies the Divine imperative in a situation when two strangers’ lives intersect on the road between Jerusalem and Jericho—one in desperate need and the other willing to help him. In this parable, the Samaritan who gave help was a foreigner to Jews in every sense of the word but not any more a stranger than the man who needed help from him. The two men in the story were entirely foreign to one another. Jesus presses the point further in the Matthew 25 account, where He negatively renders judgment upon those who refuse to cloth, feed, give water, care for, and tend to the dispossessed. The reason? Jesus states, “inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me” (Matthew 25:45, NKJV). Refusal to help those in need is the same as refusing Christ Himself. Whether the foreigner is hospitably received or not has an impact on one’s eternal experience, for better or worse.²⁴⁰

To receive Christian hospitality, one does not have to do or be anything other than who they are; it is a free gift to be a guest of the Christian. This act of grace is a witness of the Church and a picture of "the hospitality each sinner receives from God in and through Christ."²⁴¹

²³⁹ Ibid, 16.

²⁴⁰ Gustav Stählin, “ξένος, ξενία, ξενίζω, ξενοδογέω, Φιλοξενία, Φιλόξενος” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 15.

²⁴¹ Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness amid Moral Diversity* (Aldershot, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub., c2006., 2006), <https://find.library.duke.edu/catalog/DUKE003808985>.

Generous, inviting, welcoming, and genuine care are markers of hospitality done well and are synonymous with the message of the Gospel. A Gospel that includes all manner of broken and depraved "strangers" of God and invites them into his eternal home. Christian hospitality is a beautiful picture of this reality.

All people are welcome and invited to the Christian table. While all are accepted and included in the invitation, the invitee's ideas, premises, and assertions are subject to examination, scrutiny, and, if required, rejection. There is a distinction between ideas and people. Christians invite all to the proverbial dinner table (not to be confused with Communion), but they are to consider and examine views to discover their truthfulness or falsity in the open-air market of discussion between rational people. In the end, truth rises to the surface and wins the day, or at least that is the goal. There is not, nor can it be, the same way to treat people, as ideas to be tossed about as students might pontificate in a university seminar setting. People are single corporeal and spiritual wholes "whom the breath of God has awakened from nothingness" from the moment of their conception.²⁴² There are honor and uniqueness bestowed to humans that belong to no other living creatures and certainly not ideas. Christian hospitality is an honor of the humanness of each person.

Bretherton has similar thoughts on hospitality and its confusion with accepting all ideas or worldviews. In his work *Hospitality as Holiness*, Bretherton explains the critical distinction between hospitality and tolerance. In actively welcoming the stranger, the Christian consciously moves to welcome those who are "marginalized, oppressed and rendered invisible."²⁴³ People can be marginalized not just because of a physical identifier—skin color, gender, height, etc. but also

²⁴² David Bentley Hart, "The Anti-Theology of the Body," *The New Atlantis*, last modified Summer 2005, accessed April 19, 2019, <https://www.thenewatlantis.com/publications/the-anti-theology-of-the-body>.

²⁴³ Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness*.

because of ideas they believe (e.g., atheist, Republican, socialist, etc.). Hospitality is a way to acknowledge those living on a community's fringes (those whose appearance may not be fashionable or whose opinions are unpopular). As Christians open their doors, confrontations about how the church has responded to moral issues—past and present—will confront them. The Church's rejoinder will persuade some non-Christians; some will deny the response, some will ignore it, and some will actively oppose it. Bretherton offers this solution, "The only response the church can make to moral problems is to bear witness to their resolution in and through Jesus Christ and to invite its neighbors to participate in those patterns of thought and action that bear witness to this resolution."²⁴⁴ Hospitality is a non-threatening but engaging way for the Church and non-Christians to dialogue with one another.

In the Navy, such dialogue does not take place in any official capacity for apparent reasons. The purpose of the Navy is not to hash out policy on morality, religion and the like but to maintain, train, and equip combat-ready naval forces and preserve freedom of movement on the seas."²⁴⁵ Nor should the Navy be engaged in such discussion for the organization exists for a specific mission. Within the interaction between people *of* the Navy—the Sailors—such dialogue happens frequently and often.

During long periods out at sea on deployment or in a forward-operating base opportunity abounds for conversations to broach on the whole range of personal or professional related topics, and these dialogues are common. The kinsmanship among military members is well-

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

²⁴⁵ Department of the Navy, "Navy Mission" (Department of the Navy, 2020), https://www.dfas.mil/Portals/98/Documents/Onboarding/Navy_CustomerFAQ_Onboarding.pdf?ver=2020-04-20-150226-587.

documented for this reason.²⁴⁶ Choosing to engage a fellow Sailor, ask questions, and listen to what they have to say is a way to extend hospitality in the idiosyncratic military life. Most Sailors onboard a ship or in a combat zone do not have ample personal space or typical amenities to host others for an evening of food and conversation. Warships and tents inside barbed-wire fenced compounds do not afford such luxuries or real estate. In cramped office spaces, on the mess decks where Sailors eat their meals, or in the small chapels where the crew worships, opportunities arise to extend hospitality in the moments between duties. Inviting someone to a conversation and perhaps a cup of coffee or tea is how human connections can happen in austere military operating environments. Welcoming and taking an interest in who someone is, as a human created by God, first, and as a fellow Sailor, second. A Christian serving in the Navy can extend hospitality regardless of rank or position as long as decorum and professionalism fitting to the military is maintained. While off-duty and amongst peers of the same rank, only imagination and available time and space limit the possibilities for hospitality.

In the practicum, hospitality in the operational Navy environment on deployments, in war zones, and downtime during exercises has two distinct components: time and focusing on the other. These are fundamental components to hospitality. Edith Schaeffer remarked, “The most precious thing a human being has to give is time. There is so very little, after all, in a life.”²⁴⁷ For the Navy Sailor, much of the work week and the hours therein are strictly prescribed in policy, leaving little time to devote to another. *The Manual of Navy Total Force Manpower Policies and Procedures* (short title is OPNAV INSTRUCTION 1000.16L) provides the guidance, policies, and procedures to develop and implement manpower for all naval activities and is used in with

²⁴⁶ Nathan Solomon, “‘Only God Can Judge Me’: Faith, Trauma, and Combat,” *Interpretation* 69, no. 1 (January 1, 2015): 63–75.

²⁴⁷ Edith Schaeffer, *L’Abri* (Worthing (Sussex): Norfolk P, 1969), 28.

the Naval Manpower Analysis Center in developing a ship's manning document based upon the Navy Standard Workweek (NSWW). Under normal operating conditions, the crew of a vessel is on a three-section watch rotation of eight hours per section. When parsed out, this is fifty-six hours for sleep, fourteen hours for meals, fourteen hours for hygiene and bathroom time, and three hours for free time on Sunday to attend church services if one chooses.²⁴⁸ Adding up the requirements indicate that the Navy expects an eighty-one-hour work week while underway. According to the OPNAV 1000.16L, fifty-six hours are allocated for standing watch, eleven hours for routine work, eight hours for training, and six other hours for service diversion.²⁴⁹

In a restrictive and condensed work week, it is evident that giving another time and focus is a challenge, yet even if it is only a brief encounter, giving someone our focused attention communicates welcome.²⁵⁰ Person-to-person hospitality signals to others that they are valued and worthy of dignity; respect and recognition are expressed in giving someone our full attention. Because so much of helping “helping” has been turned into a profession with paid specialists, it is very unusual when someone gives focused attention to a needy or hurting person outside of a paid relationship. Giving another Sailor our full and undivided attention communicates that they are interesting and worthwhile because, intuitively, the natural human inclination is to pay attention to the people we value.²⁵¹ Through the mode of hospitality, value is expressed and communicated as if the one hosting says (without saying), “You are valuable. I give my time, attention, and ear to you because of your worth.

²⁴⁸ Department of the Navy, *The Manual of Navy Total Force Manpower Policies*, OPNAV 1000.16L (Washington DC: Department of the Navy, 2015).

²⁴⁹ Ibid. Service diversion includes morning quarters, uniform and personnel inspections, sick call, participation on boards and committees, interviews and legal proceedings.

²⁵⁰ Ibid, 137.

²⁵¹ Ibid, 60.

5.3 Humility

Demonstrating hospitality is one specific area a Christian can stand distinct from other Sailors and the Navy's organizational values and have the opportunity for supererogatory action. The virtue of humility does the same. In Christian parlance, humility can be defined as "an attitude of lowliness and obedience, grounded in recognition of one's status before God as His creatures."²⁵² There is a paradoxical component to humility as well—making oneself low is a pathway to recognition, praise, and Glory from God.²⁵³ Jesus would say as much in His teaching in the Gospel narrative, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all" (Mark 9:35, NKJV). Elsewhere Jesus declared that He did not come to earth to have others serve Him but to serve others (Mark 10:45); this is in contradiction to His status and associated right as the Divine to have His subjects serve and worship Him. Jesus' demonstration was just as poignant as His teaching. In a remarkable display of humility, Jesus, the teacher, leader, and revolutionary washed the filthy feet of His underlings to their great astonishment and then instructed them to do likewise (John 13:1-17).

Secular researchers on humility have identified three essential components to this virtue: accurate perception of one's ability, status, and station; intentional mindfulness of others; presenting oneself in a non-presumptuous manner in modesty and meekness. Sociologists, psychologists, and behavioral scientists of all ideological stripe agree on the three axes and what the ideal picture of humility should look like. Interestingly enough, Jesus was the consummate example of honest and true self-assessment who was oriented toward others and presented

²⁵² Martin H. Manser, *Dictionary of Bible Themes: The Accessible and Comprehensive Tool for Topical Studies* (London: M.M., 2015), 8276.

²⁵³ M.G. Easton, *Illustrated Bible Dictionary and Treasury of Biblical History, Biography, Doctrine, and Literature* (New York: Harper and Brothers, n.d.), 339.

Himself modestly with meekness. A strong, logical argument can be made that no other historical figure accurately and comprehensively demonstrated humility as Jesus Christ did. In His call for His disciples to follow after Him, Jesus was also directing them towards humility after His example.

5.3.1 An Accurate Perception of Self

One of the three axioms of humility is the ability to see yourself as you actually are. Such self-assessment takes into account one's own weaknesses *and* strengths. Historically, humility and weakness have been commonly associated with one another, as illustrated in ancient philosophical writing.²⁵⁴ The Romans placed little value on humility.²⁵⁵ Walter Grundmann notes that humility was often linked to adjectives such as insignificant, weak, poor, lowly, and servile in the ancient Greek and Hellenistic world.²⁵⁶ Even still, in many cultures, the view of humility is understood in this way. Because of this, an overly critical person may metaphorically self-flagellate in a zealous pursuit over greater levels of humility; earnest as it may be, but misguided nonetheless. But this is a misunderstanding of humility in the complete sense of the word.²⁵⁷

Humility also acknowledges personal strengths, gifts, and abilities, not just weaknesses.²⁵⁸ Personal strengths are not viewed in isolation from the rest of individual characteristics but are

²⁵⁴ For more read Aristotle, *Aristotle: Nicomachean Ethics*, trans. C. C. W. Taylor (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). Among the list of virtues Aristotle identifies, humility is not one of them. Lowliness and associated social status were affiliated with slaves and bondservants (slaves by choice) of which there were many in the Roman Empire (some estimates run as high as ten million across the entire empire).

²⁵⁵ Martin Bernard Timoney, *Identifying the Core Components of Christian Humility* (Lynchburg, VA: Liberty University, 2020), 7.

²⁵⁶ Walter Grundmann, "Ταπεινοφροσύνη (Humility)," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

²⁵⁷ John Marks Templeton, *Worldwide Laws of Life: 200 Eternal Spiritual Principles* (West Conshohocken, United States: Templeton Press, 1998), 162-163.

²⁵⁸ Robert A. Emmons, *The Psychology of Ultimate Concerns: Motivation and Spirituality in Personality* (New York: Guilford Press, 1999), 4.

part of a larger context that covers the entire span of traits a person has. Intuitively, we understand that certain individuals possess more natural gifting and ability than others, but misguided humility may cause a person to discredit the capabilities that they do have. To accurately self-assess, an individual must recognize that their own vantage point is, in fact, limited; a person can never objectively or with certain accuracy evaluate themselves because they are always perceiving from their own perspective. In pursuit of humility, one must accept the limited nature of their perspective in this way. The benefit is that this reality changes how we relate to others because limitations of self-awareness should invoke an openness to others—to learn from others and seek their wisdom in attending to one's own limitations.²⁵⁹ The knowledge, skills, abilities, and worldviews of others have great potential for personal growth, but a person can only take advantage of the perspective of others if they have the humility to recognize the necessity of it.

5.3.2 Intentional Mindfulness of Others

Accurate self-assessment is strictly an exercise in introspection as each person seeks to understand their strengths and weaknesses; as mentioned already, others' perspectives of us are necessary for an accurate evaluation. While inward focus is a component of humility, so is how we relate to other people. Specifically, social scientists note that individuals with humility have a distinct external emphasis toward others; that people with humility are consistently mindful of the considerations of their proverbial neighbor.²⁶⁰ When a person is intentionally cognizant of

²⁵⁹ Julie J. Exline, "Humility and the Ability to Receive from Others," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 31, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 41.

²⁶⁰ Everett L. Worthington, "Humility: The Quiet Virtue," *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 270–273.

other people, their behavior is typically earmarked by certain virtues such as understanding, appreciation, empathy, respect, and compassion.

Naturally, humble people make excellent friends because they do not approach relationships with self-seeking or self-serving motives; their intentions are sincerely benevolent.²⁶¹ Particularly in a marriage relationship, when humility characterizes the spouses and how they relate to one another, “otherness” creates a synergetic effect where one is relegating their own wants and desires for the sake of their spouse. This is precisely what Paul had in mind in his instruction for husbands and wives to submit yourselves “one to another in fear of the Lord” (Ephesians 5:21).

Because humility acknowledges the limitations of self, an individual gains awareness that they are not the proverbial center of the universe by which everyone else must focus their attention and activity.²⁶² A humble person thinks quite the opposite; they see themselves as part of the greater community with the ability they offer to the collective, and they see others as contributors to the community in ways that their limitations cannot. Humility also gives an individual a proclivity to ask for forgiveness from individuals and the community when they make mistakes. Non-humble people feel no such compunction about admitting their wrongs, let alone apologize for a shortcoming or misstep either done unintentionally from a place of aloof innocence or deliberately from malign motivations.

If arrogance is a hyper-egoic state, humility can be appropriately labeled a hypo-egoic state identified by “low levels of self-centeredness and egocentrism.”²⁶³ Individual desires and

²⁶¹ Stacey E. McElroy-Heltzel et al., “Embarrassment of Riches in the Measurement of Humility: A Critical Review of 22 Measures,” *The Journal of Positive Psychology* 14, no. 3 (May 4, 2019): 394.

²⁶² June Price Tangney, “Humility: Theoretical Perspectives, Empirical Findings and Directions for Future Research,” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 72.

²⁶³ Timoney, *Identifying the Core Components of Christian Humility* 5-6. See also M.R. Leary and J. Guadagno, “The Role of Hypo-Egoic Self-Procecces in Optimal Functioning and Subjective Well-Being,” in

needs are not wholly dismissed in a hypo-egoic state but instead kept in balance with those in the community. Connectedness to others and the community is the result as the humble person understands the value that each person brings to the whole. Intuitively, intentional focus on others in humility fosters an environment of community and invites all to participate and contribute. Paradoxically, a humble community can equally emphasize the individual and the collective in healthy harmony.

5.3.3 Presenting in Modesty and Meekness

Deliberate consideration of neighbor is the relational component of humility, honest self-assessment is the internal portion, and modest presentation is the external, observable aspect. Humility from this aspect is how a person presents themselves in the form of appearance—dress, body language, facial expression, clothing accessories, make-up (if a woman), jewelry, vehicle type, and even hairstyle. Not to be overlooked is the social media profile a person creates online and how they present themselves in pictures and posts. All these considerations—whether in the cyber world or physical form—are part of a person’s presentation. Modesty and meekness entail avoiding self-exaltation, extravagance, or excessive flamboyance; still, in the positive sense, it has the nuance of a well-ordered, balanced, and honorable person of self-discipline.²⁶⁴

Modest and meekness are demonstrations of humility, pride, and narcissism would be outward displays of inward arrogance. People predisposed towards self-aggrandizement use their appearance and complimentary accessories to bring attention to themselves. They look to others to give themselves notice and to bring who they are into focus before an audience. The social

Designing Positive Psychology: Taking Stock and Moving Forward, ed. Kennon M. Sheldon, Todd B. Kashdan, and Michael F. Steger (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 135–146.

²⁶⁴ Hermann Sasse, “Κόσμιος (Kosmios),” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

media domain is wrought with such people who are keenly motivated to present themselves in a way that garners people's attention in the form of "likes" or "thumbs up."

A person living life from a place of humility reflexively presents themselves in meekness and modesty because this is consistent with accurate self-appraisal and intentional focus on others. A litmus test for humility is modest presentation; to trend towards elevating the self over others is a violation of humility. Accurate self-awareness and intentional mindfulness of neighbor intuitively guide a person in their presentation to others—the natural result is modesty and meekness.

5.3.4 Jesus as the Consummate Example of Humility

Regarding modesty and meekness, Jesus Christ is the example par excellence. Aside from how His modest presentation to the Judean, Galilean, and Samaritan communities in His three years of public ministry, the Gospel narratives attest that He was acutely aware of His abilities and had intentional mindfulness of others—even His professed enemies— that is incomparable to any other recorded historical figure from antiquity to the present age. For the Church, He serves as the ultimate example for all Christians to follow in living out humility in the course of daily life.

Even a cursory review of the New Testament reveals that humility is a distinct feature of Jesus Christ (thorough examinations of Scripture reveal not so much as a hint of arrogance or pride that can be attributed to the Son of God). That the Anointed One and coming Messiah would be unrecognizable as Divine Royalty has its roots in the Old Testament. One passage, in particular, identified as a Servant Song in Isaiah, highlights the Messiah's modest and meek arrival to the physical world.

5.3.3.1 The Fourth Servant Song: Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Isaiah 52:13-53:12 is known as the last of four Servant Songs in Isaiah.²⁶⁵ The consensus of Evangelical theologians, and Bible academics of all ideological stripe, conclude that עֶבֶד, ebed, or servant, which appears twice in the final Servant Song, is singularly identified as Jesus Christ of the Gospel.²⁶⁶ Within the Isaiah 52-53 passage, one verse unambiguously indicates the Servant's meek, modest, and humble appearance (v. 2):

For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant,
And as a root out of dry ground.
He has no form or comeliness;
And when we see Him,
There is no beauty that we desire Him.

There is a direct correlation between the Servant's humility and His treatment by the masses (v. 3):

He is despised and rejected by men,
A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.
And we hid, as it were, our faces from Him;
He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.

²⁶⁵ Herbert W. Bateman, Darrell L. Bock, and Gordon H. Johnston, *Jesus the Messiah: Tracing the Promises, Expectations, and Coming of Israel's King* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 2012). The other such Servant Songs are found Isaiah 42:1-9, 49:1-13, and 50:4-11. These four Servant Songs are grouped together because of their thematic similarity: the Servant is nameless and unknown in each, the Servant is unquestioningly obedient to God, the Servant suffers physically and emotionally, and the Servant is exalted by God as a result of his work.²⁶⁵ Other unique aspects of the Servant include his work to establish justice throughout all nations (42:1-4, 6-7; 49:5-6), his perseverance to complete God's mission in spite of intense opposition (42:4; 49:4; 7-8; 50:6-9; 52:14-53:10), and his leadership as God's agent in a second exodus (42:7; 49:8-13).²⁶⁵

The Hebrew term עֶבֶד ebed, or servant, appears 40 times in Isaiah. In addition to "servant" עֶבֶד ebed can also mean "bond servant," "slave," or one who is owned by another. עֶבֶד ebed appears seventeen times from chapters 40-51 and twice in the Isaiah 52:13-53:12 passage. The Servant himself is not specifically named in any of the Servant Songs and therefore is anonymous. This is not to say that the Servant's identity cannot be known; there are specific details in the Songs that, when taken as a corpus, narrow down the identity of the Servant to a specific individual. There are at least fifteen specific details in the fourth Servant Song that prophetically describe the nature, appearance, and activity of God's Servant. The probability of one person fulfilling just eight of those fifteen is mathematically negligible, or in other words nearly impossible.

²⁶⁶ Darrell L. Bock and Mitch Glaser, eds., *The Gospel According to Isaiah 53: Encountering the Suffering Servant in Jewish and Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Academic, 2012). See also Stanley E. Porter, ed., *The Messiah in the Old and New Testaments* and Richard S. Hess and M. Daniel Carroll's *Israel's Messiah in the Bible and the Dead Sea Scrolls*.

Isaiah uses plant imagery as a metaphor to tell how the Servant was raised “as a tender plant, and as a root on dry ground.” The Servant's fragile upbringing required nurturing attention from a responsible caregiver. The metaphor depicts less than ideal conditions for the ground where he grew up was dry and unfertile. As the Servant matured, those around him largely failed to notice him as anything more than ordinary, and overlooked the incredible potential that would be revealed in due time. In this way, neither the Israelites nor the Gentile nations recognized him as the Servant who would perform mighty deeds to the astonishment of domestic and foreign leaders.

The use of “root” (שֹׁרֵשׁ) immediately raises the suspicion that this is no ordinary Servant with common ancestry. Already in Isaiah, the prophet gives a prophecy that a “root of Jesse” will come forth in great wisdom, understanding, knowledge, and power to usher in an era of unprecedented peace (11:1-10). Similar phrasing is used here, and so the imagery of “root” in Isaiah 53:2 presents a picture of the Davidic scion in the Servant.²⁶⁷ This gives messianic implications to the Servant and designates him as both royal and unique.

While the Servant has a distinct royal lineage, he is inordinately common in physical appearance with no form or comeliness and no beauty that the masses would desire to see Him. This starkly contrasts with other Davidic kings who the Bible notes were attractive and handsome. The Bible describes King David as “ruddy, with beautiful eyes, and good looks” (1 Samuel 16:12). His son Absalom’s captivating appearance was evidently the talk of the nation “Now in all of Israel no one who was praised as much as Absalom for his good looks” (2 Samuel 14:25). This is a sharp contrast to the Servant who is neither physically imposing nor handsome.

²⁶⁷ P. E. Satterthwaite et al., eds., *The Lord's Anointed: Interpretation of Old Testament Messianic Texts*, Tyndale House studies (Carlisle, U.K. : Grand Rapids, Mich: Paternoster Press ; Baker Books, 1995).

The Hebrew word תָּאֲרָא (*tō'ar*) means “shape” or “form” and is used to describe the physical body in this context.²⁶⁸ Comeliness is הִדְרָא (*hā-dār*) defined as glory, splendor, or ornament.²⁶⁹ The terms collectively emphasize the Servant’s distinction-less physical attributes; in other words, Jesus Christ—as depicted here as Servant and in the NT as an impoverished craftsman—is remarkably common.

5.3.3.2 Let This Mind Be in You Which Was Also in Christ: Philippians 2:3-8

The depiction of Jesus’ humility in the fourth Servant Song and the Gospel is exceeded only by a short passage with Paul’s letter to the church at Philippi. After a greeting and an exhortation in the opening lines (Philippians 1), he pivots to instruct humility within the church body and uses Jesus Christ as an example. Paul could have illustrated his points by describing Jesus’ simple and modest Galilean life but instead reveals a profound bit of theology found nowhere else in Scripture that wonderfully discloses the nature and process of the Divine Incarnation.

Paul begins on the topic of humility by asking a series of rhetorical questions before his encouragement for the Philippian church to strive for unity (Philippians 2:1-2). Then, he states:

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

To illustrate humility, Paul contrasts “lowliness of mind” ταπεινοφροσύνη (also translated as humility) with “selfish ambition” ἐπιθεία and “conceit” κευοδοξία to understand what humility is it is helpful to know what it is not.

²⁶⁸ Swanson, James, *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew*, תָּאֲרָא.

²⁶⁹ Brown, Driver, and Briggs, *Enhanced Brown-Driver-Briggs-Hebrew and English Lexicon*, הִדְרָא.

In the Greco-Roman world, ἐριθεία usage was affiliated with the mindset and attitude of a day laborer.²⁷⁰ From the ancient aristocrat perspective, day laborers such as prostitutes, farmhands, or manual helpers demean themselves for monetary gain by trading their bodies for a wage disconnected from any higher-level meaning or purpose.²⁷¹ In other words, it is selling your body for money. ἐριθεία denotes an attitude of doing something only for personal gain without any consideration of other factors. The word translated in English as conceit from the Greek word κευοδοξία has a much stronger and more negative connotation. It combines two words, κευο meaning “without” or “empty” and δοξία translated as “glory.” When joined together, the sense of κευοδοξία is clear—it means “empty glory.”²⁷² It is a “state of pride without basis or justification.”²⁷³ Any sense of pride derived from κευοδοξία is empty, cheap, and ultimately vain.²⁷⁴

Ubiquitous in the ancient Greco-Roman was what Paul would classify as ἐριθεία and κευοδοξία; societal norms that encouraged self-promotion and gaining recognition from others to improve one’s standing.²⁷⁵ This is not too far from a departure from the current US military culture where recognition from personal accomplishment—actual or feigned—in the form of praise from superiors, awards, medals, and high marks on evaluations helps get one promoted. Humility and lowliness of mind that comes with having ταπεινοφροσύνη is in contradistinction

²⁷⁰ Friedrich Büchsel, “Ἐριθεία (Self-Seeking),” ed. Geoffrey William Bromiley, Gerhard Friedrich, and Kittel, Gerhard, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

²⁷¹ Ibid.

²⁷² Albrecht Oepke, “Κευοδοξίαν (Conceit),” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

²⁷³ Johannes P. Louw and Eugene A Nida, “Κευοδοξία,” *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Based on Semantic Domains* (New York, NY: United Bible Societies, 1996).

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

²⁷⁵ Grundmann, “Ταπεινοφροσύνη (Humility).”

to such motivations. Humility was associated with the social underclass and the poor as well as the uneducated and virtue-less community members.²⁷⁶

The Church was to be counter-cultural from the outset, where Christ's followers were to esteem other members but not themselves. A person did not have to be concerned with promoting themselves; that is the responsibility and task of other Christians. Christians act on behalf of their fellow brothers and sisters, actively and intentionally seeking the welfare of the other.

Ταπεινοφροσύνη was done for the sake of unity within the body of believers, and unity is the natural result. When the Church body is other-focused, it fosters a sense of trust and belonging that is not found in society writ large. It is easy to imagine the causal effect when the Church does not operate out of sense ταπεινοφροσύνη—discord is the logical consequence as each person is only motivated for what they get for themselves. Paul's instruction to ἡγήομαι ὑπερέχω “to regard others higher or better” than oneself prohibits any such mentality from pervading the Church. And he knows what is at stake—some congregations he oversaw had toxic levels of division and selfishness that fostered unhealthy Christians and a troubled church environment. Addressing conceit, selfishness, and shallow ambition through promoting humility counter-acts the common human tendency to look out for themselves first and foremost. It is by “refraining from self-assertion can the unity of the congregation be established and sustained.”²⁷⁷

Counter-intuitively, a person achieves greatness within the Christian economy through humbleness and service to others. This is consistent with Jesus' teaching on greatness and His instructions to attend to someone else needs through service (Matthew 20:26). Even still, one

²⁷⁶ Timoney, *Identifying the Core Components of Christian Humility*, 57.

²⁷⁷ Grundmann, “Ταπεινοφροσύνη (Humility).”

does not serve others from a desire to achieve greatness, but rather internal character transformation happens through service that cannot be achieved in another way. Only through a paradigm shift from self to others can a person achieve character greatness and become more like Christ in the process.

Paul describes the depth and breadth of Christ's humility in Philippians 2:5-8 in explaining the Divine Incarnation. He states:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God did not consider it robbery to be equal with God but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Biblical scholars recognize this passage (with verses nine through eleven included) as a pre-Pauline creed or hymn that First Century Christians recited at regular gatherings.²⁷⁸ The cadence, grammar, syntax, and style all indicate this.²⁷⁹ Prior to the canonization of New Testament books, early believers used creeds—proclamations and truths that summarized fundamental Christian beliefs—in their worship when they met together. Churches throughout Judea and the greater Roman Empire passed these creeds one to another as early Christians traversed between cities in their periodic travels. These short, easily rememberable statements became official sayings of the church and believers used throughout the Roman Empire in First Century worship.²⁸⁰

The Philippians passage unequivocally declares Jesus' divinity. Jesus is in the form of God (ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ) and equal to Him (εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ). How Jesus the God became Jesus the

²⁷⁸ Gary R. Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin, Mo: College Press Pub. Co, 1996), Ch. IV.

²⁷⁹ Ibid.

²⁸⁰ The most notable and regularly cited creed comes from 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 which incidentally precedes Paul's letter to the church. This provides some of the earliest eye witness attestation to the resurrected Christ. Even secular scholars such as Bart Ehrman acknowledge the authenticity of many of the creeds, 1 Corinthians 15:3-7 and Philippians 2:3-8 included.

Nazarene and manifested in human form came via the process of emptying Himself of His divinity; this is the most incredible display of humility the world has ever witnessed throughout the corpus of history. The reason for such a declaration? The higher the status of an individual, the greater level of humility required to be subservient to others. For the average middle-class American to assume the role of a servant would be a humbling process. It would need even greater humility for the President to do the same. How much more is humility required for the King of Kings with infinite intellect, power, and strength to willingly surrender their rights for glory and worship to take the position as a servant?

The Divine emptying of Jesus found in Philippians 2:7 is translated from the Greek verb κενόω, which means “to empty” or “render void.” This does not mean that Jesus negated Himself in some way nor aspired to be more or less than He is. What κενόω emphasizes is that Jesus did not exploit His divine privilege while He was in human form but willingly laid it aside in humility to take the position as a servant among men.²⁸¹ The Messiah poured Himself out by demonstrating true humanness, as one made in God’s image, over and against vain conceit; this obedience to God the Father ultimately led to His demeaning, shameful, and undignified criminal’s death by crucifixion.²⁸²

5.4 Christ’s Example is the Supererogation Model

The Bible records the mockery observers cast upon Jesus as He hung suspended on the cross in a nude and battered ignoble state (Matthew 27:42). The crowd’s scorn was not misaligned with the common practice of the day for public executions. But the point to

²⁸¹ Albrecht Oepke, “Κενόω (to Make Empty),” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964).

²⁸² Gordon Fee, “Philippians 2:5-11: Hymn or Exalted Pauline Prose?,” *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 2, no. 1 (1992): 38.

underscore here is the cultural revelation that began with Christ's example that would change the trajectory of the global landscape to this day. In ancient Roman culture, dignitaries, royalty, distinguished figures, notable academics, and the like constantly sought to elevate themselves to greater and greater levels of prominence within the society; higher influence, prestige, and, most importantly, power were associated with increased importance. This mentality and the pursuit for self-elevation is the common human experience found across cultures the world over through the modern age. But in an unprecedented demonstration, Christ showed an inexpressible degree of humility that is impossible to duplicate; the vast expanse that separates His infinite divinity and the slave status He assumed with His death on the Cross makes this inconceivable for any human to achieve. No other god narrative from any culture across history has its central figure humiliated in such a way as Christ was but quite the opposite.

Since Christ's followers cannot do exactly as their Savior has done because of humanity's limits, the exhortation from the Bible is for them to suppose the same mindset as Jesus. Paul says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:5). Christians are to demonstrate humility after the example of Christ so far as their capability and limits allow. Humility is the guidance for how Christians are to live in community with other believers but also serves as the counter-cultural distinctive that is unique to this people group. Humility is a common Christian virtue that serves as a litmus test as to whether or not a person is authentically living out their faith. Since humility is not a requirement for all people, humble actions are supererogatory since not all people must act this way; for Christians, humility is part of who they are and how they live.

Acts of hospitality are a natural consequence of a life lived in humility. If humility requires an intentional focus on others, then hospitality is the expression of that intention.

Hospitality values and dignifies the other, esteeming them at or higher than how one regards themselves. A person does not earn Christian hospitality; they receive an invitation to the table—proverbial or action—by virtue of their intrinsic value as someone made Imago Dei. All are invited, and all are welcome in the act of hospitality done in the spirit of humility.

In a divine mosaic that only God Himself could create, the Cross of Christ offers a convergence of humility and hospitality that serves as the ultimate representative of both concepts. In an unparalleled display of humility, the God-Man Jesus hung with arms spread on the Cross as if the open arms themselves were symbolic of the wide invitation He offers to all who would freely come to Him. All people are invited to the table of Christ through the Cross, a humble offer from a humble king.

Christians have the opportunity to demonstrate humility and hospitality in the Navy as a form of supererogation. Humility and hospitality are not required in the Navy, but Christians can use these virtues to pique the interest of non-believers and create conditions conducive to apologetic discourse and evangelism. If the goal is to create a model for Christians to effectively share their faith in the Navy humility and hospitality are two distinct ways believers can do so that are truly above and beyond the normal call of duty.

CHAPTER SIX

6.1 Heart Before Head: Introduction

Since hospitality and humility are supererogatory above the Navy's Core Values (honor, courage, and commitment), a question arises, "How can Christians leverage these distinctives to make a case for Christianity?" Hospitality and humility stand in stark contrast to how the institution itself expects its members to act, but this is not to say that individuals in the Navy are neither humble nor hospitable; individuals are free to demonstrate such acts following their own preference, but again, the Navy places no such requirement on DoN members. An obvious point here is that neither hospitality nor humility are distinctly Christian; any person has the ability to exercise these virtues and likely do at some point through the course of living life. What we will examine here, however, is how Christians can *intentionally use* hospitality and humility with aspirations to share the Gospel because of their uniqueness in a Navy operating environment.

Supererogatory acts alone do not and cannot make a comprehensive Gospel presentation; actions above and beyond demonstrate how Christians authentically and practically live out their faith in the world, but it does not offer the essential Gospel elements—the hopeless human state that requires a Savior so graciously provided by God through His Jesus Christ that offers forgiveness of sin and eternal life. Supererogatory acts do not deliver this message; more elements are necessary to make an effective apologetic approach.

What we will examine in this chapter is a combination of the anthropological and evidential apologetic methods that extract the best of both approaches to create a unique blend entitled the Heart Before Head (HBH) method. Of the apologetic approaches, the anthropological one is not as well-recognized as the classical, reformed epistemological, presuppositional, evidential, and moral techniques but is not a nascent method new to the field. It has its roots in

Blasé Pascal’s mid-seventeenth century musings, *Pensées*, that he meant to create a formal apology but did not complete due to an untimely death.²⁸³ In *Pensées*, he writes, “We know the truth, not only by the reason, but also by the heart, and it is this last way we know first principles.”²⁸⁴ As we will discover in the following paragraphs, the heart is not the organ that pumps blood to the body but rather the inner self that tempers the volition, mind, and desires.²⁸⁵ An apologist must first address a person’s predisposition, as indicated by their “heart,” before persuading them to follow Christ through argumentation and facts—the HBH approach is based upon this premise. In this chapter, we will examine the HBH apologetic approach that focuses on supererogatory acts and other argumentation that speaks to the “heart” of a person more than satisfying intellectual curiosity—or the “head” of a person. Intellectual ascent is essential and not to be disregarded, and thus has a place in the second phase of HBH when the apologist presents facts. Both anthropological and evidential apologetics are necessary for a compelling apologetic, but a heart inclined to receive the facts must precede data for true belief to occur in the mind.

6.2 Why the Heart First

In one of the earliest Christian writings of the New Testament, the apostle Paul declares to the Corinthian church, “For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified” (1 Corinthians 2:2). Of the items that Paul could boast about—his status as a Pharisee, obedience to the law, his tribal lineage—it was the central message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ that Paul chose to declare as primacy over all else. Paul’s mindset provides the ultimate goal of all apologetics, to lead people into a relationship with Christ by recognizing Him

²⁸³ Peter Kreeft and Blaise Pascal, *Christianity for Modern Pagans Pascal’s Pensées Edited, Outlined, and Explained* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), location 78-273 .

²⁸⁴ Blaise Pascal, T. S Eliot, and W. F Trotter, *Pascal’s Pensées* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1958), 228.

²⁸⁵ James Swanson, “Καρδιά (Kardia),” in *Dictionary of Biblical Languages with Semantic Domains: Hebrew* (Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, Inc, 1997), 2840.

as God's anointed, the savior of all humanity achieved through His death, burial, and resurrection. Apologetics is for evangelizing the unbeliever. Kenneth Boa says, "[Apologetics] focuses on bringing non-Christians to the point of commitment."²⁸⁶ Apologists know that apologetics is not to best an opponent in argumentation for the sake of winning; more profoundly, it is a function of persuasion and presenting evidence to ultimately prompt an individual to give their life wholly to Christ. Intuitively, an apologetic method should focus on the central claims of Christianity—mainly the work, person, and invitation of Jesus Christ. Evidential apologetics is such an approach; historical arguments for presenting evidence for the resurrection of Christ and the initiation of the Church that many theistic academics, like John Warwick Montgomery, B.B. Warfield, and Gary Habermas, favor.

While the evidential apologetic method is effective and even preferred since it delves into data without having a preparatory step (unlike the classical approach), it is incomplete. Facts, data, and evidence coupled with solid apologetic argumentation are not incontrovertible from the skeptic's perspective; this is even if an unbeliever may accept the conclusion where the apologist's premises logically lead yet disregard the personal application that leads to faith. A skeptic can deny the most convincing evidential, historical, and logical proofs but illogically concede the points a Christian makes as to why faith is coherent.²⁸⁷ Further, an atheist may even go far as to grant the fantastic or awe-inspiring concept of a Divine being or a man resurrecting from the dead but will consider the metaphysical as ultimately unexplainable; but, in the

²⁸⁶ Kenneth Boa, *Faith Has Its Reasons: Integrative Approaches to Defending the Christian Faith*. (Kindle Edition: InterVarsity Press, 2006) location 509.

²⁸⁷ The March 26, 2008 debate between William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman at the College of Holy Cross in Worcester Massachusetts is a prime example. In event entitled "Is There Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus?" Craig makes a probabilistic argument using a minimal facts approach that is best explained by Jesus literally rising from the dead. Ehrman acknowledges each of these facts yet explains the conclusion away with phrases like "We don't know" or "We weren't there."

following statement, will allow for future science or archeological discovery to form some naturalistic exegesis that will rescue them from accepting the obvious supernatural explanation. There within this strained logic, lies the heart of the agnostic. In *Five Views on Apologetics*, this is one point that shares universal consensus among the contributors, Habermas, Craig, Frame, Feinberg, and Clark, as well as Steven Cowan (the editor), all agree—no amount of evidence nor logical argumentation can lead a person to Christ.²⁸⁸ So it seems that something beyond appealing to head knowledge is needed to have an effective apologetic method; the argument here is that an apologist must deal with the heart first.

The French mathematician and philosopher Blaise Pascal stated, “The heart has reasons, that reason does not know.”²⁸⁹ As stated earlier, the “heart” Pascal referred to was not the physical body part responsible for blood flow but the seat and center of human emotion, volition, desire, and will. The internal force compels an individual to whatever end they choose, regardless of whether that end is reasonable or rational. Using “heart” in this way is common in Christian and secular parlance. When asked what is the greatest commandment in Matthew 22:36, Jesus responds in verse 37 with, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart.” *Καρδία*, translated as “heart,” can refer to the primary organ of the body responsible for physical vitality in the Greco-Roman world, but it is metaphorically understood as the center “of the inner life of man and the source or seat of all the forces and functions of soul and spirit.”²⁹⁰ In the New Testament, it is never used in reference to the actual physical organ.²⁹¹ In the New Testament, the

²⁸⁸ Steven B. Cowan and William Lane Craig, eds., *Five Views on Apologetics*, Counterpoints (Grand Rapids, Mich: Zondervan Pub. House, 2000), 376.

²⁸⁹ Blaise Pascal, T. S. Eliot, and W. F. Trotter, *Pascal's Pensées* (Kindle Edition: E.P. Dutton, 1958), location 1620.

²⁹⁰ Johannes Behm, “*Καρδία* (Heart),” in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964), Strong's Greek #25.

²⁹¹ Swanson, “*Καρδία* (Kardia).”

heart is the “seat of understanding, the source of thought and reflection” and the center of human will.²⁹² Secular usage of “heart” in everyday vernacular finds similar meaning. When a football coach motivates his team to “Put all their heart and soul” into winning the championship game, the connotation is the same as in the New Testament.

For an apologetic method to have the full power of persuasion, the apologist must appeal to both the head through evidence, proofs, and historical facts and the heart by appealing to the emotional and volition center of the person. The heart opens the mind to truth, for the heart is the gateway to all genuine, true conviction; without it, any information retained is knowledge for the sake of knowledge without any transformational power. The late pop-apologist Ravi Zacharias remarked that the greatest chasm that exists in man is the distance between his head and his heart.²⁹³ And here is Zacharias’s point—the head can have factual knowledge, but the heart may not believe nor accept it. Such is the case of several well-known “celebrity” Christians such as Marty Sampson of Hillsong United, Joshua Harris pastor and author of *I Kissed Dating Goodbye*, and Moody Bible Institute and *Desiring God* website contributor Paul Maxwell; each had crises of the heart rather than of the mind when they publicly renounced their Christian faith.²⁹⁴

The Bible speaks of the connection between the head and the heart in several locations, but none so pronounced as the Proverbs 9:10 passage stating, “The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom.” Neither “heart” nor “head” are explicitly mentioned here, but King Solomon’s admonition is clear; a heart condition of reverence and respect directly correlates with

²⁹² Behm, “Καρδία (Heart).”

²⁹³ Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other Gods: The Absolute Claims of the Christian Message* (Nashville, TN: W Publishing Group, 2002), 148.

²⁹⁴ Social media venues such as Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter seem to be the popular choice for publicly renouncing one’s faith as Sampson, Harris, and Maxwell each posted a video or Tweet declaring they have chosen to not be a Christian any longer. Choice is a matter of volition and not a matter of science, fact, or data; the post-Christian testimonies of the former believers in interviews and follow-up posts after the fact bear this point out.

a phenomenon that occurs in the head—the emergence of personal wisdom. Wisdom cannot proceed from a person whose heart is disinclined to respect God because of the inextricable link between the two. Here, without any ambiguity, the Bible states that a prerequisite for obtaining wisdom is a heart condition inclined a certain way.

“He who has ears to hear let him hear!” (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, Mark 4:9, 25) is Jesus’ common refrain to the masses in which He calls His audience to open their heart to receive His teaching. Intuitively, we know that Jesus was not referring to physical ears, for His audience all had ears, as each human has two from birth unless otherwise deformed by unnatural causes. His imperative was a not-so-veiled call to urge the listener to open the receptivity of their inner will so that they can hear *and* receive his words. It is the same principle Salomon admonished with his words in Proverbs 9:10—the inclination of the heart, for good or for ill, guides the head.

Classical apologetics asserts a “two-step” approach to apologetics, first through establishing the existence of God (step one) and then moving to evidence about the unique claims of Jesus Christ (step two).²⁹⁵ Here, a different “two-step” approach is proposed; in step one, the apologist appeals to the individual’s heart (as the Bible and Pascal define it), beginning with acts of supererogatory humility and hospitality as they interact with nonbelievers in the course of their workday. Opening the heart with supererogation is only one part of it; there is essential messaging that accompanies the relationships that naturally form as Christians humbly and hospitably engage with their neighbors. Humility and hospitality serve as an accurate revelation of the existing features of Christianity, which are often misunderstood and misrepresented by unbelievers. A unique component of humility and hospitality, when

²⁹⁵ William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith (3rd Edition): Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton, United States: Crossway, 2008), 208-215.

performed in this way, is that a Christian can demonstrate these without using overt Bible, Gospel, or theological language that can be inappropriate for a military working environment outside the proper time and context. It is no different than most work situations, military or civilian—church and ministry work environments are an obvious exception to this principle.

Since humility and hospitality are intuitive for sanctified, Holy-Spirit-filled Christians and are what make believers “salt” and “light” (Matthew 5:13-14), as they demonstrate these virtues, it is a tangible example of Christianity lived out authentically and sincerely. Studies show that nearly a quarter of Americans identify as having no religious affiliation, which does not include those who identify as atheist, agnostic, or members of other faith groups.²⁹⁶ An implication of this growing non-religious reality in Western culture is that nonbelievers may not even know what a Christian is, let alone be able to identify how followers of Christ are different from other religious people. Through authentic Christian living through humility and hospitality, those outside the Church have tangible examples of how Christians live and interact with others.

The Christian further opens the heart—after acts of humility and hospitality—with intentional messaging to convey the common aspects of the human experience that all people intuitively know: (1) the true human condition and (2) death is a certainty. As Christians build relationships with their secular counterparts, interpersonal dialogue is a natural outworking from developing those bonds in which these topics can be discussed. In the matter of discourse, the Christian must explain the true human condition. In contradistinction to the false narrative that humans are essentially good, the Bible tells a different story. From mankind’s earliest days, the proclivity has always been towards rebellion, selfishness, and depravity. Even if a person does

²⁹⁶ Elizabeth A Collison, Sandra E Gramling, and Benjamin D Lord, “The Role of Religious Affiliation in Christian and Unaffiliated Bereaved Emerging Adults’ Use of Religious Coping,” *Death studies* 40, no. 2 (2016): 104–105.

not acknowledge the Bible as the source of truth, the shared human experience testifies to this reality—by nature, people are inherently corrupt. The degenerate human condition means that mankind cannot save nor separate themselves from it because they are intricately connected to it in their very essence. A drowning person cannot rescue themselves unless aided by an external source. The only logical outcome in this hopeless situation is certain death.

Appealing to the heart with a combination of supererogation and focused dialogue prepares the person emotionally and intellectually for discussion on matters of faith. These elements (hopeless human condition, death is a certainty, true fulfillment and salvation are only found in Christ, acts of supererogation) collectively form the anthropological apologetic argument.²⁹⁷ This type of theological reasoning is also called psychological apologetics.²⁹⁸ At its foundation, step one of the HBH approach is psychological or anthropological apologetics.

Once a person subsumes the correct understanding of humanity's hopeless condition, the apologist's second move is to present the historical evidence for the life and work of Jesus Christ. There are several tacks a Christian can make regarding an evidential apologetics case, but the Minimal Facts (MF) argument Gary Habermas developed is preferred for two reasons. One, the evidence used in MF has multiple source attestation meaning that the data comes from various historical and independent contributors.²⁹⁹ The second reason is that the evidence receives consensus from the vast majority of theologians, academics, and specialists in the field, with only nominal resistance, if any, from outlier skeptics whose opinions are not considered in

²⁹⁷ Robert Velarde, "Greatness and Wretchedness: The Usefulness of Pascal's Anthropological Argument in Apologetics," *Christian Research Journal* 27, no. 2 (2004): 7.

²⁹⁸ Dr. Shawn Nelson, "Which Apologetic Approach Is Best?" (nelson.ink, September 2019), <https://nelson.ink/which-apologetic-approach-is-correct/>.

²⁹⁹ Gary R Habermas, "The Minimal Facts Approach to the Resurrection of Jesus: The Role of Methodology as a Crucial Component in Establishing Historicity," *Southeastern Theological Review* (Summer 2012): 15–16.

any serious way.³⁰⁰ Critical scholars of all persuasions are in the consensus, which lends credibility to the evidence as it deflates the argument that there is a theological motive behind accepting it.

Universal agreement, with dubious exceptions, holds that Jesus' historical resurrection occurred. Since this is true, a question emerges, "What is the best explanation for the resurrection?" MF approach asks what can be proved about the resurrection using data that have two essential characteristics, as mentioned above. The first characteristic is that each event must be independently verifiable, typically from different perspectives and viewpoints. The second characteristic is that the data must have near-universal consensus—except fringe critics whose arguments are otherwise dismissed—by the greater academic community.

On the first characteristic, each event or data point must have several perspectives and angles that each verify the piece of information. This is the more important criterion of the two since it addresses the historicity of an event and whether or not it is reliable. The second characteristic is not as vital but still crucial to MF. This characteristic communicates common ground among those discussing the resurrection and provides a shared overall picture that helps avoid unnecessary conflict on the topic.

The Minimal Facts argument is independent of the presupposition that Scripture is inspired that many Evangelical theologians typically use to prove Jesus' resurrection. This is an inherent strength of MF. Whereas one typical path to demonstrating the resurrection's validity will start with the inspiration of Scripture and then move to examine the resurrection accounts through the Gospel accounts, MF is a bottom-up approach that assumes nothing except for data that is independently evidenced (the first characteristic) and has scholarly unanimity (the second

³⁰⁰ Ibid, 18.

characteristic). Whether or not Scripture is inspired, reliable, or unreliable is irrelevant since an apologist can still show that specific events or data are probable with MF.

This does not mean MF dismisses the New Testament writings for resurrection proof. Even agnostic scholar Bart Ehrman cites the New Testament frequently in his published works because there are NT letters he estimates as authentic that can withstand the criticism from the academic community of past and present.

MF avoids periphery resurrection issues like the number of women at the tomb, the activity and presence of angels the Sunday after the Sabbath, and which disciple entered the tomb first since these topics do not meet the two minimal facts criteria. Even if there are disputes about the aforementioned periphery issues, they have no bearing on the probability of the resurrection event since one can prove the resurrection with just the bare minimum facts.

The two-step HBH apologetic method makes for a more effective and comprehensive approach that considers the total person—their heart and the head. The HBH approach is a syncretistic blend of anthropological apologetics (tantamount to psychological apologetics) distilled from the principles from Blaise Pascal's *Pensées* and the evidential method of apologetics championed by Gary Habermas. While Pascal's and Habermas's approaches have noteworthy merits in their own right, the order in which an apologist presents these arguments is vital to their effectiveness. An immediate move to the evidence before addressing the heart is like talking to someone with headphones on before asking them to please remove them first; they might be able to hear what you have to say but only on top of what is already pumping into their ears.

6.3 Opening the Heart

In one of the more renowned passages of *Pensées*, Pascal gives an outline for step one for an apologetic approach centered on the human heart; it doubly serves as a segue for the historical evidence that follows in step two:

Men despise religion; they hate it, and fear it is true.³⁰¹ To remedy this, we must begin by showing that religion is not contrary to reason; that it is venerable, to inspire respect for it; then we must make it lovable, to make good men hope it is true; finally we must prove it is true.³⁰²

To appeal to the unbeliever’s heart, an apologist must use a combination of demonstration, explanation, and persuasion, a holistic anthropological approach that accounts for the psychological composition of humans. Notice the key phrases from the quote that builds the outline: “to inspire,” “make it lovable,” and “make good men hope it is true.” The phrase “we must prove it is true” forms the basis of moving to step two—the evidential approach using MF. Collectively, this forms the foundation of step one of HBH.

To pierce through to the unbeliever’s heart, the messenger must reflect the message they present, for it is far easier for someone to reject the content of a message when the one delivering is inconsistent by comparison. An apologist must demonstrate the Christian faith’s full excellencies for the Gospel to be compelling to a skeptical world. How a follower of Christ interacts with those outside the Church—as those who walk in wisdom and circumspectly (Ephesians 5:15; Colossians 4:5)—can be a precursor to an apologetic unto itself. If one were to watch any dialogue or debate William Lane Craig, Ravi Zacharias, John Lennox, or Gary Habermas has with a scholar from the opposing view, the graciousness of Christ will be on

³⁰¹ The term “religion” as Pascal uses it here is synonymous with the Christian faith. See *Pensées* 149 and 215 for Pascal’s further understanding of the term.

³⁰² Pascal, Eliot, and Trotter, *Pascal’s Pensées*, location 1165.

display in full manner and form. If nothing else, the apologist wins points for decorum, respect, and grace even as the antagonist—in some cases—displays a snarky, arrogant, sanctimonious attitude towards the Christian.³⁰³ Not all Christian-atheist interactions are contentious, but enough anecdotal evidence will show that if mockery, rudeness, or derision were presented in a discussion, it is almost unilaterally from the nonbeliever towards the believer. As an illustration, Richard Dawkins—a pseudo-figurehead for the new atheist movement—encourages naturalists, atheists, agnostics, and nonbelievers of all types to mock and publicly ridicule people with religious faith.³⁰⁴

The apologist accomplishes two things by faithfully and sincerely living the life of a disciple: (1) they demonstrate a genuine conviction of faith, and this has the power to inspire in its own right; (2) the Christian provides tangible proof of the power of the Christian faith through observable action. Elaine Graham emphasizes that the Church should engage in such a method of apologetics in a skeptical, post-modern landscape where even benevolent faith-based action is called into question but is nonetheless compelling in contrast to the indifference the vast majority shows towards the multitude of suffering.³⁰⁵ Sincerely living as a follower of Christ can be a powerful, persuasive apologetic method to open the unbeliever's heart to the realities of the Christian faith as they see the power of God at work in another human being. Contending for the heart of the unbeliever is what Beilby called the affectional dimension of apologetics and is a true representative of Christianity, for even those who have an elementary understanding of it

³⁰³ Numerous debates between atheists and Christians illustrate this point. Debates between Frank Turek and Christopher Hitchens, Richard Dawkins and William Lane Craig (albeit as part of larger panel), and James White and Greg Clark are examples that can be watched on Youtube.

³⁰⁴ Richard Dawkins, “Headline Speaker: Reason Rally” (Presented at the Reason Rally, Washington DC, March 24, 2012).

³⁰⁵ Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age* (London, United Kingdom: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2013), 93.

know that “Christianity requires the full action of the head, heart, and hands.”³⁰⁶ Jesus speaks in the same wholistic terms in Matthew 22:37 when He refers to the mind (head), body (hands), and soul (heart). Through authentic living following Christ’s example, Christians can first “inspire” those outside the faith, as Pascal suggests.

6.3.1 To Inspire Respect

Pascal’s prescription is to inspire men and women to respect and acknowledge Christianity before proving Christianity is true with reason and articulate argumentation.³⁰⁷ Here, supererogatory actions like humility and hospitality are critical. As mentioned in the previous chapters, acts of these sort are not required nor expected of US Navy Sailors, either explicitly stated or implied in doctrine, policy, or instruction. But through hospitality and humility, Christians become “the most effective ambassadors and apologists for the Gospel” as they live out their faith in the public sphere for all to see.³⁰⁸

Hospitality through invitation and making space for others is a pragmatic way for Christians to connect and interact with those they mean to build relationships in a non-threatening way. Christian hospitality is nuanced that must stay connected to its ecclesial and biblical underpinnings and not simply accommodate the other person for hospitality’s sake. Hospitality as a component of the HBH approach is done with sincerity and intentionality. Keeping both principles connected to hospitality retains a “Christian realist commitment to the incarnational imperative to give oneself up to the world...while remaining rooted in a particular tradition and vantage point.”³⁰⁹ In the gray zone between the Church and the world in the realm

³⁰⁶ James K. Beilby, *Thinking About Christian Apologetics: What It Is and Why We Do It* (Downers Grove, Ill: IVP Books, 2011), 168.

³⁰⁷ Pascal, Eliot, and Trotter, *Pascal’s Pensées*, location 1165.

³⁰⁸ Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 134.

³⁰⁹ *Ibid*, 134.

of hospitality outreach, non-Christians can experience God through the life of the believer; but Christians are not missing from a fresh Divine encounter either. Believers can experience God in “new and surprising ways” as they extend themselves for others—for the sake of others—as Jesus’ representatives.³¹⁰

So it is with humility as well. A core component of humility is focusing on one’s neighbor in consideration of their needs and wants ahead of personal interests.³¹¹ At its essence, humility is a “quiet virtue” performed not to gain notice or acclaim for one’s self but for the sake and benefit of others. Of humility, Everett Worthington remarks that “As a virtue it can accomplish great effects. It can heal. It can inspire. It can help people reach far beyond the limits they see constraining themselves.”³¹² Like hospitality, humility is equally moving and supernaturally charged, even though it seems to come at the expense of the one demonstrating it. Not only is the “other” whom the individual is giving deference blessed, but the literature also shows that the humble person is typically happier and more fulfilled than those consumed with self-fulfillment.³¹³

Humility and hospitality are supererogatory tools in the hands of the apologists that can inspire nonbelievers towards admiration and respect for the Christian faith. Rather than terminate as only praiseworthy actions—which is good in its own right—they have the real potential to open the heart of others to the Gospel. Affecting the heart's trajectory toward the Gospel is critical for the HBH apologetic approach; supererogatory acts by humility and hospitality offer

³¹⁰ Luke Bretherton, *Christianity and Contemporary Politics: The Conditions and Possibilities of Faithful Witness* (Chichester, West Sussex, U.K: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010), 87.

³¹¹ June Price Tangney, “Humility: Theoretical Perspectives, Empirical Findings and Directions for Future Research,” *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology* 19, no. 1 (Spring 2000): 72.

³¹² Everett L. Worthington, “Humility: The Quiet Virtue,” *Journal of Psychology and Christianity* 27, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 273.

³¹³ Tangney, “Humility,” 70-82

this possibility but must be augmented by necessary subsequent actions to round out the approach.

6.3.2 To Make it Lovable

In addition to respect, the apologist must make Christianity's truth lovable to the unbeliever. A question arises, “How can an apologist make a skeptic love the truth of the Gospel?” The answer to this question is the same for the Christian as it is for the skeptic—by recognizing who humans truly are compared to who Christ truly is. An accurate rendering of man and all of their capabilities, for good or ill, leaves no shortage of illustration. A historical survey of the human condition testifies to the dichotomous nature within man as evidenced by truly magnificent feats of accomplishment while simultaneously demonstrating an unparalleled capacity to inflict evil on others and ourselves. The fact that humans can willingly create so much pain and suffering on one’s self is a testament to the depths of man’s depravity. Greg Koukl recognizes the bifurcating nature of man as he says:

Two facts of the human condition lie at the heart of our inescapable sense of longing. One is that we are broken.... The second is, it hasn’t always been this way. There remains a remnant of former beauty the brokenness cannot efface.³¹⁴

To arrive at this realization requires honest assessment and genuine introspection; thus, many people miss this self-proven truth of knowing that humans are their own greatest enemies. Humans have consistently shown throughout history that they are saboteurs of the most subversive type yet fail to recognize the source of our most fundamental dysfunction. Gordon Lewis defines man’s problem in this way, “Here then is our problem: complete happiness

³¹⁴ Gregory Koukl, *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions* (Kindle Edition: Zondervan, 2009), location 3845 .

requires complete honesty with ourselves before others.”³¹⁵ When humans are honest about our actual condition and our nature’s capability, we can see the need for a solution—or a savior—to the hopeless circumstance.

The human is both great and wretched at once, characteristics shared by all mortals regardless of any single identifier (race, age, sex, etc.), unmatched by any other created being that exists on earth.³¹⁶ Man’s nobility is fundamentally derived from Him who created and designed humans, God. Therefore, the Creator’s thumbprint rests upon every individual, and thus the very greatness of God is imputed—at least in part—to every human by virtue of this unique relationship with the Grand Designer. When humans create great architectural structures, engage in acts of compassion towards other humans, and develop solutions to complex mathematical equations, they are but reflecting some of the greatness of their ultimate Creator. And yet, these same humans use their great intellectual ability to imagine and excogitate the most devastating methods to destroy the very image of God within themselves and others.

6.3.3 Make Men Hope it is True

The only logical conclusion for such behavior is inescapable and permanent death despite all human’s best efforts to avoid such an end. This is an important reality to emphasize as the apologist builds the bleakest, darkest, but the most accurate backdrop to present the beauty of the Gospel against. The human condition is ultimately a one-way road to death, but as many philosophers, secular and Christian alike, observe, men and women tend to avoid thinking about this inevitability.³¹⁷ And for a good reason, the irreversible nature of death coupled with its

³¹⁵ Gordon Russell Lewis, *Testing Christianity’s Truth Claims: Approaches to Christian Apologetics* (Lanham, Md: University Press of America, 1990), 238.

³¹⁶ Pascal, Eliot, and Trotter, *Pascal’s Pensées*, location 2298-2338.

³¹⁷ Phil Fernandes, “The Apologetic Methodology of Blaise Pascal” (Evangelical Theological Society Papers, 1995), Theological Research Exchange Network.

unknowingness of what happens after it can be frightening. Pascal provides a haunting image of the eventual demise of man:

Let us imagine a number of men in chains, and all condemned to death, where some are killed each day in the sight of the others, and those who remain see their own fate in that of their fellows, and wait their turn, looking at each other sorrowfully and without hope. It is an image of the condition of men.³¹⁸

While such a reality is depressing, the morbid imagery Pascal presents here is an eerily accurate caricature that has—what Bernard Ramm refers to as—existential shock value, the sort that can shake skeptical people from their state of indecision or indifference or both. That physical death is the result of all men, and this inescapable fact provides the common ground for the apologist to connect with the unbeliever.

Even in the face of inevitable demise, humans without hope (and most certainly without a relationship with Christ) are prone to a few predictable responses. Apologist and theologian David Bentley Hart says that “humans will continue to distract themselves from themselves and from their mortality”³¹⁹ in an effort to avoid the unavoidable. Of man’s attempts at distraction Peter Kreeft uses metaphor through a parable to describe this distraction:

We are locked in a car (our body), rushing furiously down a hill (time), through fog (ignorance), unable to see ahead, over rocks and pits (wretchedness). The doors are welded shut, the steering works only a little, and the brakes are nonexistent. Our only certainty is that all the cars sooner or later fall over the edge of the cliff (death). So what do we do? We erect billboards at the edge of the cliff, so that we do not have to look at the abyss. The billboards are called ‘civilization. Our ‘solution’ is the biggest part of the problem.³²⁰

³¹⁸ Pascal, Eliot, and Trotter, *Pascal’s Pensées*, location 1306.

³¹⁹ David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (Kindle Edition: Yale University Press, 2009), location 408.

³²⁰ Peter Kreeft and Blaise Pascal, *Christianity for Modern Pagans Pascal’s Pensées Edited, Outlined, and Explained* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 1993), 145.

Humans typically distract themselves from the truth in three common ways: diversion, indifference, or self-deception.³²¹ Regardless of the depth and extent of a person's distraction, the focus in this first step is to bring a person to ask, "What happens after death?" for, in the hopeless human condition, the answer to this question should be of tantamount importance.³²² In highlighting this point, the apologists can make men hope Christianity was true.

To this point, the apologist has been building a case for the Gospel message's magnificent beauty, for which, hopefully, the unbeliever will realize the absolute and desperate need. The paradoxical nature of humans combined with the ineluctable destination of death, construct a no-win scenario for all humans, and thus the need for someone with incredible power and unmatched grace that has both the ability and the willingness to step into the dilemma and rescue humanity from an avoidable dismal end—this is where the person, work, and offer of Jesus Christ makes its entrance.

Until the heart is moved, however, the full power of persuasion of the apologist must be at work, and it starts with the demonstration of belief in Christ and what that looks like through supererogatory acts. Should the apologist live their Christian beliefs authentically with integrity privately and publicly, the unseen nature of faith moves into the world of tangible reality and provides a powerful testimony to an unbeliever. From there, a move to highlight the wretched human condition—basic common knowledge—that leads to certain death. The apologist uses these obvious realities to pierce through distraction, indifference, and self-deception, the common ways men and women manage the weight of eventual death. All this opens the heart and sets the stage for a savior to appear on the scene who is eager to act on behalf of anyone who will call

³²¹ Fernandes, "The Apologetic Methodology of Blaise Pascal," 9

³²² Rick Wade, "Blaise Pascal: An Apologist for Our Times – A Defense of Christianity Ringing True Today," *Probe Ministries*, May 27, 1998, <https://probe.org/blaise-pascal-an-apologist-for-our-times/>.

upon His name (Romans 10:13). This is the anthropological step of the HBH apologetic method. From there, it is now time to move on to HBH step two—presenting evidence on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

6.4 Evidence Second

Once the apologist demonstrates the need for a Savior, it is time to introduce Jesus Christ and what he has done. The uninformed unbelievers will likely be unfamiliar with what Christians believe. To this end, Gordon Lewis provides a solid summation of Christian claims:

(1) that an all-wise, all-good, all-powerful God who is distinct from the world actively sustains and rules the world, (2) that the eternal Word (logos) of God became flesh in Jesus of Nazareth, died for our sins, and rose again from the grave, (3) that God expressed His redemptive purposes through prophetic and apostolic spokesmen in Scripture, and (4) that people who are not what they ought to be may be forgiven and regenerated by repenting of their sin and trusting Christ's redemption.³²³

Of the four claims, the second step of the HBH apologetic approach hones in on the death and resurrection of Jesus as the way of salvation, but as mentioned earlier, it is difficult to definitively deduce all Christian truth claims through a historical argument and evidence on item two (2) alone, but there are strong inferences that the apologist can make from it. Once the resurrection of Jesus Christ is established, the apologist can build a case for the other pillars of the Christian faith. This is the evidential apologetic method in full function and form.

From historical data for the resurrection, apologists using the evidential apologetic method “may infer that God really did raise Jesus from the dead, and from this one point, the whole of the Christian faith may potentially be defended.”³²⁴ That the tomb was empty on the first Easter Sunday morning enjoys near-universal agreement from recognized New Testament scholars—theistic, atheistic, and agnostic alike—even still, the primary contention is not over the

³²³ Lewis, *Testing Christianity's Truth Claims*, 20-21.

³²⁴ Boa, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, location 4329-4337.

evidence of the vacant grave but the best explanation as to why it was.³²⁵ The evidentialist will argue if Jesus was resurrected from the dead in bodily form, and all other possible reasons lack explanatory power or otherwise fail, then a strong and convincing probabilistic case can be made for God's existence. Kenneth Boa continues with inductive reasoning to establish the other Christian claims:

If God raised Jesus from the dead, then the true God is the God of Jesus Christ. He is the God of the Jewish people who inspired the Old Testament, who sent Jesus his Son into the world for our salvation, and who commissioned the apostles and their associates to establish the Christian church and to produce the New Testament.³²⁶

Evidentialists concede that what Boa builds here is a probabilistic case constructed by inductive reasoning. Through the smallest escape hatch the probabilistic argument leaves open, the skeptic eludes from accepting the conclusion where the evidence leads. One classic debate on the resurrection between William Lane Craig and John Dominic Crossan provides the consummate illustration. During the debate, Craig asks what evidence it would take for him (Crossan) to believe that God raised Jesus from the dead, to which he responds, "it's a theological presupposition of mine that God does not operate that way."³²⁷ To Crossan and others of his cloth, miracles are impossible; therefore, only natural explanations are acceptable.

Writing on behalf of the evidentialist community, Habermas reasons to start with Jesus' teaching, which includes how Jesus taught and referred to Himself and His unique role as a spokesman for God.³²⁸ Instead, the Head Before Heart apologetic approach starts with

³²⁵ William Lane Craig, "Is There Historical Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus?" (Debate, William Lane Craig and Bart Ehrman, College of the Holy Cross, March 28, 2006). <https://www.physics.smu.edu/pseudo/ScienceReligion/Ehrman-v-Craig.html>.

³²⁶ Boa, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, location 4337.

³²⁷ Norman L. Geisler and Frank Turek, *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* (Wheaton, Ill: Crossway Books, 2004), 316.

³²⁸ Cowan and Craig, *Five Views on Apologetics*, 100-105.

anthropological apologetics before moving to Jesus' claim that persons could only enter the Kingdom of God if they respond properly to Him and His message.³²⁹ HBH sets up the delivery of apologetic discourse through the anthropological approach from step one.

6.4.1 Minimal Facts

The flow of the argument naturally progresses to how Jesus secured salvation for those that believe in Him; at this point, positive apologetics about the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ is most appropriate. Of contemporary scholars who published, lectured, and taught on this, Gary Habermas provides a simple (but not basic in the elementary sense), an easily memorable method called the Minimal Facts approach to the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Written and discussed extensively in his books and articles, MF consists of two components, as mentioned earlier. First, that good evidence exists for the facts of an argument.³³⁰ Second, the facts "are generally admitted by critical scholars who research this particular area."³³¹ The first has preeminence in the minimal facts approach of the two components. There are lists of varying lengths of what constitutes data in the MF argument, specifically on the death and resurrection of Jesus, but the least of them are:

1. Jesus died by crucifixion.
2. After His death, Jesus' followers had experiences they believed were appearances of the resurrected Jesus.
3. Saul of Tarsus also experienced what he believed was the resurrected Jesus.³³²

In an expanded MF list that enjoys scholarly agreement (but not to the highest degree the aforementioned does):

4. The disciples were willing to die for their belief in Jesus' resurrection

³²⁹ Cowan and Craig, 106.

³³⁰ Boa, *Faith Has Its Reasons*, location 4269.

³³¹ Cowan and Craig, *Five Views on Apologetics*, 100.

³³² Habermas, 21.

5. Early First Century preaching on Jesus' resurrection in Jerusalem
6. James, the half-brother of Jesus, conversion to Christianity
7. The formation of the Christian church
8. Church worship moving from Saturday (as is the tradition in the Jewish faith) to Sunday.
9. The explosive growth of the Christian movement and church³³³

These facts have ubiquitous agreement among scholars, with only the most obdurate outliers as dissenters. Most critics do not attempt to attack Christianity on any of the nine merits, but some propose dubious alternative explanations like mass hallucinations, planned conspiracy, swoon theory, or disciple confusion.

The strength of MF for the resurrection of Jesus is that the data provide positive reasons for believing in the message of Christ while simultaneously disproving the litany of naturalistic hypotheses, including those previously mentioned.³³⁴ So if Jesus did rise from death like He said He would, then the implications of such a monumental feat would reverberate throughout history for all mankind. It demonstrates the reality of the supernatural. It directly infers the existence of God. It proves the limitless power of God. It validates all the teachings, claims, and promises Jesus made while on earth, and last, but certainly not least, it means that salvation is available for everyone who believes (John 3:16).

This is the apex of the HBH apologetic method—psychological and intellectual ascent that appeals to the head and the heart. Intentional supererogation coupled with an earnest evaluation of the self, the focus to defer distraction, a sincere examination of the evidence, and an open honesty to go where it leads. The result—a stunning vista whereby an unbeliever recognizes who they are in light of who God is and comes to experience the incredible salvation God extends through His son Jesus Christ.

³³³ Gary R. Habermas, *The Risen Jesus & Future Hope* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2003), 26-30.

³³⁴ Cowan and Craig, *Five Views on Apologetics*, 115.

6.5 Conclusion

The HBH approach is an apologetic method for the modern age, a time when skepticism abounds; mistrust in information, open question of authority, doubt in leadership at all levels, and incredulity in our foundational institutions like government, schools, and churches is the pervasive mood sweeping across Western culture like a brushfire fueled by hot and harsh wind.

Seventeen-century Europe was no less pessimistic, the backdrop by which Blaise Pascal presented his thoughts on presenting Christianity to unbelievers. Pascal recognized a person could find truth apart from reason, logic, and rationale alone but also, and perhaps preferably, with the heart—the seat and center of human emotion, volition, and will.³³⁵ By heart, Pascal meant what humans intuitively know instead of what humans can understand through deductive reasoning.³³⁶ Properly functioning humans are the most unique of all God’s creatures; they exercise the full complement of emotion, volition, and contemplation yet still act according to reasons of the heart, even if logic directs them to a different end.

This is why an apologetic approach must start with the heart rather than facts or evidence. Gary Habermas asserts that seventy to eighty percent of all doubters, skeptics, atheists, and agnostics deny Christianity for emotional reasons and not for lack of evidence.³³⁷ This accounts for the confusing position of Bart Ehrman—the understudy of Bruce Metzger—who New Testament than most Christians can hope to know in a lifetime, who readily affirms Habermas’ minimal facts on the resurrection yet vehemently and militantly deny the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

³³⁵ Fernandes, “The Apologetic Methodology of Blaise Pascal,” 3.

³³⁶ Kreeft and Pascal, *Christianity for Modern Pagans Pascal’s Pensées Edited, Outlined, and Explained*, 228.

³³⁷ Habermas, “Apologetic Methods.”

It is not for lack of evidence or proof that people reject Christianity but rather the suppression of what they know.

The Head Before Heart apologetic seeks to mitigate this familiar reality that evangelists, apologists, theologians, pastors, and laypersons experience as they share their faith with neighbors, coworkers, family members, and strangers they meet. Many times, non-Christians cannot articulate why they do not believe and will not accept the Gospel truth; even worse, they choose no desire to explore the vast amount of available data. Thus, a heart inclined to the Gospel is necessary for someone to intellectually believe in information. With this in mind, HBH is different and distinct from the two-step classical apologetics method. It is essential to appeal to the heart first through the supererogatory actions of hospitality and humility, demonstrating authentic Christ-like with the benefit of making Christianity desirable to the unbeliever. The apologist also opens the heart by accurately describing the contradictory nature of the awesome and wicked human condition, an apparent reality to all people who need reminding due to denial, distraction, or indifference. Although death is the physical destination of all because of our condition, there is a solution to this certain but unfortunate dilemma that will make men wish that Christianity were true—salvation through a relationship with Jesus Christ. Once the door of the heart is opened, the evidence of Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are free to walk through the open heart, and with all the power of persuasion and proof, a new life is welcomed into the kingdom.

CHAPTER SEVEN

7.1 The Transformed Life: Tangible Resurrection Evidence

“In Your name I come alive, to declare Your victory; the resurrected King is resurrecting me.”
Resurrecting by Elevation Worship

Thousands of Christ-followers together sang the resurrection’s truth at a worship concert at the Capital One Arena in Washington DC in the fall of 2019; the author was in attendance that particular evening, participating with fellow believers in the risen Savior’s worship. A skeptic listening and observing the grand chorus of Christians might inquire, “How do any of these people know that the resurrection actually happened? Were any of them there? Did they see the risen Jesus themselves? Do they have any evidence to support them singing about the ‘resurrected King?’

Even if someone were to answer the skeptic, the exchange would likely leave the challenger unsatisfied. The average unstudied and uninformed Christian will not likely have the intellectual tools to make a formal apologetic case for the resurrection off the cuff to a skeptic asking questions. Yet conviction and belief in the resurrection are the fundamental, if not the central components of the Christian faith as has been since the church’s beginning.³³⁸ To be a Christian—as the common understanding of what it means to be a Christian goes—is analogous to believing in the resurrection.³³⁹ The resurrection’s centrality is reflected in Paul’s words to the Corinthian church, “For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile....If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all me the most

³³⁸ Gary R. Habermas, *The Risen Jesus & Future Hope* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2003), 24-25.

³³⁹ Mike Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus: A New Historiographical Approach* (Downers Grove, Ill. : Nottingham, England: IVP Academic ; Apollos, 2010), 261.

pitiable” (1 Corinthians 15:17,19, NKJV). In other words, if there is no resurrection, there is no Christian faith.

If there is such an emphatic emphasis on the resurrection, how do Christians come to know that it is true? Is it a facts and data pursuit prior to becoming a Christian, and then once a person obtains a satisfactory amount of information, they commit to intellectual assent? To this point, we have been examining supererogation and how to leverage it to make a comprehensive apologetic approach that addresses the head and the heart; even still a person can deny belief for either volition or intellectual reasons (or both) however irrational that may be. Habermas asserts some people do indeed have factual doubts that require reconciliation, but he freely admits that even those armed with the facts can remain unconvinced.³⁴⁰ If this were the case, facts, data, and evidence would be why people become Christians, but this is not so historically. Consider the four Gospel narratives as recorded in the New Testament as they provide the consummate illustration of this point. A rough estimate of the people who witnessed, heard of, were healed by, taught by, cared for by, or received a miracle from Jesus (totaling in the tens of thousands if one were to count the Galilean miracles alone) exponentially exceeded those who actually followed after him as faithful believers. Jesus’ primary antagonists, the Pharisees, attest to his miraculous abilities to raise the dead (as in Lazarus’ case; see John 11) yet would not cross the threshold of belief, but not for lack of factual knowledge or eye witness testimony. In the Pharisee’s case, the best possible data was available to them, as well as the ability to thoroughly investigate the facts themselves (which it appears they did according to John 12:9-11). It seems

³⁴⁰ Gary R. Habermas, *The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Draw Closer to God* (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman, 1999), Chapter 3, "The Other Two Species of Doubt."

that the quality and amount of evidence is not ultimately the determining factor to alter a person's heart predisposition, especially if there is purposeful volitional resistance.³⁴¹

Historical evidence and data for Jesus' resurrection fail for the same reason. The consensus of New Testament scholars from every different ideological stripe agrees to nine fundamental resurrection facts Habermas identifies as minimal facts mentioned in the previous chapter.³⁴² Nevertheless, the Ehrman's, Crossley's, and Lüdemann's continue to carry the title "New Testament scholar" as recognized experts in the field on historical and biblical data on Jesus, but they are not Christian.³⁴³ In Ehrman's case, he was once an Evangelical who turned his back on the faith, walking away from Christianity only to gain notoriety as an academic for his NT knowledge (an academic who, by the way, holds to many of the minimal facts).³⁴⁴ How does one account for such a disparity between factual knowledge and conviction? A young child can confess Jesus, believe that he died for her sins, and that he rose from the grave but not have the factual data to back up such convictions. If an individual's belief were measurable on a scale of one to one hundred, it is not likely that the young child in the previous illustration would have any less belief in Jesus than an adult with a Doctor of Philosophy degree in theology has. Jesus Himself sets child-like faith as the example for others to follow (Mark 10:15).

³⁴¹ Ibid, Chapter 3, "The Other Two Species of Doubt."

³⁴² Gary Habermas, *Philosophy of History, Miracles, and the Resurrection of Jesus*, Third Edition. (Academx Publishing Services Inc, 2013), 49-50.

³⁴³ Bart Ehrman (Distinguished Professor of Religious Studies at University of North Carolina), John G. Crossley (Senior Lecturer in New Testament Studies at the University of Sheffield), and Gerd Lüdemann (Professor Emeritus of History and Literature of Early Christianity at Georg-August University) are either atheist or agnostic, (or some combination of the two) according to public declarations they made at various times during their careers. Bart Crossley's worldview came up during a recorded podcast discussion with Gary Habermas on New Testament reliability dated August 8, 2015. Lüdemann said as much during a debate with William Craig at California Polytechnic Institute San Luis Obispo on January 22, 2002. William Craig asked Bart Ehrman to receive Christ at a debate on the resurrection at the College of the Holy Cross held on March 28, 2006. Ehrman declined the invitation.

³⁴⁴ Laurence M. Vance, "The Triumph of Christianity," *The New American* (Appleton, United States: The New American, June 18, 2018).

A logical question surfaces, “What does it take to convince someone that Jesus awoke to life after three days in the grave?” Facts and evidence are simply not enough; the purposeful doubter comes up with one more question, another point of contention, and an additional area of uncertainty. Therefore, the best possible resurrection evidence is an intimate and personal encounter with the living Jesus Christ; in this situation, denying that Jesus rose from the grave is an impossibility.³⁴⁵ An individual encounter with the resurrected Christ is an incontrovertible experience, but short of that, a person who has not met Jesus can know the resurrection’s reality through the transformed lives of those who have—Christians. Either a personal experience with Jesus or the outworking of Christian charity, love, and Gospel proclamation from the life of a changed believer provides more than enough tangible evidence to prove the resurrection’s truth.

7.2 Transformed Lives

When Jesus came back to life after three days dead, his disciples underwent the most dramatic of transformations when their beloved rabbi’s physical appearance disabused them of the belief that his death was both final and permanent. The resurrection’s reality dramatically altered their understanding of death; before this event, Jews—minus the Sadducees—generally presumed a bodily resurrection.³⁴⁶ Jesus’ emergence from the tomb actualized an idea they only principally believed previously.³⁴⁷ The resurrection of a single person before the world’s end would have been utterly foreign to the disciples; they would have more likely understood the resurrection as “some sort of translation of Jesus to heaven.”³⁴⁸ Jesus’ appearances to the

³⁴⁵ Refusing to accept the facts and submit to them are still possibilities. Habermas discusses this in Chapter 3 of his book *The Thomas Factor: Using Your Doubts to Draw Closer to God*.

³⁴⁶ Licona, *The Resurrection of Jesus*, 471.

³⁴⁷ J. P. Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity* (Grand Rapids, United States: Baker Academic, 1987), 182.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid*, 182.

disciples, and their subsequent testimony, provide some of the most substantial evidence for the resurrection.³⁴⁹ The empty tomb was the fulfillment of Jewish resurrection belief, but in a new way, and thus reshaped the disciple's worldview in the most fundamental way. The transformation of the disciples constitutes one of the accepted minimal facts.³⁵⁰

7.2.1 The Disciple's Transformation

The disciple's precipitous metamorphosis is noteworthy given how quickly the change occurred in a period of no more than a few days. Consider their disposition seventy-two to ninety-six hours prior to the resurrection recorded in the Gospels.³⁵¹ They carried themselves in the manner of diffident and timorous followers; inquisitive to understand the Kingdom of God and faithful to their teacher, yes, but lacking self-assurance necessary to lead the Christian movement from its infancy toward the end that Jesus had in mind (Matthew 28:19). With Jesus' death, they thought the movement had reached its logical and permanent conclusion while they sought to find other activities to occupy their time, resigning themselves to return to their previous vocations of fishing and otherwise (John 21:1-3).

The resurrection of Jesus Christ catalyzed a stunning transformation (see Table 1).

| <u>Before Resurrection</u> | <u>Verse</u> | <u>After Resurrection</u> | <u>Verse</u> |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------|---|---------------------|
| Feared Roman and Jewish authorities | Mark 14:51 | Fearless before Roman and Jewish leadership | Acts 5:22-32 |
| Denied affiliation with Jesus | Mark 14:66-72 | Strident public allegiance to Christ | Acts 4:23-31 |
| Obtuse to the resurrection | Matthew 16:22 | Boldly proclaimed the resurrection | Acts 2:29-36 |
| Unsure of their calling | John 21:1-3 | Resolute in their mission | Acts 4:20 |

³⁴⁹ Ibid, 182.

³⁵⁰ Gary Habermas, "The Minimal Facts Approach to the Resurrection of Jesus: The Role of Methodology as a Crucial Component in Establishing Historicity," *Southeastern Theological Review* 3:1 (Summer 2012): 15–26.

³⁵¹ Michael Grant and Barnes & Noble, *Saint Peter: A Biography* (New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1998), 94-95.

| | | | |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Timid Disposition | Mark 14:50 | Confident and sure | Acts 4:31 |
|-------------------|---------------|--------------------|--------------|

Table 1 demonstrating the disciple's dramatic change

In his dialogue with the disciples, Jesus repeatedly discussed his impending demise at Jewish leadership's hands but with the assurance that he would arise from death after three days (Matthew 16:21). Repetitive emphasis on the events that were yet to transpire informed the disciples with factual particulars, but Jesus' words were not transformative to the disciples, yet.³⁵² It was only after their own personal encounter did this come to fruition. In other words, telling the disciples about the resurrection did little to alter their convictions.³⁵³ Seeing, hearing, and touching their fallen teacher alive was the persuasive event for the disciples; information and data alone did not convince them of the resurrection's truth.³⁵⁴

7.2.2 Saul to Paul

The account of Paul's conversion from ardent early church adversary to becoming a Christian himself is no less spectacular. Paul went beyond the demeanor of the average skeptic or doubter; he was an active persecutor of Christians seeking to arrest, jail, and, if the situation called for it, murder them for teaching a way of salvation apart from the law.³⁵⁵ Like the transformation of the disciples, Paul's conversion is considered one of the primary minimal facts.³⁵⁶ The Acts narrative of the first Church martyr, Stephen, illustrates Paul's vitriolic attitude towards Christians prior to his conversion. In response to Stephen's Gospel presentation, an

³⁵² Ibid, 94-96.

³⁵³ Gary R. Habermas, *The Risen Jesus & Future Hope* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield Pub, 2003), 9.

³⁵⁴ Ibid.

³⁵⁵ Arland J. Hultgren, "Paul's Pre-Christian Persecutions of the Church: Their Purpose, Locale, and Nature," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 95, no. 1 (1976): 97.

³⁵⁶ Habermas, *The Risen Jesus & Future Hope*, 27-28.

already agitated Jewish crowd took up stones and bludgeoned him to death, of which Paul gave full approval (Acts 8:1).

Having lived in Israel from Christianity's nascent beginnings, Paul had access to the best and freshest data to investigate the resurrection to its furthest logical end. Eyewitnesses to the resurrected Christ were readily available to provide a full report upon inquiry; NT text indicates that these witnesses, the apostles among them, were zealous to tell whoever would listen that Jesus rose from the dead (Acts 2-5, 1 Corinthians 15:1-8). The empty tomb, no doubt a subject of much discussion around Jerusalem and within the Pharisaic circle (of which Paul was a member), was a known site of interest, a location that Paul could have examined with all the rigor necessary to satisfy any reservations he might have had.

Curiously, the Pauline Epistles do not indicate that he ever went to the tomb to investigate its vacancy for himself, yet Paul clearly believed Jesus's resurrection.³⁵⁷ The empty tomb does not seem to be a central focus for Paul as the word "tomb" is not found anywhere in Paul's letters, but his theology is thoroughly steeped in the resurrection as read in key passages from Romans, 1 Corinthians, and Philippians.³⁵⁸ The 1 Corinthians 15:12-13 reads, "Now if Christ is preached that he been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen" (NKJV). On six other occasions Paul uses *anastasis* (ἀνάστασις), translated to mean "resurrection," taking on the sense of body physically rising up again.³⁵⁹

³⁵⁷ Moreland, *Scaling the Secular City*, 10.

³⁵⁸ Jindřich Manak, "The Apostle Paul and the Empty Tomb," *Novum Testamentum* 2 (January 1, 1958): 277.

³⁵⁹ Gerhard Kittel and Geoffrey William Bromiley, s.v. ἀνάστασις, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*. 2 2 (Grand Rapids (Mich.): WM. B. Eerdmans, 1964).

The context of Paul's anastasis (ἀνάστασις) use indicates that the resurrection event was without ambiguity in his mind; in fact, he made an impassioned defense of it in the 1 Corinthians 15:12-58 passage. Paul's conversion narrative, as recorded in Acts, explicitly describes a confrontation with Jesus, initiated by a fully alive Jesus in resurrected form (Acts 9:7). This event served as the catalyst for his transformation, instilling in him the conviction of the Gospel that he would spend the rest of his life promulgating through preaching, evangelism, sharing his testimony, and writing. From his conversion, Paul would dedicate his energy to understanding what it means to be a Christian and developing theology towards that end—work that has served as the theological foundation for Christians throughout the ages. Church doctrine in ecclesiology (the Pauline Epistles, broadly), soteriology (Romans 1:16, 10:9; 1 Corinthians 1:23; Ephesian 2:8-9) eschatology (1 Corinthians 15: 50-52; 1 Thessalonians 4-5), pneumatology (Romans 8:26; 1 Corinthians 2:13, 11), angelology (Romans 1:21; 2 Corinthians 2:14, 11:14), bibliology (2 Timothy 3:16-17) and Christology (Colossians) all have their roots in Paul's work and writings.

The ardor Paul demonstrated towards researching, exploring, and communicating the nuances of the Christian faith to any audience, willing or otherwise (Philippians 1:12-26), underscores the stunning nature of his conversion and transformation, a vociferous enemy turned to the staunchest of advocates. Paul's Christological epiphany was so profound that the church in Judea remarked, 'The one who used to persecute us is now preaching the very faith he tried to destroy!' (Galatians 1:23). A most relevant question arises, "What caused Paul to dramatically change his fundamental beliefs about Jesus Christ?"

7.3 The Transformed Life is Evidence of the Resurrection

The turning point for Paul was his personal encounter with Jesus Christ; this experience changed his entire life trajectory, thus birthing the starting point for his Christian journey and

life-long pursuit of evangelism. Paul's Damascus Road experience converted him to a Christian, not his knowledge, data, and facts *about* Jesus Christ. Individual conversions are initiated by such encounters, events in which God confronts us in one of the many methods available at his disposal.³⁶⁰ Not all Christians experience a personal encounter with Jesus as Paul did, nor can anyone experience Christ exactly as he did, but rather each encounter is uniquely individual, specific to each person.

The impact of Paul's conversion went well beyond his transformation. His testimony was evidently compelling enough to an unknown number of individuals throughout the Roman Empire that they became followers of Christ and worshipped together with other believers in newly-formed local churches. The NT does not indicate how each specific new convert came to faith—although Acts does give an account of some conversions—nor is it known how many other Christians had a Damascus Road-type experience like Paul. However, each new disciple certainly had their own unique and personal encounter with risen Jesus in some form or fashion.

In meeting the Lord, a disciple encounters the divine power that raised him from the dead, and this power is communicated to her or him together with the mission to serve others.³⁶¹ The same testimony is true for every Christian throughout time. Christians testify that the revelation of Jesus Christ came to them by examining the Scriptures or the Holy Spirit's inward pull. Others claim that a Christian privately shared the Gospel with them one-on-one, and an inner transformation began. Some Christians testify that Jesus came to them in an unmistakable vision, seeing his face and having their lives changed. Some Christians encountered Christ

³⁶⁰ Austin Holmes, "Encountering Christ: Karl Barth and Mysticism," *Lumen et Vita* 8, no. 2 (June 1, 2018), accessed April 18, 2021, <https://ejournals.bc.edu/index.php/lumenetvita/article/view/10508>, 31.

³⁶¹ Brian Johnstone, "Transformation Ethics: The Moral Implications of the Resurrection," in *Resurrection: An Interdisciplinary Symposium on the Resurrection of Jesus*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Daniel Kendall, and Gerald O'Collins (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 346.

through Holy Spirit-empowered preaching that illuminated the reality of Jesus' death and resurrection. What is noticeably absent from the testimony of many Christians is that facts or evidence convinced them to believe, a personal encounter that proved to be the deciding factor. Evidence is helpful in further developing faith and deepening conviction in Christianity, but the initial move from non-belief to belief is a personal encounter with the resurrected Christ.

7.3.1 Until Belief Comes: Experiencing the Resurrection in the Lives of Christians

In the absence of personal faith, those that have not had a personal encounter with Jesus can experience him through the lives of Christian who have. In the discussion of Paul's conversion thus far, one observes the deep contrast between the zealous persecutor of the early church Paul was to the impassioned apostolic leader that he became. Those that knew Paul, or knew of him by reputation only, were obviously inwardly moved by his transformation. In Paul's early stages of preaching ministry, those that heard him scarcely believed his actions were sincere, deducing his evangelism efforts were an elaborate ploy to lure believers from hiding (actual or metaphorical) so that he might arrest them (Acts 9:26). As his audiences came to understand that his Christian confession and ministry were authentic, the people were no longer incredulous but were genuinely amazed (Acts 9:21, Galatians 1:23). While not everyone who heard Paul's Christian apologetics was persuaded to believe themselves, at a minimum, it demonstrated the deep conviction at which he held his personal belief. In other words, Paul knew the resurrection's reality even if his listeners did not, and by virtue of his first-century missionary work, people across the Roman Empire could experience the resurrection, at least in part, by proxy through Paul.

Time and space separate the modern man from having direct and personal interaction with either Paul or the Apostles, from hearing or be taught by them to learn of their first-hand

accounts with the living Christ. People living now are physically disconnected from the actual resurrection event; the passing of now thousands of years remove the possibility for inquisitive individuals to inspect the empty tomb and interview eyewitnesses for themselves personally. People can have their own personal encounter or until that happens, experience the resurrected Christ *through* the transformation of Christians who have experienced Jesus Christ alive. This can look like evangelism and church edification after Paul and the Apostles' example, but current and historical Christian work broadens the scope that shows a more comprehensive picture, not the least of which includes charitable works that benefit all in society.

On this point, apologist and theologian David Bentley Hart remarks Christianity produced, thus far, twenty centuries of unprecedented moral triumphs through its care of “widows and orphans, its almshouses, hospitals, foundling homes, schools, shelters, relief organizations, soup kitchens, medical missions, charitable aid societies,” a feat unmatched by any other group individually or combined, measured by any reasonable standard.³⁶² The corpus of Christian charitable work is incalculable, but if one were to examine only how Christians have cared for the infirmed, dying, and diseased, the point would be well illustrated. Christian care for the sick is the exemplar par excellence, so much so that the modern hospital's charitable mission models itself after the ancient Christian *hospitalitas* template, and “specifically Matthew's six works of mercy depicted in the New Testament.”³⁶³

Christian healings hostels for persons with fatal and misunderstood conditions such as leprosy and AIDS are equally noteworthy. In the eleventh and twelfth century, the Christian

³⁶² David Bentley Hart, *Atheist Delusions: The Christian Revolution and Its Fashionable Enemies* (Kindle Edition: Yale University Press, 2009), 9.

³⁶³ Guenter B. Risse, *Mending Bodies, Saving Souls: A History of Hospitals* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 5.

church was the primary care provider for lepers,³⁶⁴ an outcast group despised as much for their disease as the mysterious way it was passed.³⁶⁵ Lepers were so despised during the medieval era (although leprosy is largely eradicated, there is still a negative stigma attached)³⁶⁶ that townships did not allow them in their midst, reserving their lot to the fringes of society. Christian communities were the only groups who allowed lepers in near proximity with “monks, nuns, and even laity to minister to those persons’ [lepers] needs.”³⁶⁷

The medieval lepers were much like the Autoimmune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) carriers of the 1990s when society was unsure how infected people transmitted the virus. From AIDS beginnings, Christian churches in developing countries, ministering to the poorest of the poor, heavily invested in AIDS control programs and houses of care to this outcast group.³⁶⁸ Care for AIDS patients has broadened in the twenty-first century to include preventive work and education in the world’s most heavily affected regions, most notably the sub-Saharan African countries.³⁶⁹ The effort Christians have dedicated to care for people with AIDS is globally recognized and applauded all the same; this care continues to expand and endeavor to the current day.³⁷⁰

³⁶⁴ Jacques Le Goff, *Medieval Civilization, 400-1500* (Oxford, UK ; New York, NY, USA: B. Blackwell, 1988), 316.

³⁶⁵ Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 29-31.

³⁶⁶ Flora Mae Gootee, “Training and Equipping Indian Ministers and Recruits to Approach Leper Communities and to Reach Lepers for Christ” (D.Min., Regent University, 2008), v, <http://search.proquest.com/docview/304815676/abstract/55C06A23FF194700PQ/1>,

³⁶⁷ Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 30.

³⁶⁸ Steffen Flessa, “Why Do Christians Care?: Values and Objectives of Church-Related Health Services in Developing Countries,” *Zeitschrift für Gesundheitswissenschaften* 13, no. 5 (October 2005): 243.

³⁶⁹ *Ibid*, 243.

³⁷⁰ Melvin Orr, “Blue Ridge Departs Pattaya, Thailand,” *Commander, U.S. Pacific Fleet News* (Honolulu, Hawaii, May 30, 2012). The author was part of a contingent of approximately fifteen US Navy sailors who participated in a community outreach initiative on behalf of the US government to Camillian Social Center in Rayong, Thailand in May 2012. Camillian Social Center houses local orphans born with AIDS and serves as a care

What is the genesis behind Christian's historical and current charitable work? Christians care, and they establish health services because they are called to do so, but the calling is preceded by a personal transformation that begins with a commitment of faith to Jesus Christ. Flessa remarks, "Health economist and public health planners will misinterpret church-related health activities unless they understand acts of mercy, including health care, are deeply rooted in the Christian faith."³⁷¹ In *Hospitality as Holiness*, a book on the unique nature of Christian hospitality, Bretherton makes the connection between the Christian belief in the resurrection and the subsequent natural outworking of charitable works. He states, "Through the resurrection, humankind is both redeemed from (sin and death) and can now enter a new order of being. Christ's resurrection constitutes both humanity's redemption and its transformation,"³⁷² this results in a fundamental change in a person's ethics that compels them to care for the vulnerable, sick, widow, outcast, and orphan.³⁷³

Johnstone remarks, "People will act and behave in accordance with what they believe is true but will not do the same for what they know to be a lie."³⁷⁴ Since Christianity's beginning, men and women shaped by Jesus' resurrection have spread throughout the world to share their story and care for people after their Savior's example; in many instances, these benevolent acts demonstrated the Gospel's power and thus moved people to have their own encounters with Christ. This notion draws from the New Testament apparition accounts, which have a

facility for expectant adults in the final stages of the crippling condition. The home is led by a Catholic priest and supported by the greater Christian community.

³⁷¹ Flessa, "Why Do Christians Care?," 244.

³⁷² Luke Bretherton, *Hospitality as Holiness: Christian Witness amid Moral Diversity* (Aldershot, England ; Burlington, VT: Ashgate Pub, 2006), 55.

³⁷³ Ibid, 55.

³⁷⁴ Johnstone, "Transformation Ethics: The Moral Implications of the Resurrection," 346.

characteristic structure of recognition (of the risen Jesus by the disciples), “followed by a sending on mission, sustained by personal love for the Risen One.”³⁷⁵ Love for the risen Jesus generates a responsibility and absolute commitment to others, the hurting, destitute, sick, and the underprivileged whom one encounters in the world beyond the church walls. Therefore, Christian morality can never yield to forgetfulness and resignation to the fate of the hurting, generates a love beyond the range of death, which moves the Christian to try to change the conditions that caused the harm in the first place so that others may not be similarly hurt.³⁷⁶

This accurately describes Father Damien’s work, the Belgian priest who ministered lepers in a quarantined colony in Mokolai, Hawaii in the late nineteenth century. His deep affection for the lepers so moved the colony residents that many became Christians themselves (along with Hawaiians from adjacent communities), of which the progeny still exist and worship in Hawaii today.³⁷⁷ Scottish poet and novelist Robert Louis Stevenson went to Hawaii to learn more about the Catholic minister, and missionary wrote an open letter by what he discovered; the letter became better known by its short title, *Father Damien*, a short book that attests to the transformative impact the Belgian missionary had on the leper colony.

7.4 Conclusion

It is unknown, but there are no known reports that Father Damien’s colony had access to academic literature or scholarly dialogue that detailed probabilistic arguments for the resurrection. What the lepers had was this—a missionary transformed by the reality of the resurrection who came and cared for them, when all others abandoned them, until his death by

³⁷⁵ Ibid, 346.

³⁷⁶ Ibid, 346.

³⁷⁷ Richard D. Stewart, “Leper Priest of Molokai, the Father Damien Story” (Ph.D., The University of Wisconsin - Milwaukee, 1997), 949-955 .

leprosy. The compelling evidence was Father Damien's own life, a man who intimately knew and communed with the living Christ until his final day.³⁷⁸ Of the 1,570 lepers who resided at the colony during its eleven-year existence many became Christians,³⁷⁹ Father Damien himself converting and baptizing more Hawaiians than other missionaries to that point in the island's history.³⁸⁰ Such is the case for many who come to Christ. This demonstration of love by transformed Christians itself is a testament to the reality of the resurrection. In one testimonial, Gideon Byamugisha, an AIDS carrier who became a Christian, recounts the kindness and connection he received from the Church when he felt alone and isolated that ultimately transformed his own life.³⁸¹

This is the power and reality of Jesus' resurrection and provides the most compelling proof. Looking across the landscape of human history from the first Easter day when Jesus emerged from the tomb until the current day shows a world transformed by transformed Christians. Christian benevolence—born out of sincere love and dedication to the risen Savior—to the hurting, destitute, widowed, poor, diseased, and fatherless is the tangible proof of the resurrection that any person can investigate for themselves. Christianity's central decree is the real resurrection of Christ, in body and soul, and “the redemption this proclamation offered consisted in an ultimate transfiguration of the flesh and the glorification of the entirety of creation.”³⁸² Christians continue to believe in the Gospel's power to transform the human will from “an engine of cruelty, sentimentality, and selfishness into a vessel of divine grace, capable

³⁷⁸ Ibid, 862-876.

³⁷⁹ Ibid, 352.

³⁸⁰ Ibid, 141.

³⁸¹ Gideon B Byamugisha, “Living with HIV/AIDS: A Personal Testimony,” *Transformation* 13, no. 2 (1996): 28–30.

³⁸² Hart, *Atheist Delusions*, 144.

of union with God and love of one's neighbor."³⁸³ The resurrected King will continue to resurrect people from their sin, spiritual death, and inner darkness until the end of the age; newly alive and newly transformed people offering the best available evidence for the resurrection, superior to facts, evidence, and data.

Therein lies the essence of this entire project—to introduce others to the Christ who has meant so much to so many. To have those who do not yet know Christ experience the wonderful transformation that happens when they meet Him for the first time is at the heart of every evangelist and apologist. And so, Christians refine their techniques, evolve with the times, and ruminate on how to best reach a world that desperately needs to know its Savior. In this project, the angle was through the lens of Christian ethics, to determine those virtues and behaviors that are intuitive to Christians as redeemed people, yet uncommon to those outside the Church to the degree that those common Christian actions are called supererogatory.

³⁸³ Ibid, 17.

CHAPTER EIGHT

8.1 Conclusion

The genesis of this project originated with a fundamental question, "Is it possible to distinguish Christians from non-Christians by observing their behavior?" Phrased differently, "Do Christians have distinct actions, behaviors, mannerisms, and dispositions that unbelievers can easily identify as unique and distinct?" These two questions are fascinating in a US Navy context where policy requires uniformity among the rank and file in the form of dress, appearance, and grooming, which makes knowing details about an individual service member's life difficult just by looking at them.³⁸⁴ A step further in the line of logic leads to the following declaration— it is nearly impossible to know if a Navy Sailor is a Christian just by being an outside observer of them. If this is true, how can Christians share their faith with others in an organization like the Navy, where open evangelism and religious discussion are eschewed (or unlawful if a person does not stop when asked)? But what if there are apparent non-verbal Christian hallmarks a believer could leverage to advance the Kingdom of God in the military?

The previous question led to an examination of supererogation which led to the belief that Christians can use actions that are categorically above and beyond the cultural standard (supererogation) to promulgate the Gospel when complemented with an apologetic method. The reason for the belief is this—Christians are expressly distinct from every other people group (religious, cultural, social, ethnic, national, or otherwise) under the "salt and light principle" derived from Jesus' words recorded in Matthew 5:13-14. Christians are not "salt" and "light"

³⁸⁴ Christian military chaplains don a Cross emblem on their uniform that signifies their faith but not all chaplains who wear the Cross are Christians. Some Cross-bearing chaplains deviate or deny from one or more of the following fundamental Christian beliefs: Jesus' virgin birth, His sinless life, death upon the Cross, resurrection from the tomb, divinity, His status as God's only Son, and salvation by grace through faith in Him. These other faith groups wear the Cross because their beliefs are closest to Christianity and not Muslim, Jewish, or Buddhist chaplains who wear either the Crescent, Two Tablets, or Wheel on the uniforms, respectively.

based on physical characteristics such as height, skin color, age, sex, foot size, or body shape, for people of all demographic and types call the Church home. The only reasonable conclusion is that Christians are salt and light based upon an inward change that manifests in attitudes, actions, mannerisms, and behaviors, but not the words a person speaks alone. Individuals can proclaim, "I am a Christian!" yet live in a way that contradicts the established and essential biblical ethic to love God and neighbor as thyself.

What we attempted to unpack here was to explore how Navy service members could contend for the Gospel in a legal and appropriate way for a professional workplace. If we could develop a method for evangelism and apologetics in the Navy, the applicability of the techniques we formulated here could be far-reaching. But before we materialized a method, there had to be a sufficient and sustaining reason to embark on such an endeavor because sheer willpower alone would be wholly inadequate for the task; plus, anything less than being motivated by the genuine love of neighbor cheapens the beauty of the Gospel message. Early in the project in Chapter Two, we demonstrated that the only appropriate starting point for developing an apologetic method for the Navy must be a sincere and authentic love for neighbor sourced from a love of God first. Christians love God because God loved us first (1 John 4:19); it is only natural to love others from this overflow from the Divine source.

Christian love towards others manifests itself in a number of ways, not the least of which are acts of supererogation. As we discovered in Chapter Three, supererogatory acts are those actions above and beyond the norm, as examined by JO Urmson, Roderick Chisholm, David Heyd, Gregory Mellema, and Elizabeth Drummond. In Chapter Three, we expanded the definition and created a more comprehensive definition. Here we defined a supererogatory act as a morally praiseworthy act born from good intentions that are right to do or not to do, which an

individual voluntarily does of their own free will devoid of external pressure and without a duty to perform. The definition we developed is consistent with the six supererogation conditions.

With the task of defining supererogation complete, the next step we undertook was examining the standards in the Navy by which we measure actions above and beyond against. The Navy articulates the behavioral standard through the Navy Core Values charter, taught to all Sailors at boot camp, at the Naval Academy, and other accession points through the *Sailor's Creed*. The organization has high expectations from its members; all Department of the Navy personnel are expected to act with honor, courage, and commitment in their professional and personal lives. The Navy will administratively and punitively hold its members accountable for failing to keep the standards of the Core Values. Recent history is wrought with examples of Sailors failing to adhere to the standards and the Navy appropriately addressing the indiscretions. In Chapter Four, we looked at honor, courage, and commitment and the Navy's implementation of those values upon its members.

Since the Bible guides believers to act with honor, courage, and commitment— and the Navy the same to all Sailors— a question arises, "How can Christians in the Navy holding to the Core Values avoid being mistaken for just exemplary Sailors? The danger here is that the Navy organization misunderstands Christians as **only** moral people and not radically transformed recipients of Christ's free gift of salvation. Christians are and should be moral, but that is not the end of their transformation. Any person, believer or non-believer, can be a moral person, but there is something special and unique about a Christian. Christians are dissimilar from all others, so much so that Jesus calls His followers "salt" and "light" in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:13-16. Since the Navy's Core Values are honor, courage, and commitment, Christian supererogation must be above and beyond these virtues. The question we examined in Chapter

Five was, "What are some unique Christian supererogatory acts that are above and beyond the Navy Core Values?" Our use of supererogation in this project is intentional; it builds towards an apologetic method exclusively tailored to the US Navy context. Chapter Five explored how humility and hospitality are unique against the Navy Core Values and how believers can leverage them as supererogatory acts for apologetic purposes. Fundamentally, hospitality is "making space," physically and metaphorically, for the foreigner, outcast, and downtrodden. This is what Christians are called to do after God's example, who has a place at His table for all willing to accept His invitation to join. Humility is of a different sort but no less supererogatory. Humility and hospitality share an intentional focus on others, but there is a reflective aspect to the former that does not necessarily apply to the latter. Humility is particularly powerful in an era where the exaltation of the self has found its resurgence in Western culture. Christ is the consummate example of humility for everyone everywhere, not just in the Christian community. We see that in the Isaiah 52:13-53:12 Servant Song, and Philippians 2:3-8 description of Jesus' Divine emptying. Humility and hospitality done with purpose serve as an essential first step to the Heart Before Head apologetic approach we unpacked in Chapter Seven.

Winning hearts through winsome and genuine supererogatory acts like humility and hospitality are intuitive precursors to any apologetic discourse or evangelism. The behavior of the Christian must mirror the beauty of the Message they are delivering, or dissonance and confusion will result. How can a Christian speak of God's love yet be rude, arrogant, and inhospitable with their actions? A disconnect between the Message and the Messenger only gives further reason for someone to hear the Gospel message and walk away. With this in mind, we developed the Heart Before Head apologetic approach that provides a more robust and holistic approach to the evangelism endeavor. Before an apologist dives into evidence, facts, and data,

they must consider opening the listener's heart first. Jesus would say as much in His teaching, "He who has ears to hear, let Him hear!" (Matthew 11:15, 13:9, Mark 4:9, 25), which indicates the correct heart disposition is a precondition for learning spiritual truths.

There is no definitive way for a Christian to know if a person's heart is ready for the Gospel—this judgment is reserved for the individual and God alone. A willing apologist, however, can be humble and hospitable to have the best possible impact on their listener's heart and set conditions for them to consider apologetic dialogue openly. The HBH is a variant of Blaise Pascal's anthropological apologetic method that adds supererogation and then evidence through the minimal facts approach and other historical methods. When apologetics is preceded by humility and hospitality—as was the way of Jesus in His earthly ministry—the Christian is able to mitigate a person's proclivity towards indifference to the Gospel. Admittedly, supererogation does not present a definitive argument for Christianity, so it must be integrated with other apologetic techniques that support the Christian faith's validity. To this end, the HBH method is a more complete apologetic approach.

We closed the project with Chapter Seven by acknowledging the best apologetic techniques done with hospitality and humility are not recipes that assure that the listener will happily receive the Gospel; quite the contrary, actually. By and large, the masses who heard Jesus' parables, witnessed His miracles, received His hospitality, and experienced His humility rejected His invitation. Only a little more than 500 believers of the tens of thousands of people who witnessed Jesus' ministry faithfully followed him, according to 1 Corinthians 15. What makes one person believe, and others remain skeptical even when experiencing the same event(s)? The psychology of belief is certainly a concept worth exploring.

But when all the best apologetic and evangelism efforts fail, Christians can still testify to the reality and truth of the Gospel with their transformed life as proof that Jesus' claims are genuine. Arguments and philosophical explanations may not win the day; a skeptic may still demand more evidence and data before believing that may be beyond the apologist's ability to provide. There may not be any evidence that can convince the staunchest skeptic; at that point, living proof as a living sacrifice will be the best any Christian can do.

Appendix A

A.1 Speaking the Common Language of Public Theology

Evangelical Christians, motivated by their faithfulness and love of Christ, are in constant pursuit to find innovative methods to bring the Gospel message to an unbelieving world. The main point of this paper was to articulate leverage supererogatory acts to build a comprehensive apologetic approach that is more effective than the existing models. Evangelical Chaplains serving in an official capacity within the Department of Defense have additional constraints to evangelizing the unchurched as guided by institutional guidance, written policy, and instruction that is non-applicable to the common citizen. Whether servicemember or civilian, there is great need to reimage evangelism since the flow of secularization's undercurrent swept—at times with overt purpose and other occasions with sneaking malign—through America's institutions to create an environment where the masses now consider the open proclamation of one's religious beliefs to be faux pas or even taboo. Thus, the modern era calls for such creativity and new approaches to sharing biblical truths as cultural sensitivities in the military or the general public find any small perceived prescription on how to live life as a reason to be offended.

The current Western societal attitudes have secularization to thank, in large part. Healey remarks, "Standard secularization theory holds that modernity will gradually and inescapably outgrow religion,"³⁸⁵ and while this was a failed movement, the after-effects of the cultural war still linger to give America the "new normal" it now experiences. This new normal is considered the post-secular era, a mish-mash of secular concepts that allow space for religious practitioners and their ideas and thoughts—in the public space, but without the prominence and enjoyed

³⁸⁵ Stephen Eric Healey, "Public Theology and Postmodernism: A Theological-Ethical Analysis" (Ph.D., Boston College, 1996), accessed February 6, 2021, 50.

people of faith once enjoyed in society. The post-secular age is an era where Christians must contend for their ideas and worldview in the vast and continuously changing pluralistic socio-political landscape, just the same as any worldview must do.

Given the opening that post-secularism allows, a small but active group of Christian scholars have been developing a niche theological method—public theology—to make the most of the opportunity to contend for Christian faith in the community. An adequate working definition of public theology is: theologically informed dialogue and discourse that is, on the one hand, intelligible and convincing to devotees but also accessible and comprehensible to those outside of it, even in a possibly persuasive way.³⁸⁶ Public theology is a trans-community theological concept, communicable to the Church and the unchurched, a middle ground understandable to both sides. It is a convergence of sorts, an intersection of theology and ethics, at once a promulgation of church doctrine about issues that affect all society, and a prescription of how people ought to live.³⁸⁷ For military chaplains, the public theology discipline fits nicely in the ecumenical environment found within the Department of Defense.

Public theology serves to engage the culture in the marketplace of ideas by justifying and articulating the theological basis for a believer's commitment to Christ. It does this by communicating, descriptively and prescriptively, a reasonable option for a civilization's moral and spiritual framework for the benefit of all people therein. In this way, public theology is a negative and positive apologetic medium, first by refuting objections to Christianity and, second, to possibly persuade non-believers to move to a positive response to Christ. Public theology's

³⁸⁶ Eugene Harold Breitenberg Jr., "The Comprehensive Public Theology of Max L. Stackhouse: Theological Ethics, Society, and Theological Education," *ProQuest Dissertations and Theses* (Ph.D., Union Theological Seminary & Presbyterian School of Christian Education, 2004), 25-26.

³⁸⁷ *Ibid*, 25.

distinctiveness lies in its forum and audience. While theologians typically parse theological matters within a body of believer's context, public theology is for the entire community's mixed audience.

Because public theology is a distinct theological method—albeit not what is traditionally understood to be as “method” in the same vein as liberation theology, feminist theology, neo-orthodoxy, post-liberal theology, and the like—it is subject to evaluation and analysis to determine its coherence as a system. For this, Paul Allen's five fundamental questions of theological analysis will be used to evaluate public theology. In shorthand, the five questions are (1) underlying presuppositions, (2) theological starting points, (3) the sources it uses, (4) the nature of the theological task, and (5) the procedure.³⁸⁸ It is against that criteria this paper will appraise public theology as a system. Although not specifically a Paul Allen question of theological analysis, public theology will also be evaluated for its use for US military chaplains.

Public theology is not without its objections and detractors. Even though public theology's intention and purpose are of the noblest sort, several scholars point out flaws and deficiencies with the theological approach. Of note, public theology's bilingual nature—in that it attempts to speak a language comprehensible to those inside and outside the church—is a subtle, but not necessarily deliberate, compromise; watering down the full essence and strength of Christian theology. On this point, critics say that public theology is misguided as a method.

A.2 Public Theology Principles

While the critique may be valid, public theology's bilingual nature forms one of the approach's four foundation principles. Public theology scholar Max Stackhouse identifies these

³⁸⁸ Paul L. Allen, *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Guides for the perplexed (London: T & T Clark, 2012), 208.

basic principles for this approach: (1) that a person cannot wholly and fully privatize their faith, (2) a person's faith will have an inevitable impact on the public, (3) public theology must be "bilingual," and (4) that theology is inescapably apologetic.³⁸⁹ The individual principles are not altogether unique to public theology but collectively, however, form its basis. However, before the paper discusses the four principles, a brief aside on public theology's origin.

A.2.1 Public Theology Etymology

The phrase "public theology" is a recent, 20th-century term, as late as the mid-1960s. Robert Bellah, a North American sociologist, described a type of "civil religion," shared or "common elements of religious orientation that the great majority of American's share."³⁹⁰ Personal faith and religious belief are of the most private of affairs, yet the values of the religious are commonly held to all but the outliers in society. This commonality manifests itself in the most fundamental ways. The consummate illustration is America's social institutions. A cursory survey of them—education, judicial, political, economic, medicine, family, church, and the like—shows the crucial role religion played in their development for the benefit of everyone in society, not just religious people.³⁹¹ Bellah's observation of this public religious dimension birthed the term "American civil religion."³⁹²

The civil religion concept settled into public theology in the following decade. In 1974, religious scholar Martin Marty used the terms *public theology* and *public theologian* in his essay

³⁸⁹ Max L. Stackhouse, "Public Theology and Ethical Judgement," *Theology Today* 54, no. 2 (July 1997): 165–79.

³⁹⁰ Robert N. Bellah, "Civil Religion in America," *Daedalus* 134, no. 4 (2005): 42.

³⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 42.

³⁹² *Ibid.*, 42.

“Reinhold Niebuhr: Public Theology and the American Experience,”³⁹³ their first known usage.³⁹⁴ Marty’s introduction of the terms denoted a particular kind of civil religion, not as a fundamental departure but rather a nuance of it. In developing public theology and the public theologian concept, he used American historical figures Jonathan Edwards, Abraham Lincoln, Woodrow Wilson, and Woodrow Wilson. These American icons specifically used theological material and deistic imagery to contribute and make sense of the unique American experience through the spoken and written word.

Jonathan Edwards, for example, provided theological and philosophical rationales for the church’s social engagement for the greater American society.³⁹⁵ A vocal antagonist for the separation of religion from public life, Edwards used the church’s care for the impoverished to demonstrate how Christians contribute to the community as a whole and not just concern for others within their faith.³⁹⁶ Although Abraham Lincoln was less an overt, vocal theologian after the likes of Edwards, he nevertheless intertwined theology into his position as president in his speeches, policies, and the manner in which he led the country. When knowing what to look for, a careful eye can quickly identify theological convictions in his political work. One example of many is Lincoln’s Peoria October 16, 1854 speech as he lays a biblical rationale against slavery, “It still will be the abundance of man’s heart, that slavery extension is wrong; and out of the abundance of his heart, his mouth will continue to speak.”³⁹⁷

³⁹³ Stackhouse, “Public Theology and Ethical Judgement,” 165.

³⁹⁴ Breitenberg, “The Comprehensive Public Theology of Max L. Stackhouse: Theological Ethics, Society, and Theological Education,” 4-5.

³⁹⁵ William Wainwright, “Jonathan Edwards,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2020. (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2020), accessed March 6, 2021, <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/edwards/>.

³⁹⁶ Ibid.

³⁹⁷ Abraham Lincoln and Steven B. Smith, *The Writings of Abraham Lincoln* (New Haven, United States: Yale University Press, 2012), 81. For those well-versed in the New Testament, they will recognize Luke 6:45 “For

A.2.2 The Four Principles of Public Theology

Secularization and its proponents predicted that the contemporary age would progressively but steadily outgrow religion to the point where religious ideas, concepts, and principles would have no place in the public square.³⁹⁸ Secularization suffered its unceremonious end when Islamic fundamentalists hijacked and crashed three civilian aircraft into the US' centers of economic and military strength on September 11, 2001. Shock and sadness of the incident aside, what 9/11 demonstrates is that religion has an inescapable impact on society through its adherents. And this is what authorities and the global community quickly discovered in the tragedy's wake—religious ideology motivated the men to plan and execute the deadliest terrorist attack in world history.³⁹⁹

9/11 demonstrates what humans intuitively know: a person cannot compartmentalize their faith to only their private life. This is public theology's first principle.⁴⁰⁰ Belief is so deeply integrated into a person's being that their faith cannot be fully private unless they themselves were wholly and completely isolated from the rest of the world. In this situation, it is theoretically possible for a person to privatize their faith.

However, isolation and withdrawal from society to privately practice one's faith has its own problems. If an individual isolates from their community for religious convictions then they impact society by their *absence*, withholding the contribution they would otherwise make to

out of the abundance of his heart, the mouth speaks" in Lincoln's speech. Lincoln often used biblical imagery and verses in his public addresses.

³⁹⁸ Healey, "Public Theology and Postmodernism," 50.

³⁹⁹ M. Ziser, "Emersonian Terrorism: John Brown, Islam, and Postsecular Violence," *American Literature* 82, no. 2 (January 1, 2010): 333–360.

⁴⁰⁰ Stackhouse, "Public Theology and Ethical Judgement," 165-179.

society if they were present. Whether present or absent, an individual's faith has an inevitable impact on the public. This is the second principle of public theology.

Most people share common space in a pluralistic setting with neighbors, colleagues, and co-workers of belief systems similar and different from their own. Interaction and engagement with other people are inevitable and thus a person's faith inescapably impacts others. Whether by word, actions or silent example, the Christian presents an argument about the ways things are and ought to be.⁴⁰¹ It a public discourse of sorts, a prescription for the guidance of souls, societies and communities of nations.⁴⁰²

Any prescription of how life ought to be live, in the form of an ethic recommendation through words or actions, pushes up against the different worldviews others may hold. In much the same way, the non-belief of a person is an ethical prescription for the Christian so the same principle works in the other direction. The interactive nature of public life demands that people have an unavoidable impact on each other. Because religion impacts the public in ineluctable ways, it is incumbent upon the Christian faithful to intelligibly communicate their theology and beliefs to both those inside and outside of the church.

This necessitates that theology is bilingual, the third principle of public theology.⁴⁰³ Theology must be communicable across the available discourse modes, comprehensible to those inside and outside the faith community. Even for Christians, theological concepts can be difficult to grasp even after years of diligent study and faithful praxis. Therefore, one cannot assume that

⁴⁰¹ Elaine Graham, "Jews, Pagans, Sceptics and Emperors: Public Theology as Christian Apologetics" (Presented at the Kings College London & Westminster Abbey Faith and Public Policy Seminary, Westminster Abbey, 2013).

⁴⁰² Stackhouse, "Public Theology and Ethical Judgement," 165-179.

⁴⁰³ Elaine L. Graham, "Jews, Pagans, Sceptics and Emperors" (Presented at the Chester Theological Society, University of Chester, February 25, 2014), accessed November 8, 2020, <https://chesterrep.openrepository.com/handle/10034/313501>.

non-Christians can *prima facie* understand theology when presented with ideas that the church has long believed. Public theology has a bilingual component, a unique fluency that reaches across the span that separates the religious from the non-religious so that the two sides can comprehensibly converse.

Public discourse decorum discourages strictly polemical or ecclesiastical language. It can come across as a foreign language to those unfamiliar with theological vernacular but if one is to communicate theology openly then there must be distinctives from it and all other language.⁴⁰⁴ This commits the theologian to endeavor to communicate in ways which rest on an assumption of accountability to the non-theological: to convince, to commend, and to construct a publicly accessible discourse by which theology can defend its values to those beyond its own speech community.⁴⁰⁵ Here Graham suggests the inevitable apologetic nature of public theology, it's fourth principle.

As theology engages with the public it becomes both a negative and positive Christian apologetic. Public theology is a positive apologetic in the sense that it gives reasons why Christianity is the preferred worldview adopt. As a Christian presents theological ideas and concepts to a public audience, it makes a positive argument about the state of the world and how life should be lived.⁴⁰⁶ While a public theologian may not explicitly state such proclamations, a prescription on life is inferred by making a public declaration. In this way, public theology forces the hearer to respond positively through acceptance or dismiss it outright. A third option is to consider what is said and defer judgment on the statement's truth or falsehood to a later time.

⁴⁰⁴ Benno van den Toren, *Christian Apologetics As Cross-Cultural Dialogue* (London, UNITED KINGDOM: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2011), 65.

⁴⁰⁵ Elaine Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place: Public Theology in a Post-Secular Age* (London, United Kingdom: Hymns Ancient & Modern Ltd, 2013), 106-139.

⁴⁰⁶ Graham, "Jews, Pagans, Sceptics and Emperors: Public Theology as Christian Apologetics."

General agreement in the literature on public theology holds that it stands at the crossroads of theology and ethics.⁴⁰⁷ At this juncture, the public theologian proclaims the “how” and “ought” for personal, institutional, national, and governmental conduct, actions, attitudes, and practices.⁴⁰⁸ Public theology contends for the Christian ethic, the “how” life is to be lived. The “ought” is distinctly rooted in the Christian understanding of the Divine mandates found in the God of the Bible. In this way, the language is unavoidably prescriptive because it either describes or attempts to construct a way of life that is distinctly Christian.

Public theology also explains and defends the Christian worldview to the public and thus is an apologetic in the negative sense. Kamitsuka calls this public theology nuance a “critical theological reflection,”⁴⁰⁹ not exercised in a Christian setting but out in the open. Graham goes further to say that theology in this manner is an apologetic exercise of defending Christianity’s intellectual and rational credibility in the public square.⁴¹⁰

Theology presented in public creates a strong accountability mechanism the theologian is forced to consider. When a Christian introduces theologically informed discourse, premises, and principles to the masses, they (the Christian) and the theology are both open to evaluation by available warrants and criteria.⁴¹¹ Theology in this way “rests on an assumption of accountability to the non-theological” and makes one have to consider critiques and revisions from sources

⁴⁰⁷ Breitenberg, “The Comprehensive Public Theology of Max L. Stackhouse: Theological Ethics, Society, and Theological Education,” 25.

⁴⁰⁸ Max L. Stackhouse, “Public Theology and Political Economy in a Globalizing Era,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 14, no. 2 (August 1, 2001): 63–86.

⁴⁰⁹ David G. Kamitsuka, *Theology and Contemporary Culture: Liberation, Postliberal, and Revisionary Perspectives* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

⁴¹⁰ Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 107.

⁴¹¹ Breitenberg, “The Comprehensive Public Theology of Max L. Stackhouse: Theological Ethics, Society, and Theological Education” 25-28

outside the church.⁴¹² To disengage to avoid such critiques also damages the possibility of cultural transformation rooted in theological tradition.⁴¹³ Greater accountability and exposure to critiques can be challenging and unpleasant to receive but the result is a refined theological position that the public had a part in constructing.

A.2.3 Allen's Five Fundamental Questions of Theological Method

Now that public theology's four principles have been discussed, it is hi time to evaluate it as a system. In *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Paul Allen identifies five fundamental questions to evaluate a method. They are:

1. The role of philosophy and related metaphysical presuppositions in the method
2. The theological starting points and individual criteria coherence
3. The various sources of theology
4. The theological task's nature
5. The theological procedure.⁴¹⁴

This paper will use the use these questions to examine the public theology coherence as a method.

A.2.3.1 Philosophical and Metaphysical Presuppositions

Each theological method, and all methods for that matter, has a set of presuppositions it rests upon in order to move forward methodologically. As stated already, public theology intersects the ethics and theology disciplines in that it prescribes a manner of living for all in society. Christian social ethics is a specific and distinct kind of religious ethics that implies several theses about the nature of Christianity and the social ethos.⁴¹⁵ Religious ethics focus on standards and moral principles that guide practitioners' conduct within a religious context.

⁴¹² Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*.

⁴¹³ Graham, "How to Speak of God?"

⁴¹⁴ Allen, *Theological Method: A Guide for the Perplexed*, 208.

⁴¹⁵ Healey, "Public Theology and Postmodernism," 52.

Christian social ethics is distinctly *Christian* in that it must be essentially related to the work of Jesus Christ as revealed in the New Testament.⁴¹⁶ Laying aside an in-depth conversation on Christian social ethics,⁴¹⁷ public theology presupposes the validity of religious ethics generally, and Christian social ethics specifically.⁴¹⁸ This essential presupposition undergirds the strength of the method, for without it public theology lacks the power to prescribe an ethic nor develop a social construct, never mind trying to persuade or convince a non-believer to adopt Christianity as their worldview.

Another public theology assumption, closely related to the first, is that first principle ethics, even gathered from a plurality of contrary worldviews, form a common moral foundation.⁴¹⁹ The moral commonality accommodates a notion of ethical neutral ground to parse out specific principles to ascertain their validity and coherence. For ethical discourse to occur within the neutral ground, the theologian presupposes the notion of civility, another fundamental public theology assumption.⁴²⁰ Without the ability to engage in cross-worldview dialogue with theologically informed discourse in a way that is heard (although not necessarily received), public theology becomes an impossibility.

⁴¹⁶ Stanley Hauerwas et al., *The Hauerwas Reader* (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press, 2001), 372-391

⁴¹⁷ See Max Stackhouse's *Creeds, Ethics of Necropolis, Ethics and the Urban Ethos*, "Ethics: Social and Christian," and "The Location of the Holy." Also the collection of Stanley Hauerwas' writing in *The Hauerwas Reader* is a comprehensive look at Christian social ethics.

⁴¹⁸ Healey, "Public Theology and Postmodernism," 52.

⁴¹⁹ Max Stackhouse, "Torture, Terrorism, and Theology: The Need for a Universal Ethic," *The Christian Century* 103 (1986): 862.

⁴²⁰ Max L. Stackhouse, "What Then Shall We Do?: On Using Scripture in Economic Ethics," *Interpretation: A Journal of Bible and Theology* 41, no. 4 (October 1987): 382-397.

A.2.3.2 Theological Starting Points

Public theology is not theology about public issues but rather theology in public.⁴²¹ The nuance demonstrates a level of transparency and accountability towards a thriving, plural public domain that transcends special interests for the sake of common good.⁴²² But what is the theological starting point for such engagement? Public theology is rooted in religious traditions and how religious persons, specifically Christians, historically engaged in the open marketplace of ideas with how Christian beliefs and practices bear, both descriptively and prescriptively, on public life.⁴²³ Public theology is less concerned with defending specific denominational faith-communities or a specific Christianity flavor than generating informed understandings of the theological and religious dimensions of public issues and developing analysis and critique in language that is accessible across disciplines and faith-traditions. Stackhouse notes that public theology has drawn predominantly from mainstream Protestant and Reformed Christian theologies and the understanding of the common human experience.⁴²⁴

This is the fundamental starting point for public theology, that all people share a common human experience. All people have typical desires and longings (outliers aside), including a sense of belonging, a need for order, and a want to live life. Public theology appeals to the commonality and provides a solution for these longings. And it is this, that society and all people live best when living according to God's created order and purpose.⁴²⁵

⁴²¹ Graham, "Jews, Pagans, Sceptics and Emperors: Public Theology as Christian Apologetics."

⁴²² Graham, "Jews, Pagans, Sceptics and Emperors."

⁴²³ E. Harold Breitenberg, "To Tell the Truth: Will the Real Public Theology Please Stand Up?," *Journal of the Society of Christian Ethics* 23, no. 2 (2003), 66.

⁴²⁴ Max L Stackhouse, *God and Globalization. Volume 4* (New York: Continuum, 2007).

⁴²⁵ Stackhouse, "Public Theology and Political Economy in a Globalizing Era," 63.

A.2.3.3 Sources

Public theology draws upon a wide range of available analysis sources, sources beyond only confessional communities. Breitenberg notes, “public theology relies on sources of insight, language, methods of argument, and warrants that are in theory open to all.”⁴²⁶ But this is for evaluation and discourse purposes only. The theological basis for public theology is rooted in the Bible. Public theology makes “explicit use, in its commentary on the public scene, of ethical teachings, behavior paradigms, and morally revelatory events” from the Bible.⁴²⁷ In the open forum, Scripture is inevitably apologetic for it has to argue that an appeal to the Bible can be congruent with the Christian tradition and a foundation for public action the face of modern realities.⁴²⁸

Scripture requires interpretation, a hermeneutical endeavor, within faith communities to exemplify this knowledge structure.⁴²⁹ Through reason and interpretation, one can discover what the Bible says for contemporary society. This is not a departure from the original intent and purpose but an application of principles gained from the hermeneutics of the primary meaning. The Bible’s application serves as a boundary in public theology, “by which claims about the adequacy of religious perspectives are measured as they expand and transfer into new social and cultural settings and meanings.”⁴³⁰

⁴²⁶ Breitenberg, “To Tell the Truth,” 66.

⁴²⁷ *Ibid.*, 88.

⁴²⁸ Breitenberg, “The Comprehensive Public Theology of Max L. Stackhouse: Theological Ethics, Society, and Theological Education,” 80.

⁴²⁹ Healey, “Public Theology and Postmodernism,” 54.

⁴³⁰ Breitenberg, “The Comprehensive Public Theology of Max L. Stackhouse: Theological Ethics, Society, and Theological Education,” 80.

A.2.3.4 Nature of Theological Task

Herein lies public theology's task—to apply theology to the culture. The Bible has greater contribution potential than only to believers who hold to its authority. As the inspired Word of God, the Bible has applicability to all humankind and so the public theology task is to demonstrate how “Christian beliefs bear on public life and the common good and in doing so persuade and move to action both Christians and non-Christians.”⁴³¹ The task is mainly persuasive in nature, presenting sound arguments that contend for the Christian perspective on matters of policy, civic law, community order, and societal structure so that persons can live the fullness of life as God intends. The mediums include all the spaces where public discourse is typically held: open forums, town hall meetings, editorials, articles, parent-teacher association gatherings, rallies, and the like. As technological advances open new communication modes, the opportunity for public theology increases. Christians can present theology on blogs, Facebook, Twitter, or comment on popular news sites on specific articles, offering the biblical perspective on any number of issues.

Not all hold to Scriptural imperatives but the biblical notions of order and justice are the imagine of the good which informs discourse. In the spirit of civility and collaboration, Christians, using the public theology method, can shape opinion and policies that affect society. This unique theological discipline occupies the boundary between the religious and the secular communities, and its “language undertakes an act of ‘translation’ in order to communicate to a non-specialist audience.”⁴³² This is a crucial public theology task component that communicates across the secular-church divide with language and terms consistent with those that the secular

⁴³¹ Ibid, 66.

⁴³² Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 97.

community is familiar with. Rather than having the non-theologically versed enter into the church realm, Christians take the positive step to initiate, engage, and communicate in palpable ways. Theological comprehension is not the end-goal, but theology presents a plausible case for what it advocates to gain public confidence and potential acceptance.

A.2.3.5 Theological Procedure

Every theology and theological method must meet the test of public reception.⁴³³ Stackhouse qualifies by saying that it need not be accepted in the Christian sense—as in adopted as one’s own personal belief— but instead accepted as coherent and an idea worthy of consideration.⁴³⁴ Theology gains this level of acceptance when the public can examine, analyze, and test the idea against any of the available warrants by which it tests all ideas. Methodologically, this is what makes public theology public because it observes “procedural criteria associated with dialogue within a pluralistic public sphere.”⁴³⁵

The key to dialogue and communication across the secular-religious divide is public theology’s adaptation of the middle axioms approach. The approach provides a pragmatic strategy for mediating between Christian ideals and particular social policies and issues.⁴³⁶ Middle axioms are mediating moral directives that have a crucial function in “Christian moral reasoning in the critical middle ground between the shared beliefs and related ethical principles of Christianity, and the very specific judgements that Christians...must be free to make on often

⁴³³ Stackhouse, *God and Globalization. Volume 4*, 106.

⁴³⁴ *Ibid*, 145.

⁴³⁵ Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 97.

⁴³⁶ William J. Danaher, “Healing Broken Bodies: The Missional Ecclesiology Behind J. H. Oldham’s Middle Axioms,” *Anglican Theological Review* 92, no. 2 (Spring 2010): 297.

complex economic, social and political matters.”⁴³⁷ For Christians, developing middle axioms offers a way to arrive at middle ground between broad, general pronouncements and detailed prescriptions on public issues. To be too general or too specific comes with its own hazards. For theological statements to be too general, the potential for misunderstanding or miscommunicating the idea increases. To be too specific and the theology has the risk of being inaccessible to the audience.

Middle axioms are grounded in theological principles, though not necessarily explicitly theological, and function as “provisional and interim norms to guide further deliberation.”⁴³⁸ The intent is to generate discussion and invite the public to further explore the theology (fig. 1).

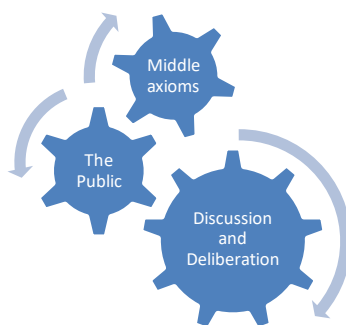


Figure 1

Middle axioms are not intended to represent the comprehensive expression of Christian social ethics but instead are “to facilitate public conversation and manufacture a shared space of discourse.”⁴³⁹ They are not tests of faith nor standards to differentiate belief from non-belief but

⁴³⁷ William F. Storrar, “Scottish Civil Society and Devolution: The New Case for Ronald Preston’s Defence of Middle Axioms,” *Studies in Christian Ethics* 17, no. 2 (August 1, 2004): 38.

⁴³⁸ Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 100.

⁴³⁹ *Ibid*, 100.

may be serve as a basis for coalitions of Christians and non-Christians who desire to improve social conditions for the common good of all.⁴⁴⁰

A.2.4 Suitability for Military Chaplaincy

United States Code Title 10 the legal backing for chaplains in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, and the Air Force.⁴⁴¹ In regards to chaplains specifically, Title 10 vague and broad that is non-specific in the following ways: the number of chaplains each service will have, what the appropriate ratio of service member to chaplain will be, to what kind of units (combat arms, logistical support, aviation, etc.) they will be assigned to, what is the ideal faith composition of the chaplain corps (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, etc.). These are important considerations given the religious needs of the Armed Forces, and each service is allowed the latitude to access needs and develop a strategy to address them. Title 10 is specific in these ways: who can serve as the Chief of Chaplains and Deputy Chief of Chaplains, that a chaplain is appointed to the service academies, commanders of units will logistically support the chaplain, commanders will endorse religious services, chaplains will perform divine religious services and chaplains are responsible for the burial of those assigned to their units.

Of note is the clear and distinct Christian language interwoven into Title 10's legal guidance on chaplains. Title 10 does not explicitly state that chaplains must be Protestant or Catholic but to whom else could the language refer? It reads:

- (a) An officer in the Chaplain Corps may conduct public worship according to the manner and forms of the *church* of which he is a member.
- (b) The commanders of vessels and naval activities to which chaplains are attached shall

⁴⁴⁰ Michael Horsburgh, "Middle Axioms and Social Policy: An Australian Perspective," *Social Policy & Administration*, 1991, 124.

⁴⁴¹ The United States Code is the codification by subject matter of the general and permanent laws of the United States. There are 53 titles divided by subjects. The Navy Chaplain Corps (which also serves the Marine Corps) is governed by Sections 5150, 5142, 6031, the Army chaplains by Sections 3073, 3547 and the Air Force by Sections by 8067, 8547, 9337, 9446.

cause divine service to be performed on *Sunday*, whenever the weather and other circumstances allow it to be done; and it is earnestly recommended to all officers, seamen, and others in the naval service diligently to attend at every performance of the worship of *Almighty God* (italicized added).⁴⁴²

Section 6031 use of words "Sunday," "church," and "Almighty God" are explicitly Christian. Church in this usage refers to the denominational affiliation of the chaplain but from a broader context it can also mean: the physical building where Christians gather for worship, the entire collective group of followers of Christ (typically identified as Church with a capital "C" rather than church lower case "c"), or a specific subgroup of Christians with shared foundational beliefs typical of all Christians but with tertiary doctrinal differences that make them distinct. "Church" cannot be applied to the other major religions—Jewish believers worship at the synagogue, Muslims at the mosque, Buddhists at the temple, Hindus at the shrine. Worship performed on Sundays speaks directly to Christian clergy yet the applicability spans the breadth of religious groups.

Title 10 has come to include more than Protestant and Christian clergy in practice. In the Navy, there are currently more than 100 different faith groups and denominations represented.⁴⁴³ Even if the Armed Service chaplains were comprised of only one specific denominational type of clergy the function and ministry of those individuals would not necessarily change. In this way, chaplains stand at the crossroads of secular life and religion to perform ministry among people with whom they may not necessarily share beliefs with. Whether or not a person believes as the chaplain does is immaterial, the chaplain is the individual who stands alongside their “congregant” and journeys through life with them. Winnifred Sullivan, Department Chair of

⁴⁴² United States Code, Title 10.

⁴⁴³ Navy Chaplain Recruiting, “A Calling Within A Chaplain” (Department of the Navy, February 27, 2019).

Religious Studies at Indiana University Blooming, calls this religious activity of the chaplain a ministry of presence—simply being present to experience the joys and pains (and everything in between) of life with the people they serve.⁴⁴⁴

The contemporary, professional military chaplaincy is a versatile and flexible vocation whose primary purpose is to "attend to the spiritual needs of all persons wherever they find themselves"—a ministry of presence. To attend to the spiritual needs of “all persons” in “wherever they find themselves” requires adaptability on the part of the chaplain. Chaplains in the Navy demonstrate the most flexibility of the Armed Service chaplains, their possible assignments can include one of three Department Defense organizations and one within the Department of Homeland Security—Navy, Marine Corps, Merchant Marines, and the Coast Guard.⁴⁴⁵ Within each of those organizations is a further variety of unit assignments like infantry battalions, helicopter squadrons, armored tank units, nuclear-powered aircraft carriers, guided-missile cruisers, an overseas military base chapel, an explosive ordnance disposal group, an artillery regiment. According to one count, there are more than 430 duty assignments that a Navy chaplain can serve in.⁴⁴⁶

What are the specific duties and responsibilities of the military chaplain? Broadly speaking there are four basic areas of expertise for the military chaplain: (1) facilitating the religious requirements of all faith groups represented in the military, (2) ministerial care for any service member, dependent, military retiree, DoD civilian or other eligible service recipient, (3)

⁴⁴⁴ Winnifred Fallers Sullivan, *A Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law* (Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014).

⁴⁴⁵ There are also a handful of "joint" billets that Navy chaplains can serve in that are neither Army, Air Force, Navy or Marine Corps specific. Additionally, there are Navy chaplains that occasionally serve in foreign-officer exchange programs and have the potential for assignment to countries like Canada or Great Britain on official orders.

⁴⁴⁶ This count is derived from the Navy Chaplain Corps alpha roster dated July 2018. This document lists the billets where Navy chaplains are assigned across the Department of Navy services (United States Marine Corps, Navy, Military Sea Lift Command), the Coast Guard, and the Merchant Marine Academy.

their own specific faith group's practices and religious traditions and (4) advising the command on religious, moral and ethical matters.⁴⁴⁷ The entire body of work military chaplains perform is largely divided into one of these four categories. Pragmatically speaking, however, there are many situations where chaplain services would be required.

The military chaplain's unique diverse and ecumenical environment that includes the religious and non-religious is an appropriate situation for public theology. A primary principle of public theology is theologically informed discourse is apologetic in nature since it uses common language to communicate Christian truth to possibly persuade those outside of it. Evangelical chaplains are in constant dialogue with members of their unit who do not share their own faith through normal course of their duty. A chaplain's language and manner of speak needs to be such that it is non-polemical and non-proselytizing yet true to the faith community they are endorsed to represent in the military. Even still, a military chaplain could initiate new members into their faith community working with the parameters outlined by the DoD and service specific policy.

Another way that public theology is suitable for a military application is its ability to address issues that impact religious service members and the greater organization as a whole. Military policy commissions chaplains to advise their commanders on issues related to morale, morals, ethics, religion, and the unit's spiritual readiness.⁴⁴⁸ A chaplain's theology informs their advisement to the commander on these issues and thus the chaplain directly influences decisions that affect the entire organization. A military chaplain is a practitioner of public theology by

⁴⁴⁷ "Facilitate, care, provide, and advise" is the Navy Chaplain Corps ministry model. All armed services chaplains have these essential roles, however, and therefore the Navy model is universally applicable to all military chaplains.

⁴⁴⁸ Winnifred Sullivan, *A Ministry of Presence: Chaplaincy, Spiritual Care, and the Law*. Chicago ; London: The University of Chicago Press, 2014.

virtue of their unique function within the military and is an appropriate method for this institution.

A.3 Objections to Public Theology

Public theology is a great model for military ministry but it not without its objectors. For instance, middle axioms—a hallmark to public theology—faces strong criticism from public theology detractors. Horsburgh remarks that the method works in societies that are familiar with, or at least vaguely, Christian.⁴⁴⁹ The familiarity with the Christian ethic allows the community to operate in the common language middle axioms in public theology provide. Consider how Christian middle axioms the citizenry in Japan, which is primarily Buddhist, or in Afghanistan, which is primarily Muslim, might receive them. Middle axioms fail when there is not a shared foundational ethos. The public theologian will need to address presuppositions before moving to middle axioms.

Even if middle axioms are intelligible to the secular counterpart, there are no assurances that it will bring about any further dialogue that advances the conversation from the safe middle ground of non-commitment to a specific theology or, yet further, to the Gospel. Public theology uses provisional terms and norms in the hopes to ultimately move a community towards Christ but the public may very well reject the middle axioms and end any continued discussion.

A rejection or a response of indifference are possible reactions to public theology. Because the method uses the bilingual language of middle axioms, a person could reject the Christian message through public theology without ever actually hearing the Gospel message. Public theology does not make a complete nor comprehensive Gospel presentation. Public

⁴⁴⁹ Ibid, 128-129.

theology presents only fragments of the Christian message and theology.⁴⁵⁰ Fragments in this sense are only partial insights, convictions, questions, and qualifications from the Christian tradition.⁴⁵¹ Fragments are due to the western culture's postmodern situation and in large part because "people are both ignorant and suspicious of Christian doctrine and practice."⁴⁵² These fragments give only glimpse of the Christian truth, to public theology's discredit, but this is done to present theology in the ethical common ground all people share. To this Graham remarks, trying to gain a public hearing for particular truths derived from the Christian tradition with public theology means people will be "distanced from the narratives of God's way with God's people."⁴⁵³

This is public theology's dichotomy. In one regard, public theology seeks to deliver persuasive theological discourse to the those outside the church. In another regard, public theology separates itself from the ultimate focal point, Jesus Christ, because it uses ersatz shadows in fragmentary language form. Even though distancing from Christ is not the intention, middle axioms, fragments, and bilingual language come with this hazard. For the sake of finding common ground with the secular public, the main message could get lost in translation. Public theology critics postulate this "represents a fatal dismantling of the integrity of Christian witness."⁴⁵⁴ Such attempts at cross-cultural dialogue are a form of capitulation and will distort the message from its true form.

⁴⁵⁰ Duncan B. Forrester, *Truthful Action: Explorations in Practical Theology* (London, United Kingdom: Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, 2001), 154.

⁴⁵¹ Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 101.

⁴⁵² Forrester, *Truthful Action*, 154.

⁴⁵³ Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 102.

⁴⁵⁴ *Ibid*, 101-102.

Some of the mistranslation is because public theology employs “sources of insight that are not explicitly or distinctively Christian.”⁴⁵⁵ This nuance is at once propitious feature of public theology and a point of critique from dissenters. because public theology relies on “alien or corruptive sources of knowledge or insight.”⁴⁵⁶ This has been dubbed a Barthian objection.⁴⁵⁷ Barth would have never endorsed a two-kingdoms type theology but when Christians spoke to a wider audience—like the public—it could ever be in the language of faith.⁴⁵⁸ In *Dogmatics in Outline* Barth says, “Therefore the language of faith, the language of public responsibility in which Christians we are bound to speak, will inevitably be the language of the Bible,...and the language of Christian tradition, the language in the forms of the thoughts, concepts and ideas.”⁴⁵⁹ Corrupt knowledge sources taint the fullness and power of the message and make it unreliable. Even if the sources public theology employs were reliable—as Barth understands reliable— than it should be reserved for the church alone.

A.4 Closing Thoughts

The public theology method employs conventions such as bilingual language, secular analysis modes, and middle axioms that demonstrate an enduring dedication to articulate Christian traditions and practices to wider audience beyond the church. There is accountability and great risk in offering theology in the public square where it is open to the most vociferous inquiry and scrutiny that a Christian opponent may offer. Even an antagonist, if giving a sincere

⁴⁵⁵ Breitenberg, “To Tell the Truth,” 67.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid, 68.

⁴⁵⁷ Karl Barth and his followers would reject public theology’s use of foreign sources to explain God’s truth for the purpose of providing guidance to various social arenas beyond the church. See Barth’s discussion of “The Command of God and the Ethical Problem” in Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics: The Doctrine of God*, vol. II, part 2.

⁴⁵⁸ Graham, *Between a Rock and a Hard Place*, 113.

⁴⁵⁹ Karl Barth, *Dogmatics in Outline*, trans. G. T. Thomson (New York, NY: Philosophical Library, Inc, 1949), 35.

assessment of the public theology offering, may find that the church's prescription on a specific community issue is the best option. Public theology is courageous to venture into such waters, as unfriendly, hostile, or indifferent as they may be. Critics in the liberal theology camp will say that public theology is not firmly rooted enough in the Christian tradition and that Christians, given the postmodern age, must hold fast to the dialogical and apologetic constructive task. Indeed, public theology faces a difficult balance between using language comprehensible to a broader non-churched audience and insisting on distinctly Christian terminology which may not connect with the public. A theologian will have to analyze and determine for themselves if the perceived concession and risk is worth the reward.

For the military chaplain, they are a public theologian whether they realize it or not. Each chaplain comes from a faith group that endorses them to serve in the military, and it is their theological position that forms the foundation for all ministry they do in the Department of Defense. The military is secular, and as such chaplains must purposefully use language that communicates to religious personnel as well as non-religious, all the while keeping faith with the former. Some may accuse the military chaplain of diluting the Gospel to the point of adulteration for the sake of presenting the Gospel in a non-offensive and sensitive way but this is not true. Public theology is a method to communicate the truth in the language that anyone can comprehend.

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