

arrangement of the gathered articles (chronologically would be the obvious choice). Having said this, the words from the title of the collection, *Crisis and Grace*, run like a red thread through each of the individual pieces and offer a different perspective on these, and certainly, each essay is very much worth reading. While that does not mean that a clearer order to these essays would have been desirable, it provides the collection with cohesion and a unified theme.

In conclusion, I thoroughly recommend this collection, both as a resource for those with an entry-level curiosity about Barth, as well as for those who are more interested in specific aspects of his theology and its constructive application. The footnotes in all of the essays deserve a special mention, as they are invaluable in their own right. In summary, the true strength of the volume lies precisely in the fact that it never remains at the simple expository level, but always tries to apply its findings in a helpful and practical way.

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Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War, Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini, Beacon Press, 2012 (ISBN 978-0-8070-2907-7), xxvii + 144 pp., hb \$24.95

'Veteran suicides average one every eighty minutes, an unprecedented eighteen a day or six thousand a year. They are 20 percent of all U.S. suicides, though veterans of all wars are only about 7 percent of the U.S. population. Between 2005 and 2007, the national suicide rate among veterans under age thirty *rose 26 percent*' (p. xii, italics original).

Some veterans who return home from Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan have post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). This condition 'occurs in response to prolonged, extreme trauma . . . produces hormones that affect the brain's amygdala and hippocampus, which control responses to fear, as well as regulate emotions and connect fear to memory. . . . Symptoms include flashbacks, nightmares, hypervigilance, and dissociation. . . . Dissociative episodes can put sufferers back into experiences of terror and make them lose a sense of the present. . . .' (p. xiii). The medical and mental health communities have protocols for treating PTSD. The treatment is long and difficult, but it does work, at least for some.

However, there is another form of disintegration that veterans feel: moral injury. 'Moral injury is not PTSD. Many books on veteran healing confuse and conflate them into one thing. It is possible, though, to have moral injury without PTSD' (p. xii). What is moral injury?

As young people enter the armed services, they must be taught to kill. They must be taught to ignore the elemental human instinct to avoid killing another human being unnecessarily. Basic training teaches them this through drills, repetition of 'kill, kill, kill' cries, training of the kill response, and through building a sense of full loyalty to one's fellows, intense camaraderie, and a deep and abiding sense of meaning and purpose in life. War, even justified war, requires this.

Actual war conditions magnify this training and lead to killings that are doubtful ('Did that child really have a grenade or only a rock?'), killings that are unnecessary ('That group of people were not violent'), killings that were cruel, unnecessarily cruel interrogation of prisoners, and so on. War, even justified war, generates these situations and these behaviors – in good people who are soldiers.

As young people leave the armed services and reintegrate into normal human society, their normal moral sense returns. They regain their sense that killing or torturing is not something we do; it is something we do *not* do. And then, these young people begin to remember what they did, or what they saw others do, and they are ashamed; they feel guilty, deep in their souls. In their minds, they know that they had no choice and that, at the time, they thought they were doing the right thing. But, in their newly reintegrated minds and hearts, they doubt the morality of what they did. They suffer from moral injury. They know they killed unnecessarily, and they feel terrible about it. They know they were bystanders when some atrocity occurred and did nothing about it, and they feel guilty. They know they treated someone else, an enemy person, cruelly, and they feel ashamed, disgraced, and dishonored. They do not want to be called 'heroes' (p. 96).

Moral injury is, thus, a sign of mental and moral health. It is a sign that the soldier in them has been left behind and that the normal, moral human being in them is returning. But the transition is terrible. Many take to drugs or alcohol, many become depressed, many turn to violence, and many even turn to suicide to escape their shame and guilt (p. 61).

How does one help our veterans, the men and women who have risked their lives so that we can live safely? How does one help someone who is not a sociopath, not suffering from PTSD, but someone whose evolving sense of morality teaches him or her that she or he has done something so terrible, so irrevocable that he or she just wants to hide, to escape, even into death? In other societies, returning soldiers 'undergo a period of ritual purification and rehabilitation . . . Christian church in the first millennium . . . a process that included reverting to

the status of someone who had not yet been baptized and was undergoing training in Christian faith' (p. xviii). But what are we to do in our day, in our time?

In 2009, a group of theologians, therapists, chaplains, and veterans began to work on this problem. *Soul Repair* is the story of their first steps. First, veterans were given the podium; their voices were heard, their testimony taken, and the Truth Commission on Conscience in War was convened. Then, the category 'moral injury' was developed and efforts were begun to have it recognized, alongside PTSD, as a category of veteran rehabilitation worthy of funding and treatment. Then, the Center for Soul Repair was organized at Brite Divinity School and this book was written to present these efforts.

Soul Repair is remarkable for the courageous setting forth of the witness of the veterans and for the development of the categories 'moral injury' and 'soul repair', but much work remains to be done. Categories of moral injury must be developed, based on the testimonies: killing someone in self-defense (which is still taking another life), killing someone by accident, killing someone in a doubtful situation, killing someone purposely (perhaps in anger or in response to mass thinking), killing someone whom one thought was innocent (a child, an old person), and witnessing someone else kill in any of these ways and not protesting; torturing a prisoner, dehumanizing a prisoner, and witnessing someone else doing these things and not protesting; and killing or torture that happened only once, or happened often, or became a habit. These factors create different forms and degrees of moral injury, and require different forms of soul repair.

Similarly, different modes of soul repair must be developed. Confronting and accepting the truth of what happened and not denying and not 'justifying' it, and helping veterans to forgive themselves and not trying to give some kind of dispensation are very, very important first insights. Much can also be learned from therapy with survivors of the holocaust and of child abuse: developing a 'mission', that is, a commitment to sharing publicly with others and helping others in the same situation; developing a 'récit', an acceptable narratization of the trauma; the use of 'cleansing pools' as a ritual for purification (in whatever religious or secular tradition); the use of the arts, of short stories, of film-making; and the very careful use of acts of 'atonement' (pp. 105–107).

A word of caution: The sensitivity to moral injury and the need for soul repair do not necessarily need to be linked to pacifism, though some veterans, therapists, and theologians have come to pacifist conclusions. As a Jew, the object of centuries-long antisemitism that is all too apparent today too, I reject pacifism. Individual Jews and the Jewish people need to go to war, if necessary. Some wars are justified, even as not all practices of (even Jewish) armies are justified. Moral injury and soul repair are a deep human need, even for those of us who believe in

war. *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* is an excellent first step.

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Reality, Grief, Hope: Three Urgent Prophetic Tasks, Walter Brueggemann, Eerdmans, 2014 (ISBN 978-0-8028-7072-8), xiv + 165 pp., pb \$15

Walter Brueggemann's *Reality, Grief, Hope* is quite the book. Some will love it; others will hate it. The work is very political in nature, but it is a political work based solidly around the Old Testament theology found in Jeremiah (reality), Lamentations (grief), Second Isaiah (hope), and history. It is not surprising that Brueggemann, in typical fashion, pulls no punches in his analyses.

In *Reality*, Brueggemann argues that the United States, much like ancient Israel before it, is plagued by a state of what he calls 'exceptionalism'. The nation of Israel was 'chosen' by God based upon the Abrahamic covenant. When the Babylonians conquered Israel in 587 BC and destroyed the temple, their culture – their entire world – was completely uprooted. Brueggemann argues that the United States endured a similar event in the tragedy that took place on September 11, 2001.

Brueggemann divides the book into six major sections. The first section is the introduction, where he details the basic layout of the book and briefly summarizes his argument, namely, that the United States consists of three major aspects that include confidence (specifically relating to the idea of 'exceptionalism'), denial, and despair. The parallels of these, he argues, are reality, grief, and hope.

In section two, Brueggemann describes the catastrophe that met Israel in 587 BC when she was conquered by the Babylonians. He argues that Israel's entire culture was turned on its head, including their ideology of 'chosen-ness'. Indeed, a God who once was near was now distant, and Israel, who once enjoyed its status as God's chosen people, was apparently abandoned. Brueggemann argues that Israel enjoyed a false sense of security and, despite harsh critique and warning from the prophets, got what was coming to it.

Brueggemann then draws on Israel's ideology of exceptionalism and appropriates this ideology to the United States. He argues that our