

Freedom Isn't
Free!

Forgiveness

PEACE
JESUS

ONWARD CHRISTIAN SOLDIERS

By Macey Furstenu

Coping

Believe



This thesis is dedicated to every brave American soldier who has served and sacrificed to protect human rights and to all those who support our military.

I would also like to say thank you to the many military chaplains who have helped me in writing this thesis, to Dr. Steve Haggmark and my mother for their professional guidance, constructive criticisms, and their unconditional dedication, and also to Dr. Mary Solberg for challenging my beliefs, pushing my boundaries, and her endless commitment to my success.

Table of Contents

Introduction:	1
CHAPTER 1: Psychology and War	5
CHAPTER 2: Cognitive Dissonance	16
CHAPTER 3: Justifications	22
CHAPTER 4: Religious Therapy: Coping, Forgiveness, & Prayer	30
Conclusion:	49
Bibliography:	55

INTRODUCTION

In April of 2004, a close friend of mine returned from active duty where he was involved in multiple combat missions. The military dropped him off, in Minnesota, with the assumption that he would return to his normal everyday life, back to his mundane occupation, back to socializing with friends, back to attending church on Sundays, and of course back to hanging out with his family and other loved ones. However, what the military neglected to prepare him for was that even though he looked the same on the outside, except for his buzz cut, he was a completely different person on the inside. He had seen things in combat that we only witness in our nightmares or on late night TV. He had done things in combat that we (as non-military, non-criminal individuals) would never imagine having to perform. He had changed; a part of him was missing; a part of him was left back in Iraq.

This individual whom I will call Ryan (not his real name) is back to his ordinary job, back to socializing with friends, and hanging out with family and other loved ones. However, he no longer goes to church. "How," he said, "can anyone believe in a God after seeing what I have seen, after doing what I have done to other human beings, and after knowing what I know about the human race He supposedly created?" Ryan has seen numerous mass graves; has killed several enemy soldiers and even some innocent bystanders (the military calls them "collateral damage"); has seen women and children killed in the streets by their own government because their fathers or husbands are fighting on the "wrong" side or because they are of a different religion or race. He has seen comrades fall to the ground in pain from gunshot wounds and has even witnessed

two friends/comrades die in combat. He did not go into much more detail than the basics of the stories; however, his disbelief in God has left me bewildered.

There was only one month of the 2004 school year left. I began receiving the multiple summer 'harassments☺' by advisors regarding my senior thesis topic, what it would be for the next fall semester. The current fascination with Ryan's return to Minnesota and his new disbelief in God was on my mind. I knew that I had to understand further the reasons he changed his mind about his faith. I needed to know how religious beliefs and combat actions fit together or clashed to cause him psychological discomfort. This led me to many questions such as, "How does Christianity fit into the military?" "Can a soldier go to heaven?" "Can an individual be a soldier and a Christian?" "How are soldiers trained to kill another human being?" "What does the Bible and/or other Christian scholars say about war?" Finally, how can a soldier cope with what they have done and/or seen in war in such a way that they will not be led to disregard their faith in God, as Ryan did?

These questions directed my attention to another area of interest, psychology. Besides my religion major, I am also a psychology major and remember taking Social Psychology with Professor Kruger and learning about cognitive dissonance. Cognitive dissonance theory maintains that holding inconsistent cognitions (beliefs) arouses psychological tension which people become motivated to reduce. This basically means that when an individual holds beliefs that are different from one's actions, this person will feel distress and will do whatever they can to reduce the psychological tension. This basic understanding of cognitive dissonance will be further discussed in Chapter 2.

Furthermore, in this paper, I would like to explore the nature and prevalence of cognitive dissonance as a source of natural and spiritual problems in the military.

Killing in war is not something that comes naturally. It has to be taught, conditioned, and made into an automatic response. The slightest hesitation could get a soldier and/or his comrades killed. This thesis is going to describe basic psychological methods developed to train soldiers how to kill in war. It will then further evaluate the psychological cost of killing in war and the trauma that accompanies it using works by Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, a prominent military psychologist.¹

Throughout this thesis, I will evaluate how cognitive dissonance within oneself causes such extreme internal stress that it leads these soldiers to question their own previous religious beliefs and moral values to the point where they often change them. I will then utilize Leon Festinger's work,² along with studies by other prominent psychologists to illustrate how the theory of cognitive dissonance³ works; why many people, when faced with a severe dissonance-arousing situation, tend to choose the easiest way to relieve the tension, which is to change their beliefs.

Soldiers in combat who experience cognitive dissonance cope with it in many ways. Some jettison religious beliefs that seem to condemn what they have done, while others adjust those beliefs to justify it. This thesis will show multiple religious tools and approaches that can offer a variety of strategies to assist such combat soldiers to

¹ Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, *On Killing* (New York: Little Brown Company, 1996).

² Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance* (Evanston, IL: Row, Peterson, 1957).

³ John Thogerson, "A Cognitive Dissonance Interpretation of Consistencies and Inconsistencies in Environmentally Responsible Behavior" *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 24, no. 1 (London; New York: Academic Press, 2004), 93-101; Michael Norton and others "Vicarious Dissonance: Attitude Change From the Inconsistency of Others" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 85, no. 1 (American Psychological Association, 2003), 47-62; Andrew Elliot and Patricia G. Devine, "On the Motivational Nature of Cognitive Dissonance: Dissonance as Psychological Discomfort" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, no. 3 (American Psychological Association Inc., 1994), 382-394.

acknowledge what they have done in combat and cope with the trauma they experience because of it. For this reason, I am also going to examine different forms of coping, mainly religious ones, to show that changing beliefs is not the only way to achieve cognitive consistency.

CHAPTER I: *Psychology and War*

How do you train a soldier who was raised with the principles of anti-violence and 'thou shall not kill' to kill aggressively and robotically in a combat situation, and how does that affect the soldier's psyche? This chapter will show how the military trains soldiers to kill in war (despite the natural resistance against killing another human being) and how they feel about the act of killing and the trauma the soldiers encounter.

In World War II, only 15-20 percent of combat infantry were willing to fire their rifles at another human being. In Korea, the average increased to about 50 percent, and in Vietnam, the figure escalated to over 90 percent.⁴ In one aspect, this is good news because now the vast majority of soldiers are willing to be an active component of the war and kill in battle. Modern armies have developed sophisticated ways of overcoming this instinctive aversion to kill through Operant and Classical Conditioning.

Classical conditioning and operant conditioning are two forms of training in which the soldier does not realize they are reacting because it is an automatic response. While Pavlov trained dogs to salivate by the sound of a bell, the army uses conditioning techniques to develop a reflexive "quick shoot."⁵ For example, "Instead of lying prone on a grassy field calmly shooting at a bull's eye target, the modern soldier spends many hours standing in a foxhole, with full combat equipment draped about his body, looking over an area of lightly wooded rolling terrain."⁶ Periodically, one or two man-shaped targets will pop up for a brief time and the soldier must instantly shoot at the target(s).

⁴ P. Watson, *War on the Mind: the Military Uses and Abuses of Psychology*, (New York: Basic Books, 1978) 48.

⁵ Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, *On Killing* (New York: Little Brown Company, 1996), 253.

⁶ Ibid.

The target gives immediate feedback by instantly dropping backward when hit. Positive reinforcement is given to the soldiers for success in this skill and they suffer mild punishment for failing to quickly and accurately "engage" or kill the targets. These mild punishments could include failure to graduate from initial entry training, requiring remedial training, and not be given the respect of a skilled shooter through peer pressure. There is a feeling of accomplishment when awards are given to the best shooters, and the more targets you hit, the higher you are scored, which gives more or fewer promotion points depending on your shooting ability. One of the primary areas of expertise a soldier needs is excellent shooting skills, because the military places a huge emphasis on this skill. The man-shaped object is the 'conditioned stimulus,' the immediate response to the object is the 'target behavior' and the 'positive reinforcement' is when the target drops or privileges are given out by commanding officers. This behavior is rehearsed, visualized, and conditioned to be automatic.

Another way to show how the killing behavior is made automatic is a study I learned about in Cognitive Psychology with Professor Jennifer Ackil, based on an amnesic patient named H.M, who by the age of 16, had his hippocampus removed to prevent seizures. He suffered from anterograde (cannot form new memories) and retrograde amnesia (cannot remember past memories) after his operation. While working with H.M., a psychologist named Brenda Milner made a remarkable discovery in which she learned that the medial temporal lobe and the hippocampus mediate what we now call declarative memory storage. This is where explicit memories that hold conscious awareness for people, places, and things are stored. However, even though H.M was unable to consciously recall any new memories, he was still fully capable of learning new

perceptual and motor skills. For example, when H.M fell and broke his leg, he was able to learn how to manage his wheelchair and could even explain to someone else how to operate it. However, he was unable to explain how he broke his leg. When his leg recovered, he utilized a walker and was able to manage that efficiently. When asked why he used a walker, he said he was not sure, and when asked if he had ever been in a wheelchair, he said no. The memories that H.M had are called procedural or implicit memories, in which we do not comprehend how we learned the activity, or how we did it; they are unconscious memories.⁷ These two memory systems go hand-in-hand and frequently overlap by many learning experiences such as riding a bike. Most people know how to ride a bike, but do not really remember how or when they learned it. "Indeed, constant repetition can transform declarative memory into a procedural type."⁸ The reason I am using this example is that constant, repetitive military training for soldiers can and does produce an automatic response and a non-conscious motor activity. These soldiers no longer think before they act. Their behavior is conditioned so effectively that killing, fighting, and war become automatic.

Another study by Leon Kamin, declares that classical conditioning depends on contiguity. His theory states that each time a "conditioned stimulus is followed by a reinforcing or unconditioned stimulus, a neural connection is strengthened between the stimulus, and the response or between one stimulus and another,"⁹ until the bond becomes so strong that the behavior is changed. After the behavior is effectively changed

⁷ Jenni A. Ogden and Suzanne Corkin, *Memories of H.M.* (Hillsdale, NJ, England: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc, 1991). 195-215.

⁸ Eric R. Kandel, "Biology and the Future of Psychoanalysis: A New Intellectual Framework for Psychiatry Revisited," *The American Journal of Psychiatry*, 156, (April 1999): 505-524.

⁹ Leon Kamin, *Predictability, Surprise, Attention, and Conditioning, in Punishment and Aversive Behavior*, Ed. Campbell BA, Church RM. (New York, Appleton-Century Crofts, 1969), 279-296.

and altered, the soldiers are able to graduate from their initial training and can subsequently be sent into combat if they are needed.

After this extensive training, soldiers are also motivated to kill the enemy not by ideology, hate, or fear, but instead by group pressure and regard for their comrades, respect for their leaders, concern for their own reputation, and the urge to contribute to the success of the group. A soldier described it in this way:

This is going to sound really strange, but there is a love relationship that is nurtured in combat because the man next to you – you are depending on him for the most important thing you have, your life, and if he lets you down you are either maimed or killed. If you make a mistake, the same thing is going to happen to him, so the bond of trust has to be extremely close, and I would say this bond is stronger than almost anything, with the exception of parent and child. It is hell of a lot stronger than man and wife – your life is in his hands, you trust that person with the most valuable thing you have. –John Early, a Vietnam veteran and an ex-Rhodesian mercenary.¹⁰

Some individuals diffuse responsibility through group settings and therefore do not experience a conflict of values.

Another reason these soldiers comply is demands of authority from their superior officers, which could possibly be proven by a study done by Dr. Stanley Milgram on obedience and aggression. He found that in a controlled laboratory environment, more than 65 percent of subjects could be manipulated into believing they were voluntarily inflicting a lethal electrical charge on a stranger. These subjects literally thought that they were subjecting this victim to pain; 65 percent obeyed the orders to increase the voltage, long after the supposed victim's screams had stopped and there was certainly a chance that the individual would be dead. This demonstrates that most people are willing to, and do comply with authority figures, even contrary to their normal course of action

¹⁰ Grossman, 90.

and their normal behaviors, this could even extend to shocking a person to death or killing in combat.¹¹

Another way the military persuades men/women to kill is by desensitization. Soldiers have used a variety of mechanisms to convince themselves that the enemy was different, that he did not have a family, or that he was not even human. This includes calling the enemy 'Japs,' 'Krauts,' 'Gooks,' 'Slopes,' 'Dinks,' 'Commies' and the current term 'Hajjis.'

An additional aspect of this desensitization process includes denial and defense mechanisms, which are unconscious methods for dealing with traumatic experiences. Prepackaged denial defense mechanisms are a remarkable contribution from modern U.S. Army training. Basically, the soldier has rehearsed the process so frequently what when he does kill in combat, he is able to, at one level, deny to himself that he is actually killing another human being. This careful rehearsal and realistic mimicry of the act of killing, permits the soldier to convince himself that he has only "engaged" another target.

However, killing in war is not as easy as it may seem in the previous paragraphs or as heroic as it appears in the movies. After being trained to kill for war and after killing another human being in combat, many of these soldiers are left to fend for their own mental health; unfortunately, the psychological cost for soldiers, as witnessed by the increase in post-traumatic stress, is devastating. Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, a psychology professor at Arkansas State University, a former Army Ranger and paratrooper states, "The chances of becoming a psychiatric casualty- of being debilitated for some period of

¹¹ Stanley Milgram "Behavioral Study of Obedience" *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 67 (1963), 371-378.

time as a consequence of the stresses of military life- were greater than the chances of being killed by enemy fire.”¹²

A study completed in 1946, by Swank and Marchand determined that after sixty days of continuous combat, about 98 percent of surviving soldiers will have become a psychiatric casualty.¹³ Of the 2 percent who do not become psychiatric casualties and continue to endure sustained combat, each of these soldiers have shown a predisposition toward “aggressive psychopathic behavior,” which will not be discussed in this thesis.¹⁴ The majority of these soldiers, frequently, have difficulties dealing with the fact that they killed another human being.

Killing is the worst thing that one man can do to another man... it's the last thing that should happen anywhere.

-Israeli lieutenant

This was the first time I had killed anybody and when things quieted down I went and looked at a German I knew I had shot. I remember thinking that he looked old enough to have a family and I felt very sorry.

-British World War I veteran after his first kill

It didn't bother me much then, but when I think of it now – I slaughtered those people. I murdered them.

¹² Grossman, 43.

¹³ R.L. Swank and W.E. Marchand, “Combat Neuroses: Development of Combat Exhaustion” *Archives of Neurology and Psychology*, 55 (1946), 236-147.

¹⁴ In regard to the 2 percent who do not get some sort of psychological disorder as a result of combat are those who are considered to be ‘natural soldiers’ or ‘aggressive psychopaths’ by Swank and Marchand’s WWII study. The term psychopath is usually a negative attribute, but in their study they say that these individuals are not any more violent than the other soldiers on a normal circumstance. However, when they are taught, trained, pushed to their limits, and ordered to kill, they do so without regret or remorse. The other reason why these individuals are natural soldiers is that many of them have the potential to be diagnosed as having anti-social personality disorder. ‘Anti-social personality disorder which is described in the DSM IV as: “failure to conform to social norms, deceitfulness, impulsivity or failure to plan ahead, aggressiveness, reckless disregard for safety of self or others, irritability, irresponsibility, and lack of remorse (DSM IV). Among the general population of American males, approximately 3 percent are considered to have anti-social personality disorder. These individuals are not easily used in armies, since by their very nature have the tendency to rebel against authority, but over the past couple years armies have had considerable success at bending such highly aggressive individuals to their will during wartime. Out of the 3 percent of the population suffering from this disorder, 2 percent were able to accept military discipline, which coincides with the hypothetical 2 percent of soldiers who would be by the American Psychology Association’s definition, “have no remorse about the effects of their behavior on others” (Grossman p. 182).

-German World War II veteran

And I froze, 'cos it was a boy, I would say between the ages of twelve and fourteen. When he turned at me and looked, all of a sudden he turned his whole body and pointed his automatic weapon at me, I just opened up, fired the whole twenty rounds right at the kid, and he just laid there. I dropped my weapon and cried.

-U.S. Special Forces officer and Vietnam veteran

I fired again and somehow got him in the head. There was so much blood... I vomited, until the rest of the boys came up.

-Israeli Six-Day War veteran¹⁵

The magnitude of the trauma associated with killing affects nearly ninety-eight percent of all soldiers. Within society, these men, women, doctors, lawyers, bankers, grocers, carpenters, mechanics, fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, etc, are average citizens fighting for their country. The memories that these men and women carry with them are like scabs of terrible, hidden wounds in the minds of kind and gentle everyday persons.

Ninety-eight percent of soldiers who suffer psychological trauma commonly fall under at least one of the following six categories: "fatigue cases, confessional states, conversion hysteria, anxiety states, obsessional and compulsive states, and character disorders."¹⁶

The first indication of fatigue occurs when a soldier is blatantly physically and mentally exhausted. Usually this person loses interest in all activities with comrades and tries to avoid any responsibility or activity involving physical or mental effort. Some

¹⁵ Grossman, 88.

¹⁶ R.A. Gabriel, *No More Heroes: Madness and Psychiatry in War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987) found in Grossman, 45-50.

somatic symptoms¹⁷ include hypersensitivity to sound, increased sweating, and even trembling or shaking. In this situation, the parasympathetic nervous system decreases the heart rate, respiration, and kidney function. This response is triggered by excessive psychological arousal caused by the stress of remaining in a continuous state of fight-or-flight, loss of sleep, reduction of calorie intake, and environmental sensitivity from causes such as rain, heat, and dark of the night. If not evacuated and allowed to rest, the soldier will be unable to restore his/her body and a collapse will be inevitable.

This fatigue state can quickly shift into the psychotic dissociation from reality, which is called the confusional state. Symptoms frequently include delirium, psychotic dissociation, and manic-depressive mood swings, which is sometimes called Ganzer Syndrome, in which state the "soldier will begin to make jokes, act silly, and otherwise try to ward off the horror with humor and ridiculous statements."¹⁸ For example, a soldier may use a body or a body part and consider it as still alive. In one instance, a few soldiers hauled a dead body and propped him up, put a cigarette in his mouth and 'pretended' that he was still alive. In another case, a soldier took a dismembered arm from an enemy Vietnam soldier and convinced his sergeant to shake hands with 'Herbert' (the arm). The confused soldier said, "Aw, Sarge, 'Herbert' just wants to make friends. He's lonely without his old friends, 'Mr. Foot' and Mr. Ballbag."¹⁹ However disturbing these actions, they are common incidents with soldiers enduring intense combat experience.

¹⁷ Somatoform Disorders are characterized by physical symptoms suggesting a medical condition, yet medical doctors cannot explain the symptoms. The symptoms are usually severe enough to cause patients significant distress or impaired social, occupational, or other functioning.

¹⁸ Grossman, 253.

¹⁹ Grossman, 46.

Confusional states can lead to Conversion Disorder. This disorder can materialize during combat or even years later. The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Mental Disorders (DSM IV) categorizes Conversion Disorder as a Somatoform Disorder and defines it as "the presence of symptoms or deficits affecting voluntary motor or sensory function that suggest a neurological or other general medical condition."²⁰ The disorder is characterized by physical symptoms of a neurological disorder, yet no corresponding syndrome can be found in the nervous system or other related systems of the body. A Conversion Disorder is expressed by the loss of a bodily function, such as blindness, paralysis, or the inability to speak. The actual loss of function is involuntary, but diagnostic testing does not show a physical cause for the dysfunction. Frequently these men wander aimlessly around the battlefield with complete disregard for evident dangers. Large portions of the person's memory may be blocked out to protect the conscious mind from the horror. R.A. Gabriel notes, "During both world wars, cases of contractive paralysis of the arm were quite common, and usually the arm used to pull the trigger was the one that became paralyzed."²¹

Anxiety states can affect a soldier's ability to sleep. The amount of sleep or rest he receives is insignificant because he is continuously tired. This coincides with dreams that are often overwhelmed by nightmares and he may become obsessed with death. Some of the symptoms of anxiety include; shortness of breath, weakness, pain, blurred vision, giddiness, and many of the same symptoms of hysteria. Years after combat, the

²⁰ *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th Edition.* (Washington DC: American Psychiatric Association, 2000) 300.11

²¹ R.A. Gabriel, *No More Heroes: Madness and Psychiatry in War* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1987) found in Grossman, 47.

affect from this anxiety disorder may lead to another anxiety disorder called Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which will be discussed below.

Obsessional and Compulsive states and Character Disorders occur when the soldier begins to realize the morbid nature of his symptoms. By this time, his physical symptoms are uncontrollable and paranoia, depression, isolation, and commonly, unpredictable and violent rages occur. Some become obsessed with religion. "What has happened to the soldier is an altering of his fundamental personality."²²

Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is often characterized by what we call 'flashbacks.' These are usually memories of a tragic event or experience that happened during the war that enter into the mind. These memories are so vivid that it can seem as if they are actually re-experiencing the situation again. "Patients who display combat-related PTSD show (1) memory changes such as amnesia for some war experiences, (2) flashbacks, and (3) deficits in short-term memory."²³ MRI reports on the brains of combat veterans with PTSD revealed an eight percent reduction in the volume of the hippocampus, which is where memories are stored. PTSD is also thought to be associated with a type of memory called fear conditioning in which the "original trauma activates two systems: one in the brainstem, which sensitizes the subject to related stimuli in the future, and another in the amygdala, which conditions a long-lasting fearful reaction."²⁴ This enables the trauma memory to be repeated as if it was a real event.

These psychological tragedies have a multitude of different causes. One is being in a state of constant stress; others are the constant fear of the possibility of being killed, killing others, and witnessing others you love being killed. Another cause is guilt. If a

²² Grossman, 48.

²³ M.R. Rosenzweig and others, *Biological Psychology: Third Edition* (Sinauer: Sunderland, 2002), 528.

²⁴ Ibid.

soldier kills an enemy soldier in the midst of battle, (s)he will forever be burdened with the fact of killing a husband, a father, a brother, or a son, etc. However, if he elects not to kill, then the blood of guilt will be of his fallen comrades when he has to look his friend's wife in the eye and know that he did nothing to protect his friend/her husband. "He is damned if he does, and damned if he doesn't."²⁵

William Manchester, author and U.S. Marine veteran of WWII, felt remorse and shame after his first close-range personal killing of a Japanese soldier. "I can remember," he wrote, "whispering foolishly, 'I'm sorry' and then just throwing up... I threw up all over myself. It was a betrayal of what I'd been taught since a child."²⁶

²⁵ Grossman, 87.

²⁶ Grossman, 88.

CHAPTER 2:

COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

What William Manchester felt was cognitive dissonance. His past beliefs were contradicting his recent actions.

This chapter will argue that cognitive dissonance theory is a useful tool in understanding the strategies soldiers utilize to cope with otherwise intolerable acts. When these men and women enter the military, they enter with the knowledge of their experiences and beliefs, which together mold whom they are as individuals. Past beliefs are derived from a mental acceptance and conviction of your perception of the truth, actuality, or validity of something. Beliefs are instilled during early childhood as an integrated part of the personality, which in turn shape moral values and judgments.

Lawrence Kohlberg, a prominent developmental psychologist, built onto Jean Piaget's belief that the moral judgments of children derive from their cognitive development in a series of six stages.

- *Stage 1: Punishment and obedience orientation* is characterized by avoidance of punishment. Morality is based on self-interest with disregard for anyone else and is only based on the consequences of the action.
- *Stage 2: Instrumental relativist orientation*, which is when the individual is only focused on one's own needs as the determiner of what is 'right.' An example being, "if you scratch my back I will scratch yours."
- *Stage 3: Interpersonal Concordance or "good boy/ nice girl" orientation*
- *Stage 4: "Law and Order" orientation* is both the beginning of late childhood and early adolescence.
- *Stage 5: Social-contract/legalistic orientation*
- *Stage 6: Universal ethical principle orientation*

Stage 3 and 4 involve “a move toward gaining approval or avoiding disapproval as the basis of morality; law and social rules are seen as valuable in their own right.”²⁷ While stages 5 and 6 involve a time when people are more concerned with morality as abstract principles. They are able to separate their own identification with groups from these principles.

However, the first four stages of moral development, according to Piaget and Kohlberg, are the most important for learning values, morals, laws, social rules, ethics, religion, and understanding faith. These stages comprise ages one through roughly 20-25, when people are most easily influenced. During the first two stages parents, teachers, religious leaders, and other influential adults are also teaching children to be less aggressive toward playmates. Adults commonly teach youngsters to share their toys, and they punish hitting, biting, and pinching. Adults also attempt to eradicate other aggressive behaviors by punishments (time-outs) and consequences such as taking away of privileges. I am sure that every child has heard at one point in time, “keep hands, feet, and objects to yourself.”

Extremely aggressive youngsters are often integrated into social-cognitive interventions that help them to “regulate their anger and become more skilled at empathizing with and taking others’ perspectives so they will not be so likely to over attribute hostile intentions to their peers.”²⁸ Acting aggressively outside a sports arena is commonly looked down upon by society (especially for females) even though the media often portrays violence as heroic. Outward aggression (fighting) is not only looked down upon, but is actually punished by jail time when the individual is over 18 years of age.

²⁷ Bernard Spilka et al, *The Psychology of Religion* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 80.

²⁸ David R. Shaffer, *Developmental Psychology* (Belmont, California: Wadsworth Group, 2002), 502.

Many other external influences have the potential to affect children, not only in the realm of aggression, but also in the aspect of religion: parents, peers, schools, religious institutions, books, the mass media, etc. They can affect individuals directly through explicit religious teachings or family practices; or they can affect us indirectly by influencing school, marital, and career choices. Regardless of how an individual is shaped the extent of his religious belief system, he/she will have been nurtured in a society where it is illegal, immoral, and horrific to kill another human being. As one becomes more religious, the greater the likelihood he/she will be unable to kill, if faced with the inopportune situation. These highly religious individuals will most likely need more training to kill robotically on command, in combat, than their other comrades who may not have thought about the consequence of killing another human being before. If trained effectively to kill in war (which over 98 percent are) these individuals may also have a higher tendency to face cognitive dissonance afterward.

Cognitive dissonance theory, proposed by Leon Festinger in 1957, explained why people need cognitive consistency to be stable. "He explicitly delineated psychological discomfort as a component of dissonance, and he alluded to dissonance as a bodily condition analogous to tension or drive state like hunger."²⁹ To state this theory more simply, people want a consistent state of mind in which beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors are all compatible with one another. Holding inconsistent cognitions arouses psychological tension that motivates people to change. This theory is useful to contemplate many issues in life where actions may be out of step with values; a good example in addition to Ryan and being in the military is the following.

²⁹ Andrew J. Elliot and Patricia G. Devine, "On the Motivational Nature of Cognitive Dissonance: Dissonance as Psychological Discomfort," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 67, no. 3 (1994): 382-394.

Here is an illustration of the moral command, "Thou shall not kill." What if a murderer enters your house and threatens to kill you, your pregnant wife, and your child? The issue is now about you and your family's life versus that of the criminal. You then have to decide whether to take whatever measures possible to protect you and your family or to let the murderer take the lives of the innocent. What do you do? Let us say that you do decide to be the hero and save your family and you take the life of the murderer. Now your action is in conflict with what you believe (thou shall not kill). You have taken a life. This inner conflict can lead to anxiety, depression, stress, and other psychological problems. Inconsistency between beliefs and actions produces motivation to do whatever is easiest, in order to regain cognitive consistency or consonance among beliefs and actions. This example best illustrates Ryan's, or any other person's, combat situation that elicits the cognitive dissonance.

Most of the time, our cognitive values (which include everything we know about our own beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors) coexist peacefully; at other times, they clash. The more time, money, or effort a soldier invests in his chosen profession, the more anxious he/she will feel if the experience is disappointing. However, people are different. Some people may not care about being cognitively consistent, in part because a change in attitude often seems to require the production of negative consequences or emotions.³⁰ Other individuals, who have a high need for consistency, are more likely to show the negative effect. Festinger believed that people reduce cognitive dissonance by using a set of different possibilities he classified into five categories. Within these five categories,

³⁰Leon Festinger, *A Theory of Social Cognitive Dissonance* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1957) found in Sharon S. Brehm, *Social Psychology*, 5 (New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 2002), 206.

soldiers in the military who are dealing with cognitive inconsistency may use one or all of them to reduce dissonance.

- One, they could *change their beliefs*, such as not believing in God, their religion, or in this case, Christianity any longer. According to Festinger, people are generally more inclined to choose the easiest and quickest way to obtain cognitive consistency. Change in belief is generally the easiest route.
- Two, they could *change their perception of the behavior*; for example believing they, themselves did not kill anyone and instead it was another soldier in their company. This is also known as group absolution, in which an individual places blame on the group and not on himself.
- Three, *add consonant cognitions*; such as I am fighting for my country, doing my civil duty, God is on our side, we are right and 'they' are wrong.
- Four, *minimize the importance of the conflict*; for instance believing that the men they are killing are merely targets or some guerrilla force (dehumanize their enemy). This is done throughout the military and was previously discussed in Chapter 1.
- Finally, *reduce perceived choice*, such as; I did not have a choice, I had to kill them or they would have killed me and/or my comrades.

However, as with all theories, there are problems. Cooper and Fazio agreed that when people are faced with Cognitive Dissonance, they are more likely to change their attitude about the behavior. For dissonance to be aroused, four conditions must be present.³¹

- The first necessary condition is the attitude-discrepant behavior must produce unwanted negative consequences.
- The second necessary step is a feeling of personal responsibility for the unpleasant outcome of the behavior.
- The third step is the presence of physiological arousal.
- The fourth step is quite similar to the third step, which states that the person must make an attribution for that arousal to his or her own behavior to cause dissonance.

If all of these conditions are present, an individual may experience cognitive dissonance.

³¹ J. Cooper and R.H. Fazio, "A New Look at Dissonance Theory" In L. Berkowitz (ed.) *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 17 (New York: Academic Press, 1984). Found in Brehm, 206.

A study completed in 2003, by Norton, Monin, Cooper, and Hogg not only addressed Cognitive Dissonance, but its effect on individuals in groups.³² This study supported the hypothesis that individuals change their attitudes when witnessing members of important groups engage in dissonance-arousing behaviors. The more important the group is to the individual; or to state it specifically, the more important the company is to the soldier, the more impact and influence that group will have over the soldier's behavior. The higher the soldier's social identity with his/her regiment and the more involved the soldier feels, and the more apt he/she will be to engage in combat, despite past beliefs. Furthermore, it can be understood that the act of killing, fighting in combat, and war is extremely contradictory to what these soldiers were taught growing up in society and with a Christian background. How is it that these soldiers are able to justify fighting in war when their background says war is evil?

³² Michael I. Norton and Benoit Monin, "Vicarious Dissonance: Attitude Change from the Inconsistency of Others" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology 2003, Vol. 85, no. 1 (American Psychological Association, Inc), 47-62.

CHAPTER 3:

JUSTIFICATIONS

This chapter will show how soldiers use different justification strategies for killing and going to war such as the realist perspective and just war theory, to deal with their duty. Almost all religions encourage peace and love, and hold that war is the last resort, if not altogether evil. For example, Buddhists stress non-violence; the Dalai Lama said, "Hatred will not cease by hatred, but by love alone. This is the ancient law."³³ Hinduism also promotes non-violence and says that any person who carries out violence such as killing will have the violence returned to them at some time in the future by the natural law of the universe. If a Hindu is violent, philosophers believe they have not evolved to a level where they understand and seek peaceful conduct. Ghandi says, "Ahimsa, non-violence, comes from strength, and the strength is from God, not man. Ahimsa always comes from within."³⁴ Judaism accepts that certain kinds of war will be ethically justified, and that it is sometimes morally acceptable to kill people; however, there is a list of criteria to be met to be ethical.

However, this thesis is not about the many different religions and their views on war, but instead how Christian soldiers justify themselves on going to war and killing another human being. Furthermore, this chapter is not to prove that war is 'just' but instead to show two theories/perspectives with which soldiers are able to make sense of

³³ "Ethics and Religion" *BBC* (accessed October, 2004): available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/ethics/war/index.shtml>; Internet.

³⁴ *Ibid.*

what they are doing. This does not necessarily mean that they believe war/combat is good. These theories are used as a simple form of justification.

Many Christians have been taught to "love your enemies" (Matthew 5:44), "never tire of doing what is right" (2 Thessalonians 3:13), "love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39), do not take revenge on someone who wrongs you (Matthew 5:38-47)³⁵, along with many other criteria such as compassion, peace, forgiveness, obedience, and charity. Furthermore, many of these soldiers have been taught, as Christians believing in the New Testament, that war is universally seen as evil and Jesus emphasized peace instead. He preached against retaliation and revenge and in favor of love, even to our enemies.

You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' However, I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If someone strikes you on the right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well. If someone forces you to go one mile, go with him two miles. Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be sons of your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:38-45).

The apostle Paul and other New Testament writers echoed Jesus' sentiment and expanded on it.

Never pay back evil for evil to anyone. Respect what is right in the sight of all men. If possible, so far as it depends on you, be at peace with all men. Never take your own revenge, beloved, but leave room for the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. "But if your enemy is hungry, feed him, and if he is thirsty, give him a drink; for in so doing you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good." (Romans 12:17-21)³⁶

³⁵ Howard Clark Kee, *The Cambridge Annotated Study Bible: New Revised Standard Version* (Cambridge: University Press, 1993). All Bible References from here on out originate from this book.

³⁶ "What does the Bible say about war?" *The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church* (The United Methodist Publishing House, accessed October, 2000): available from <http://www.umc.org/abouttheumc/policy/political/g-military.htm>; internet.

Christianity, along with other religions, teaches that war is an evil and it is wrong! However, there is no "red letter" (exact teachings) biblical doctrine of war. Therefore, the issue is not 'what is the Bible's view of war' but, 'what view best interprets and reflects the biblical passages regarding war?'

Several Christian perspectives on war have emerged over the centuries. The spectrum of Christian participation in war runs as follows: pacifism, nonresistance, just war, preventive war, and crusade. Pacifism and crusade are the two extremist views.³⁷

Many pacifist Christians refuse to take part in war and base their argument upon the Sermon on the Mount and many other passages in the Bible, such as the ones just cited. However, those who argue against this declare that Christ's pacifist nature and behavior were part of his unique role as redeemer of humanity. "Christians are not redeemers and so their conduct should follow Christ by seeking to bring peace and justice to the world even if this means not always turning the other cheek."³⁸

C.S. Lewis, a British scholar and theologian famous for writing children's books, poems, and for his religious wartime speeches, once said, "It is recorded that the soldiers who came to St. John the Baptist asking, 'What shall we do?' were not told to leave the army. When Our Lord Himself praised the Centurion, He never hinted that the military profession was in itself sinful. Pacifism is a recent variation. We must of course respect and tolerate Pacifists, but I think their view erroneous."³⁹ A Chaplain of the 82nd

³⁷ "Ethics and Religion" BBC (accessed October, 2004): available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/ethics/war/index.shtml>; internet.

³⁸ "Ethics and Religion" BBC (accessed October, 2004): available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/ethics/war/index.shtml>; internet.

³⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Letters of C.S. Lewis* (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1966), 248. Quoted from Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root, *The Quotable Lewis* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1989), 467.

Airborne Paratroopers said that the moral recommendations from the Bible such as “thou shall not kill,” “love your enemy,” and “turn the other cheek,” are for personal relationships and are not a very productive way to run a government. The government has an obligation to protect its citizens and prevent harm.⁴⁰

We may kill if necessary, but we must not hate and enjoy hating. We may punish if necessary, but we must not enjoy it... Even while we kill and punish, we must try to feel about the enemy as we feel about ourselves – to wish that he were not bad, to hope that he may, in this world or another, be cured: in fact, to wish his good. That is what is meant in the Bible by loving him; wishing his good, not feeling fond of him nor saying he is nice when he is not.⁴¹

The discussion on the ethics of war goes back to the Greeks and Romans, although neither civilization behaved particularly well in war. In the Christian tradition, war ethics were developed by St Augustine, and later by St. Thomas Aquinas and others. St. Augustine was a 4th Century Christian who lived in present-day Algeria and Italy. He believed that the only just reason to go to war was the desire for peace.

We do not seek peace in order to be at war, but we go to war that we may have peace. Be peaceful, therefore, in warring, so that you may vanquish those whom you war against, and bring them to the prosperity of peace.⁴²

Augustine tried to reconcile Christian pacifism with the world as it actually was, that is, to bring together the pacifist teachings of Jesus Christ with the obligations of the Roman Citizens, which included Christians, to be able to fight for their country when required to. He accepted that there would always be wars but also thought of war as a sin and the result of sin. He said that if war was the remedy for sin, then war could

⁴⁰ Chaplain Major of the 82nd Airborne Paratroopers, interviewed by Macey Furstenau, 29 October, 2004, recorded in personal notes.

⁴¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 107-108. Quoted in Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root, *The Quotable Lewis* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1989), 84.

⁴² “Ethics and Religion” BBC (accessed October, 2004): available from <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/ethics/war/index.shtml>; internet.

sometimes be justifiable, "but only if it was a remedy for sin."⁴³ If there had to be war, it should be waged with great sadness. Augustine made it clear that individuals and states (or the rulers of states) have different obligations when it came to war or violence. He stated that the rulers of states, had an obligation to maintain peace, and this obligation gave them the right to wage war in order to maintain peace. It also gave them the right to wage war in order to ensure justice and even impose punishment. This theory is called the Just War Theory.

Just War Theory

Just War Theory deals with the fact that taking a human life is seriously wrong by maintaining that states have a duty to defend their citizens, defend justice, and protect innocent human life, by defending important moral values. This approach states that we are sometimes required to use force or violence. The intention of the Just War Theory is to provide a guide to the proper way for states to act in potential or actual conflict situations. It applies only to states, and not to individuals; however, individuals often use the theory to help them decide whether it is morally right to take part in a particular war. Just War Theory provides a useful framework for individuals and political groups to use in their discussions of possible wars. However, this theory is not intended to justify wars but to prevent them, by showing that going to war, except in certain limited circumstances, is wrong, and thus motivate states to find other ways of resolving conflicts. Nevertheless, war is still always horrible. A just war is permissible only because it is the lesser of the two evils; but it is still an evil.

A war is just only if it is both justified and carried out in the right way. A justified war must satisfy six conditions:

⁴³ Ibid.

1. The war must be for a just cause.
 - o self-defense, assisting an invaded friendly nation, human rights violations, and to punish an act of aggression
 - o The war must be lawfully declared by a lawful authority
 - o However, there can be exceptions to this rule as in the case of Pre-emptive Strikes.
2. The intention behind the war must be good.
 - o GOOD: creating, restoring or keeping peace, righting a wrong, assisting the innocent
 - o BAD: seeking power, demonstrating the power of a state, grabbing land or goods, or enslaving people, hatred of the enemy, genocide, personal or national glory, revenge, preserving colonial power
3. All other ways of resolving the problem should have been tried first.
4. There must be a reasonable chance of success.
5. The means used must be in proportion to the end that the war seeks to achieve.
 - o The benefits of waging the war must be in proportion to the costs
 - It must prevent more evil than it causes
 - It must prevent more human suffering than it causes⁴⁴

Within the framework of the just war theory, there are also certain implications of how war should be fought:

- Innocent people and non-combatants should not be harmed.
- Only appropriate force should be used.
 - o This applies to both the sort of force, and how much force is used.
- Internationally agreed conventions regulating war must be obeyed.⁴⁵

Using the Christian Just War Theory as justification for going to war, or for killing in war, may or may not help the soldier come to terms with killing another human being. It is still wrong and evil!

I conducted another interview with a 59-year-old Chaplain. He has been a Chaplain for 21 years, a Minister for 27 years, has worked with Rangers, Special Forces, and Aviation Operations, fought in Vietnam, was a member of the tragedy of Black Hawk Down, and is going to Iraq soon. He does not like the Just War Theory. He said that war is fought at so many different levels and for so many different reasons. The

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

government, the multiple political parties, intelligence agencies, citizens, reporters, and even the different ranks within the Military are all fighting the war on different levels and for different reasons. He also said that there is too much of a grey area in the Just War Theory. Too many views and opinions can be brought about by one theory. This man believes that "War is an imperfect solution to an imperfect world. War is one of the outcomes of our sins; there are no innocent nations. War is caused by a human failure."⁴⁶

Despite the immense evils of war, Jesus says that war is inevitable and that wars will continue until He returns (Mark 13:7-8), and He did not oppose governments or their right to maintain armies (Matthew 8:5-10). Other New Testament passages accept the necessity of maintaining armies and the worthiness of military occupations (Luke 3:14, Acts 10:1-6).⁴⁷

Martin Luther stated, "without armaments peace cannot be kept; wars are waged not only to repel injustice but also to establish a firm peace."⁴⁸ Accordingly, Augustine said, "True religion looks upon as peaceful those wars that are waged not for motives of aggrandizement, or cruelty, but with the object of securing peace, of punishing evil-doers, and of uplifting the good."⁴⁹ Not all scholars and/or religious leaders agree with this postulation by Luther and Augustine. As stated earlier, the views on war generally fall within pacifism, nonresistance, just war, preventive war, or crusade. Luther and Augustine would therefore be considered under the just war standpoint.

⁴⁶ Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel, interviewed by author, 28 October, 2004, recorded in personal notes.

⁴⁷ BIBLE

⁴⁸ Ewald M. Plass, *What Luther Says* (St. Louis: Concordia, 1959), 3:14, 28. Exposition of Micah 4:3. in Bill Haynes, "A Christian View of the 'Just War' Theory," *Religion Today* (accessed October 2004): available from <http://www.crosswalk.com>; Internet.

⁴⁹ Thomas Aquinas, "On War" Question 40 *Summa Theologica II-II*, (Benziger Bros. Ed. 1947), quoted in Bill Haynes, "A Christian View of the 'Just War' Theory" *Religion Today* (accessed October 2004): available from <http://www.crosswalk.com>; Internet.

Christianity continues to teach that all wars are evil but sometimes a necessity.

Whenever a country decides to go to war, we have lost our ability to negotiate peace.

War must be the last resort. "To choose to go to war is choosing the lesser of two evils."⁵⁰ This is what theologians call the Realist Perspective.

Realist Perspective

The Realist Perspective recognizes that wars are going to happen. History and media headlines provide sufficient evidence that "peace" cannot always be the Christian response to the evil that people and nations perpetrate. Christian philosopher Arthur Holmes says, "To call war anything less than evil would be self-deception. The Christian conscience has recognized the tragic character of war throughout history. The issue that tears the Christian conscience is not whether war is good, but whether it is in all cases avoidable."⁵¹ The death, destruction, horrors, personal, and property losses of war are real issues. For a Christian to think about and wrestle with the issues of war is to struggle with the problem of evil. How then have Christians responded to the problem of evil as it relates to war? How do these soldiers deal with the internal cognitive dissonance they hold in their soul? These many issues are waged on the Christian soldier's human heart.

⁵⁰ "What Does the Bible Say About War?" available from <http://www.umc.org/abouttheumc/policy/political/g-military.htm>; internet.

⁵¹ Arthur F. Holmes, "The Just War" *War: Four Christian Views* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 1991), 117.

CHAPTER 4:

RELIGIOUS THERAPY: COPING, FORGIVENESS, & PRAYER

It has been said for many centuries by different religions that psychological disorders are caused by sin. Are mental disorders actually a true result of sin?⁵² Though it has never been completely proven that mental disorders are a true result of sin, a well-known psychologist, O.H. Mowrer (1961), attempted to bring the concept of sin into psychotherapy.⁵³ Obsession with sin has been examined both positively and negatively as a constructive control on behavior, and as an arouser of guilt, depression, and distress. "Obsession with sin and guilt seems to correlate within the religious frameworks that stress moral perfection."⁵⁴ Such an emphasis can incite feelings of low self-esteem and worthlessness, which have the potential of contributing to mental disorders. This obsession with sin can also be stated as a form of cognitive dissonance such as when your behavior differs from your beliefs. The need to eradicate sin and reduce guilt is a very powerful motive, and without productive coping skills, an individual may suffer from a psychological disorder. Therefore, individuals who know they have sinned feel cognitive dissonance internally which can cause mental disorders; people are moral perfectionists

⁵² D.C. O'Connell "Is Mental Illness a Result of Sin? In a Godin (Ed.), Child and Adult Before God (Brussels: Lumen Vitae Press, 1961)55-64. Quoted in Spilka, 529.

⁵³ O.H. Mowrer, *The Crisis in Psychiatry and Religion* (Princeton, NJ: Van Nostrand, 1961). Quoted in Spilka, 480.

⁵⁴ W. Miller, "Why Do Christians Break Down" (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg, 1973). Cited in Spilka, 480.

and feel the need to make improvements to their faults, especially if they are religious and have sinned.

This chapter will discuss general strategies soldiers may use to cope and adjust to the aftereffect of the tragedies in war, based on Christian approaches. As shown in Chapter 1, about ninety-eight percent of all soldiers have difficulties in dealing with the aftereffects of war. Beside the experience of my friend 'Ryan,' introduced in the first pages of this paper, I wanted to have knowledge of other stories involving the questioning of one's own beliefs as it pertains to their involvement in war and death. I asked a Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel who had been in the military for 21 years, a minister for 27 years, and who had worked with Rangers, Special Forces, and Aviation Operations, if he knew anybody who had lost their faith in God after returning from war; he said that he had worked with such people. He said, the best way to help them, is to "give them space" but also to let them know about the grace of God and the forgiveness of God. He then told me about an emotional experience he felt during a sermon after he returned from a mission in Somalia. This mission was so remarkable that it intrigued the public and a movie was made in its honor. This movie was the famous, Black Hawk Down. A quick background of this story is as follows:

On Sunday, Oct. 3, 1993, attack helicopters dropped about 120 elite American soldiers into a busy neighborhood in the heart of Mogadishu, Somalia. Their mission was to abduct several top lieutenants of Somali Warlord, Mohamed Farrah Aidid, and return to base. It was supposed to take about an hour. Instead, two of their high-tech UH-60 Blackhawk attack helicopters were shot down. The men were pinned down through a long and terrible night in a hostile city, fighting for their lives. When they

emerged the following morning, 18 Americans were dead and 73 were wounded. One helicopter pilot, Michael Durant, had been carried off by an angry mob. He was still alive, held captive somewhere in the city.

This is a tragedy construed of well-laid plans gone awry, of tragic blunders, of skillful soldiering, heroism, and occasional cowardice. The portrait reveals a military force that underestimated its enemy. The assault was launched into the most dangerous part of Mogadishu in daylight, even though the Ranger and Delta forces were trained and equipped primarily to work in darkness - where their night-vision devices can afford a decisive advantage. Commanders who thought it unlikely that Somalis could shoot down helicopters saw five shot down (three limped back to base before crash-landing). Ground rescue convoys were blocked for hours by barricades and ambushes - leaving at least five U.S. soldiers to die awaiting rescue, including two Delta sergeants who were posthumously awarded Medals of Honor.⁵⁵

The American soldiers were so confident of a quick victory that they neglected to take night-vision devices and water, both deeply needed later. Most of the Rangers who fought were only a few years out of high school. These young men were shocked to find themselves "bleeding on the dirt streets of an obscure African capital for a cause so unessential that President Clinton called off their mission the day after the fight."⁵⁶ Carefully defined rules of engagement, calling for soldiers to fire only on Somalis who aimed weapons at them, were quickly discarded in the heat of the fight. Most soldiers interviewed said that through most of the fight, they fired on crowds and eventually at anyone and anything, they saw.

Every battle is a drama played out apart from broader political issues. Soldiers cannot concern themselves with the decisions that bring them to a

⁵⁵ Mark Bowden, *A Defining Battle* (book on-line) (Philadelphia News Papers Inc, 1997, accessed October, 2004): Found in the Inquirer *Black Hawk Down*, available from <http://inquirer.philly.com/packages/somalia/sitemap.asp>; Internet.

⁵⁶ Mark Bowden, *A Defining Battle* (book on-line) (Philadelphia News Papers Inc, 1997, accessed October, 2004): Found in the Inquirer *Black Hawk Down*, available from <http://inquirer.philly.com/packages/somalia/sitemap.asp>; Internet.

fight. They trust their leaders not to risk their lives for too little. Once the battle is joined, they fight to survive, to kill before they are killed. The story of a battle is timeless. It is about the same things whether in Troy or Gettysburg, Normandy or the Ia Drang. It is about soldiers, most of them young, trapped in a fight to the death. The extreme and terrible nature of war touches something essential about being human, and soldiers do not always like what they learn.⁵⁷

For those who survive, the battle lives on in their memories, nightmares, and in the dull ache of old wounds, long after the reasons for it have been forgotten.

After learning about the history of this terrible mission, it is easy to understand the horrors billowing in the minds of these young survivors, which included the Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel. This chaplain was an active participant through this battle, and when he returned, he had to try to help the soldiers who had survived, help the families that were left behind, and try to understand all that happened in his own mind. He said that this experience was emotionally, physically, mentally, and religiously draining.

Later, he was giving a sermon on Christ the King Sunday and at the end of his sermon, he asked the congregation, "Why do we call Christ the King?" He told me, at that point in time, he honestly could not think of a reason. He told me through heartfelt words that at this point he knew he was angry with God. He questioned God's love but he never turned his back. He was just angry. He told me that when faced with issues similar to these, the most important thing is to remember the grace of God.⁵⁸ Individuals, who are angry with God, especially in times of tragedy, can remember the grace of God and all that God has done for us. God will not only forgive us, but also our enemies.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Chaplain Lieutenant Colonel, interviewed by Macey Furstenau, 28 October, 2004, recorded in personal notes.

God has shown that He is gracious because He gave His only son to die for our sins with the knowledge that we will probably sin against Him again. Grace can be represented when we take communion; it represents Christ's blood that was shed for our sins. If a soldier has accepted Jesus Christ as his/her Savior, then they have a reason to worship. The opposite is also true if a soldier has never confessed to God that they are sinners and they can benefit from His grace and place their trust in God as their best means of salvation. It is through God's Grace that we are saved. A soldier in war can use God's Grace to help him cope by knowing He is with him, loves him, and with the grace of God we will be forgiven. As a coping mechanism, soldiers may use this knowledge of God's grace to manage their anger, disbelief, and a myriad of other issues that may be brought about by war and combat.

Coping

Coping means trying to resolve the difficulties that confront us as human beings or dealing with what cannot be resolved. Everyone during their lifetime has had to cope with struggles in their lives. According to Lazarus and Folkman, coping can be achieved in any of three ways – changing the environment, changing ourselves, or changing both to some degree. “Adaptation” involves the second or third possibility; “adjustment” more strictly implies self-modification to meet situation requirements.⁵⁹ Though it may be disputed that individual religiosity is commonly treated as if it were a characteristic of personality, those who have studied the role of religion in coping are mostly concerned with it as a process variable, asking what it does for the person and how it functions when problems arise.

⁵⁹ R.S. Lazarus and S. Folkman *Stress, Appraisal, and Coping* (New York: Springer, 1984): quoted in Bernard Spilka and others, *The Psychology of Religion* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 80.

One of the leading scholars in psychology who researched the role of faith in relation to coping behavior is Kenneth Pargament of Bowling Green State University. Over the years, he has been meticulously defining and assessing the contributions of religion to the various facets of the coping process. His book, The Psychology of Religion and Coping, is the classic work in this field. He has written:

People do not face stressful situations without resources. They rely on a system of beliefs, practices, and relationships, which affects how they deal with difficult situations. In the coping process, this orienting system is translated into concrete situation-specific appraisals, activities, and goals. Religion is part of this general orienting system. A person with a strong religious faith, who suffers a disabling injury, must find a way to move from the generalities of belief to the specifics of dealing with the injury.⁶⁰

Building on Lazarus and Folkman's work, Pargament identifies two main steps in the coping process. The first stage is termed "appraisal" in which the person reflects on what happened, such as killing another human being in war, witnessing a comrade die, or seeing other atrocities in war. The individual implicitly asks, "What does this mean to me," and has to decide whether the situation is irrelevant, positive, or negative. If the answer is negative, as in the case of a soldier experiencing cognitive dissonance, the next question is, "What can I do about it?" This step, though sounding simple, is actually very complicated for the soldier experiencing dissonance. The soldier needs to escape denial and recognize that he is indeed upset about what happened during combat and that he did kill another human being. The soldier needs to associate his stress and psychological discomfort to combat in order to continue to the next step during the coping process.⁶¹

⁶⁰ M.K. Silverman and K.I. Pargament "God Help me: III. Longitudinal and prospective studies on effects of religious coping efforts on the outcomes of significant negative life events" Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, (1990), quoted in Bernard Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 481.

⁶¹ Ibid.

Prayer

Dealing with the problem is the next step in the coping process, and the act of deciding how to do this has been labeled "secondary appraisal."⁶² During this step, the soldier will assess his/her personal resources for dealing with the predicament. "A religious person may do a number of things, one of which is praying – a behavior that Holahan and Moos (1987) view as an active, cognitive coping strategy. The praying person is doing something, making an appeal to the highest power possible for help in overcoming misfortune and suffering."⁶³ This process can be constructive, in that it can spur the individual to adopt new means to solve a problem. Prayer however, can also be deconstructive if it causes the soldier to avoid actively seeking to confront the predicament by trusting God passively to solve the dilemma.

However, prayer is usually regarded as a positive coping devise directed toward both solving problems and facilitating personal growth.⁶⁴ Other psychologists see religious ritual, including prayer, as a means of controlling one's emotions, while others yet see it as an effective mechanism, in that praying may be the only practical way of dealing with many tragedies.⁶⁵

⁶²M.K. Silverman and K.I. Pargament "God Help Me: III. Longitudinal and prospective studies on effects of religious coping efforts on the outcomes of significant negative life events" Paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, San Francisco, (1990), quoted in Bernard Spilka and others, *The Psychology of Religion* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 482.

⁶³ C.J. Holahan and R.H. Moos "Personal and Contextual Determinants of Coping Strategies" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52 (1987) 946-955. Quoted in Bernard Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion* (New York: The Guilford Press, 2003), 482.

⁶⁴ S. Folkman, R.S. Dunkel-Schetter and A. De Longis "Dynamics of a Stressful Encounter: Cognitive Appraisal, Coping, and Encounter Outcomes" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 50 (1986): 183-195. quoted in Spilka, 488.

⁶⁵ Controlling emotions, H.G. Kownig, K.I. Pargament and J. Nelsen "Religious Coping and Health Status in Medically Ill Hospitalized Older Adults" *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 186 (1998): 513-521. practical way of dealing, J.P. Bjork and L.L. Klewicki "The Effects of Stressor Type of Projected Coping" *Journal of Traumatic Stress*, 10 (1997): 481- 497. both quoted in Spilka, 488.

There are many different types of prayer, however, the most common have been identified as "petitionary," "ritualistic," "meditational," "confessional," "thanksgiving," "intercessory," "self-improvement," and "conversational."⁶⁶ People use different types of prayers depending on the situation at hand.

Petitionary prayers are often used for individuals who are dealing with frustration or threat. This type of prayer is frequently spontaneous, and is used when an individual feels as if they are losing self-dependence and need help. Petitionary prayer is also closely related to self-improvement prayer and consists of addressing a divine being directly to request something, such as guidance or physical healing for oneself. When an individual requests guidance or physical healing for another person, this is what is called intercessory prayer. Intercessory prayer is a form of what is known in alternative medicine as distance healing. Studies have shown that when an individual with terminal cancer has family, friends, or congregations praying for him/her they have a tendency to live longer than expected.⁶⁷ Intercessory prayer can be helpful for soldiers who are injured, suffering from a psychological disorder, or facing cognitive dissonance, or are troubled about a comrade's death or injury, etc.

Meditational prayers, on the other hand, also called Contemplative or Center Based prayers, center one on God. They are often used to reduce anger, lessen anxiety, and to aid relaxation. This type of prayer is conducted by sitting still and silent, while trying to tune everything out except God. These individuals try to focus all their

⁶⁶ David and others "The multidimensionality of prayer and its role as a source of secondary control" paper presented at the annual convention of the American Psychological Association, Washington, D.C. 1992. quoted in Spilka, 488.

⁶⁷ Gary P. Posner, MD, "An Examination of the Media Coverage of a Prayer Study-in-Progress" *The Scientific Review of Alternative Medicine*, 2, no. 2 (1998) assessed, November, 2004; available from <http://members.aol.com/garypos/prayerstudyinprog.html>; internet.

attention, thoughts, feelings... everything on God. This is very helpful to soldiers not only in a spiritual or religious aspect, but for the psychological aspect too. The psychological aspect I am talking about here is reducing the effects of adrenaline, stress, and fear which can promote psychological disorders.

When in combat, surprised by a loud noise, or frightened, a chemical is released in the body. This chemical called cortisol, rushes to the adrenal glands in the brain. Other hormones that suppress cortisol also rush into the brain to try to balance the hormones back to normalcy. These hormones are trying to flush out the cortisol from the brain and send it down to the kidneys. If everything works out as planned, the body will return to a homeostatic balance. However, if either the hibitor or the inhibitor chemicals dominate one or the other, the person will experience an on-going state of internal imbalance. This condition is known as stress and it can have serious consequences on brain cells.⁶⁸

The sympathetic nervous system is what turns on the fight-or-flight response while the parasympathetic nervous system is supposed to turn it off and promote relaxation. The sympathetic nervous system also increases breathing, heart rate, and blood pressure. This moves more oxygen-rich blood faster to the brain and to the muscles needed for more fighting or fleeing.⁶⁹ This comes easily because there is plenty of energy to do either fighting or fleeing; adrenaline causes a rapid release of glucose and fatty acids into your bloodstream, which also heightens senses such as hearing, seeing, smell, and you are less apt to feel pain. The parasympathetic nervous system shuts down digestion, bladder control, and sphincter control. As the parasympathetic nervous system

⁶⁸ Robert M. Sapolsky, "Why Stress is Bad For Your Brain" *Science* (MN- Minitex Statewide Database Access Program. Infotrac, Aug. 9, 1996): v273 (5276), 749.

⁶⁹ John D. McArthur *The Human Brain and Stress* (The Franklin Institute Online by Unisys, 2004).

advances your body's defense mechanisms for further war experiences, it also strengthens the immune system, and it improves mood. This happens because of the adrenaline that is rushing through your body, which gives a euphoric feeling. "This combat high is like getting an injection of morphine – you float around, laughing, joking, and having a great time, totally oblivious to the dangers around you."⁷⁰ Although this sounds like fun, it is actually extremely dangerous, and it could lead to combat addiction.

Even with all of these side effects, cortisol continues to hinder other abilities. When cortisol is in the brain, it reduces your ability to remember during the stressful situation such as combat. "Cortisol interferes with the function of neurotransmitters, the chemicals that brain cells use to communicate with each other. Excessive cortisol can make it difficult to think or retrieve long-term memories."⁷¹ This could be another possible reason why soldiers forget when faced with traumatic and stressful situations.

If these stress hormones remain active for too long they can injure and even kill cells in the hippocampus, the area of your brain needed for memory and learning. In order to get the body back to normalcy, the body often needs and requires conscious effort to initiate the relaxation response and to get back to metabolic equilibrium.

This is where meditational prayer comes in as an aid to induce relaxation after a stressful combat mission, which causes a domino effect. Meditation will usually promote relaxation, which will trigger cortisol levels to drop, which will cause metabolic equilibrium and less stress; finally, with any luck, it will prevent serious psychological trauma such as fatigue state, confusional state, anxiety states, obsessional/compulsive states, and/or character disorders.

⁷⁰ Lt. Col. Dave Grossman, *On Killing* (New York: Little Brown Company, 1996), 234.

⁷¹ John D. McArthur *The Human Brain and Stress* (The Franklin Institute Online by Unisys, 2004).

Two other types of prayer are ritualistic prayer and habitual prayer. Both of these prayers involve reciting texts that have been learned as part of a particular religious tradition or training. This type of prayer can be helpful especially if the soldier is confused about how or what to pray for/about. The difference between the two types of prayer is the following: habitualistic prayer involves only one individual performing a traditional prayer, while ritualistic prayer is done with other people, as in a community. This is intended for soldiers to feel involved in a group for a feeling of security in knowing that it is an assembly of soldiers praying to God versus only one person. These rituals can be calming to soldiers by reminding them of better times with their congregation, friends, or family.

Ritualistic prayer is not only a beneficial way to make a connection with God, but the actual ritual is important for the psyche, too. Currently, there are no known cultures without some sort of ritual. Evidence overwhelmingly confirms that the roots of ritual run deep in both biology and the evolutionary process; it is easy to believe that ritual must perform some important function. Ritualization is involved in "communicating, restricting aggression, and increasing pair and group cohesion."⁷² Rituals are said to manage qualms about life, counter uncertainty, increase control over oneself and the environment, enhance meaning, lessen stress, reduce anxiety, control impulsivity,⁷³ and reduce fear. Rituals channel destructive and extreme emotions into controllable forms⁷⁴ and allow people/soldiers to express their emotions in groups. This facilitates social bonding. Through its emotional regulating and control functions, ritual (and specifically

⁷² D.M. Wulff "On the Origins and Goals of Religious Development" *International Journal for the Psychology of Religion*, 3 (1993): 181-186. quoted in Spilka, 524.

⁷³ J. Horner and E. Dob, *Dinosaur Lives* (New York: HarperCollins, 1997). Quoted in Spilka, 524.

⁷⁴ H. Benson, and M. Stark, *Timeless healing: The Power and biology of belief* (New York: Scribner, 1996). Quoted in Spilka, 524.

religious ritual) works to increase self-control and to counter disordered thinking and behavior. Military Chaplains can be beneficial during stressful times to help initiate group ritual(s) and prayer(s).

Conversational prayer involves speaking on a very personal level with God about feelings, thoughts, and needs. This type of prayer is talking with God in an informal conversation using normal conversational patterns, tone of voice, and vocabulary. This can be done individually or in a group. It is more beneficial for a soldier to do this in a group because it “produces an increased consciousness of God’s presence, resulting in greater vitality and unity in a Military Christian Fellowship. It is also very helpful in teaching people how to pray.”⁷⁵

When praying, a soldier may use prayer as directed inward, outward, or upward. “Inward” prayers are simple, spontaneous, uncensored efforts to connect with the divine. “Outward” prayers shift to the world and needs to be satisfied from outside the person. “Upward” prayers recognize the superior position of God and the inferior status of people.⁷⁶ Whatever the type of prayer used, or what kind of individual chooses the particular prayer, the underlying basic factor is that the soldier is trying to make a connection with God to deal with the effects of war.

Forgiveness

Another way to deal with tragedy and coping besides prayer is by forgiveness. Psychologists recently recognized that forgiveness is a necessary means of coping with distress when another person has wronged them (or someone else close to them) or has

⁷⁵ This is a lesson plan called Conversational Prayer: Small Group Military Model by a companion to the inductive Bible Study, (accessed September, 2004): available from <http://www.amcf-int.org/download/cpl.htm>; internet

⁷⁶ K.L. Ladd and B. Spilka “Inward, Outward, and Upward: Cognitive Aspects of Prayer” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 41 (2002): 475-484. quoted in Spilka, 490.

behaved in an unjust way.⁷⁷ This includes not only injury, but also negative feelings that are aroused when one reads about the mistreatment of others through the immoral use of power. This occurred during the Holocaust and it still continues in other places throughout the world. In these cases, the soldiers may dehumanize the enemy by thinking of them as less than human because they are mistreating their own citizens (mass genocide, torture, rape) and in turn, have negative feelings toward the enemy. They may also despise the enemy because of the comrades lost in battle or for the fact that they are being shot at. Terrible issues such as war crimes, using child soldiers, and using civilians as barricades are just a few of the reasons soldiers may hate the enemy during and after war. In order to fully cope, these soldiers are going to have to forgive. Empirical research has been conducted to show that not forgiving is associated with "emotional, cognitive, and behavioral responses known to correlate negatively with health,"⁷⁸ stress, hypertension, depression, and coronary heart disease.⁷⁹ Also noted in empirical research is a study by Gorsuch and Hao, which concluded that religion and forgiveness are positively correlated,⁸⁰ and forgiving can lower blood pressure and other signs of stress. To become whole, the soldier must shift from desiring revenge to desiring peace.

However, they are not only going to have to forgive the enemy, but also themselves in order to eradicate cognitive dissonance. It is important to accept personal responsibility for the act and request forgiveness. What has been done must now be seen

⁷⁷ K. I. Pargament & M.S. Rye "Forgiveness as a Method of Religious coping" In E. E.L. Worthington, Jr. & M.E. McCullough (Eds.) *Psychological Research and Theoretical perspectives* (Philadelphia: Templeton Press): 57-76. quoted in Spilka, 492.

⁷⁸ E.L. Worthington, J.W. Berry and L. Parrott III, "Unforgiveness, Forgiveness, Religion, and Health" in T.G. Plante & A.C. Sherman (Eds.), *Faith and Health: Psychological Perspectives* (New York: Guilford Press, 2001), 107-138. Quoted in Spilka 493.

⁷⁹ M. Friedman and R.H. Rosenman, *Type A Behavior and Your Yeart* (New York: Knopf, 1974). Quoted in Spilka, 68.

⁸⁰ R.L. Gorsuch and J. Y. Hao "Forgiveness: An Exploratory Factor Analysis and its Relationship to Religious Variables" *Review of Religious Research*, 34 (1976) 333-347. Quoted in Spilka, 67.

in a new light in order to reduce guilt and other negative feelings. "A religious or spiritual framework, via forgiveness, reduces inappropriate emotions and enhances the sense of control."⁸¹ This is when the military chaplain can be used as a necessary tool in the healing process. Furthermore, within a religious framework, pastoral counseling and therapy may be necessary to resolve this difficulty.

Therapeutic Religious Approaches

Some new themes and approaches intended particularly for clerical counselors and therapists include clinical pastoral education, pastoral counseling, spiritual psychotherapy, and ethical therapy. These techniques used by clerical counselors can be beneficial for soldiers in helping them to deal with their cognitive dissonance.

Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) was begun in 1925 to assist students in increasing their competency in ministry, especially in the areas of pastoral care and counseling. This form of theological education takes place not exclusively in academic classrooms, but also in clinical settings where ministry is being practiced. CPE is offered in many kinds of settings; in hospitals and health care including private, university, military, and veterans facilities; in prisons and correctional institutions; in parishes and congregations; in hospices and other places that care for the dying; in psychiatric facilities and community care; in business, industry and other workplace settings; in retirement homes and geriatric centers; in rehabilitation centers such as those for physical illness and injury as well as those working with the addicted; and in communities, both

⁸¹ Spilka, *The Psychology of Religion*, 492.

urban and rural. CPE is for those who want to increase their skills in pastoral care and counseling.

Pastoral counseling is a unique form of psychotherapy, which uses spiritual resources as well as psychological understanding for healing and growth. It is provided by certified pastoral counselors, who are not only mental health professionals but who have also had in-depth religious and/or theological training.⁸² When an individual is in need of counseling, these pastoral counselors take into consideration the entire person including, mind, body, and spirit. This can be helpful for soldiers struggling with cognitive dissonance, because their mind is obviously feeling tension, their spirit is damaged because they are questioning their faith, and possibly the body may be wounded or may be suffering from a somatoform disorder. Currently, in Alexandria, Louisiana, there is a Veterans Medical Center, which provides veterans with a wide range of medical/surgical services including pastoral psychiatric care.

Spiritual psychotherapy is based on the exploration of the human soul. This theory is a little abstract for what I am used to, but the idea is fascinating. "Spiritual Psychotherapy is an approach that supports the awakening intuition and the development of the whole human being. It is based upon the concept that life is a school within which the soul - the unique individual being - grows in partnership with all of evolution. The study of spiritual psychotherapy opens many doors to a working appreciation of "Man Know Thyself."⁸³ This type of therapy goes deeper than conventional forms of

⁸² The Counseling Center, *A Definition of Pastoral Counseling*, (on-line article) American Association of Pastoral Counseling, 2001 (assessed November, 2004): available from <http://www.counselingcenter.org/pastoral.htm>; internet.

⁸³ Dr. Nesit, "What is Spiritual Psychotherapy" *Mind, Body, Soul, and Alignment* (Rolfing Los Angeles, assessed November, 2004): available from <http://www.rolfinglosangeles.com/www-rolfinglosangeles-com/spiritual.html>; internet.

psychotherapy because it helps you attune to and release bound emotional pain from the body, energy system, and causal level of consciousness. This heals the chronic fragmentations in your own being and between yourself and the environment, and helps remove the obstacles to spiritual realization. "Spiritual Psychotherapy is the discovery of the truth about one's self-deceptive story."⁸⁴ Patients seek deliverance from their assumed victimization by outside forces. Spiritual psychotherapy assists patients in seeing through the myth of victimization by the realization that we are unconsciously creating our own suffering and symptoms for a good reason. These "good reasons" could include examples such as a soldier struggling with killing in war and what they believe about their religion and his symptoms he may be suffering from could be paralysis of his shooting arm (a somatoform disorder).

Spiritual psychologists such as Marilyn C Barrick, Ph.D., specialize in transformational work such as healing the soul and the spirit. She uses many approaches such as inner child work, dream analysis, spiritual practices, meditation, and EMDR⁸⁵ (trauma release therapy).⁸⁶ "Her mission is to inspire, illumine, nurture, and empower her

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ "EMDR: Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, was discovered by Francine Shapiro in 1987. As she walked in a park in Los Gatos, California one day, she was preoccupied with old memories and disturbing thoughts and feelings. Suddenly she realized she was feeling better and the memories seemed to be dissipating. She asked herself, "What's going on here?" She noticed that her eyes had been moving quickly back and forth. She was excited to discover that the more she did it, the better she felt. Francine experimented with friends and family. They, too, seemed to get relief when they held old images in mind and moved their eyes rapidly. Realizing the potential of her discovery, she went on to complete her doctorate in psychology. She focused her research efforts over the next decade upon creating a breakthrough therapy—EMDR, acclaimed by clinicians, lauded by crisis intervention organizations and endorsed by academicians. As one of the most extensively researched and supported methods for treating trauma, EMDR is now practiced around the world in areas where people have gone through major traumas such as war, earthquakes, fires, floods, hurricanes, bombings, etc. EMDR is a complex method of psychotherapy that integrates many of the successful elements of a range of therapeutic approaches in combination with eye movements, sound or some other form of rhythmical, bilateral brain stimulation that stimulates the brain's information processing system. The processing is similar to what happens during REM sleep—however, with EMDR, the person is awake."

⁸⁶ Marilyn C. Barrick, Ph.D., *Spiritual Psychology* (Mountain View Web Design, 1998-2004); accessed November, 2004; available from <http://www.spiritualpsychology.com/index.html>; Internet.

clients to claim their true identity and to aspire to psychological wholeness, spiritual integration, and the fulfillment of their divine purpose in life."⁸⁷

She most often focuses on deep soul pain. She defines this pain as the pain we feel when we have strayed away from our religious path and away from God (soldiers faced with cognitive dissonance because of war and religion). Through her spiritual work and EMDR therapy, soldiers will travel through a transformational period in which they learn how to reduce their pain, understand the lessons brought about by their war experience and see themselves in a new light. "Our key to moving on in life, spiritually and psychologically, is to learn the lessons our souls are meant to learn from our life experiences."⁸⁸

The third religious approach is ethical therapy. Dr. Lewis M. Andrews is the founder of ethical therapy. In Andrews's book, To Thine Own Self Be True,⁸⁹ he talks about the connection between spiritual values and ethical ones. The book also describes how ethical therapy exposes us to the fact that most of our emotional and psychological problems are a result of intricate decisions and actions we make to protect a self that we really should just expose. He shows that it is psychologically healthy to act ethical, to treat others well, to conduct yourself with very little pretense, to try to do what is right and tell the truth, etc. He presents considerable scientific evidence for this assertion throughout the book. For most of his book, he shows how a greater level of integrity can either solve psychological problems or help soldiers' better deal with their psychological tensions. This type of therapy can be beneficial for soldiers dealing with

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ Ibid.

⁸⁹ Lewis M. Andrews, PhD, *To Thine Own Self Be True: The Relationship Between Spiritual Values and Emotional Health* (New York: Bantam Double Day Dell Publishing Group, Inc., 1987). This is a summary of the book and is not a direct quote. This is just a small summary of what his book and therapies is about.

depression, guilt, and feelings of worthlessness, indecision, boredom, fear, frustration, loneliness, and anxiety.⁹⁰

Clergy members are not the only individuals who are currently learning about psychology and counseling. Psychotherapists' appreciation of the need for spiritual perspectives and understanding in their work has also been greatly enhanced. This is demonstrated by the fact that religious problems are now included in the DSM-IV which stands for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for Psychologists. This brings a new perspective to mainstream clinical psychology and psychiatry regarding the place of religion in personal life. This shows that it is important to consider a patient's religious/spiritual beliefs and values when assessing their psyche.

The educational curriculum of mental health professionals now includes training to increase awareness of their clients and patients religious and spiritual concerns. This is matched in the seminary training of clergy-to-be and in programs for those already in religious institutions; both groups are now becoming significantly recognizable with the psychological complexities they must confront when dealing with congregants' mental problems.⁹¹ Those working in this reasonably new interdisciplinary dominion have proposed a variety of innovative approaches to enhancing people's welfare and adaptive thinking/behavior.

Throughout this chapter, many different possible approaches have been discussed such as prayer, forgiveness, and a variety of therapeutic religious practices. As previously stated, prayer and forgiveness are both beneficial for soldiers struggling with cognitive dissonance during the stresses of war. Both of these 'tools' can result in

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ H. G. Koeng and D.B. Larson, "Religion and Mental Health: Evidence for an association," *International Review of Psychiatry*, 13 (2001): 67-78. quoted in Spilka, 532.

relaxing and comforting group cohesion, and possibly guidance for an individual. When a soldier is unable to deal with the stresses alone or even within their regiment, outside help may be needed. This is when military chaplains and other religious therapeutic approaches are needed to further assist with the coping of the war process. Keep in mind; none of these possible approaches solve the dissonance the soldiers are feeling. They merely help him/her deal with their internal tensions as effectively as possible without rejecting religion. Religion helps them manage.

CONCLUSION:

Many individuals in the United States have been nurtured in an environment where it is unethical to kill another human being. Under most circumstances, killing another human being is punishable by death. Furthermore, individuals with strong religious and moral beliefs may have other reasons why it is unacceptable to kill such as prohibitions against killing (thou shall not kill). I have shown how soldiers are trained to kill, even though it is an unnatural phenomenon, and how many of the soldiers must deal with the after effects of war and combat.

Besides showing the consequences of war and the psychological stresses that correspond with combat, we can conclude that war is never good. However, it is impossible to be a complete pacifist and say that we should never go to war. Wars are going to happen as the result of human sin. It is inevitable. War is the lesser of two evils. If the war is declared according to the just war theory and the individuals involved in the war follow the conduct described for a 'good' soldier, then the war is just. Another quote by C.S. Lewis states:

Does loving your enemy mean not punishing him? No, for loving myself does not mean that I ought not to subject myself to punishment – even to death. If one had committed a murder, the right Christian thing to do would be to give yourself up to the police and be hanged. It is, therefore, in my opinion, perfectly right for a Christian judge to sentence a man to death or a Christian soldier to kill an enemy. I always have thought so, ever since I became a Christian, and long before the war, and I still think so now that we are at peace. It is not good quoting, "Thou shall not kill." There are two Greek words: the ordinary word to KILL and the word to MURDER. And when Christ quotes that commandment, He uses the MURDER one in all three accounts. Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And I am told there is the same distinction in Hebrew. All killing is not murder any more than all sexual intercourse is adultery. When soldiers came to St.

John the Baptist asking what to do, he never remotely suggested that they ought to leave the army: nor did Christ when He met a Roman sergeant-major – what they called a centurion... We may kill if necessary, but we must not hate and enjoy it.⁹²

This quote by C.S. Lewis states blatantly that wars are going to happen, and evil people should be punished. Soldiers use justifications such as these when at war. However, those soldiers who are still fighting internally with what is morally right and the horrors that they witness in war need more than simple justifications.

This paper has shown that individuals experiencing cognitive dissonance, who take the easiest route to reduce their negative cognitions, tend to abandon past beliefs. In the case of a soldier experiencing cognitive dissonance with past religious beliefs versus current actions in war and combat, the easiest thing may be to abandon the religious, personal values, and beliefs one held. The simplest method to deal with cognitive dissonance does not always result in the healing of beliefs because it eradicates the beliefs instead of utilizing them as a possible tool for coping. It is not as cut and dry as some people think and more research in this area is needed.

However, this paper has also acknowledged that not all soldiers experience cognitive dissonance toward killing, combat, or war. Actually, the Chaplain of the 82nd Airborne Paratroopers said that, 80-90 percent of the men he was with in Iraq this past year expressed no qualms about killing.⁹³ However, the soldiers who are faced with cognitive dissonance during/after war do have many options available.

⁹² C.S. Lewis, *In Mere Christianity*, (New York: Macmillan, 1952), 106-107. Quoted in Wayne Martindale and Jerry Root, *The Quotable Lewis* (Wheaton, Illinois: Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., 1989), 605.

⁹³ Chaplain Major of the 82nd Airborne Paratroopers, interviewed by Macey Furstenuau, 29 October, 2004, recorded in personal notes. He stated, that the reason the percentage was so high is because most of the civilians were happy to be liberated. He did not meet a civilian who had not lost a brother, father, uncle, or other close family member to torture and death by Saddam's regime.

I firmly believe, however, that it is important that these soldiers do not fully overcome the cognitive dissonance that they feel and should not totally resolve or avoid this issue. The fact that war is evil should always remain a tension within the soldier; otherwise, soldiers in action will be merely killing machines. According to the cognitive dissonance theory, beliefs are the first thing that is disregarded. In the case of war, this belief is faith in God and it is the first thing that will go out the window.

The literature and studies within this thesis show some different methods available to soldiers dealing with cognitive dissonance that are more beneficial than disregarding their past beliefs. Prayer, for example, is a positive coping mechanism beneficial for making an appeal to the highest power possible for help in overcoming misfortune and suffering. Prayer is not only useful for reaching a higher power, but also in forming unity within a group, so that each soldier knows they are not fighting alone; many others are dealing with the same internal and external stresses. Prayer is also a valuable tool for relaxing a soldier, by lowering cortisol levels that could lead to long-term health problems.

Forgiveness is also an excellent tool when dealing with hostility issues toward oneself or toward the opposition. However, with all of these possible tools available for soldiers, these coping methods are not a resolution, but instead they are a way to deal with the tension one feels during war and combat. Religion offers a coping mechanism not a resolution. Religion balances the cognitive dissonance and yet keeps the tension.

War is never good! It is caused by human sin; however, it is also occasionally a necessity to prevent a worse evil. A soldier fighting in war is choosing the lesser of two evils. He may not feel as if he is right in killing another human being, but God's grace

will help him deal with it. If a soldier does resolve their cognitive dissonance between war and religion they might say, "That 'hajji' over their needs to die." If they resolve it, then soldiers may think of killing as right, fun, and/or good.

Trying to forgive someone, dealing with cognitive dissonance, and utilizing different coping mechanisms can be very difficult. When help is needed, the brigade chaplain is one of their closest allies in understanding both religion and war.

Not every brigade has a chaplain because it depends on the type of mission being performed. However, every deployed brigade will have a chaplain in the area of operation that can be contacted.⁹⁴ The number one duty a chaplain carries out is to provide support. This support includes, religious services, rites, sacraments, ordinances, pastoral care, religious education, family life ministry, institutional ministry, professional support to the command and staff, management and administration, religious/humanitarian support, religious support in planning/operations, religious support training, confidentiality, sacred confidence, spiritual leadership, and support of the Commander in the execution of Civil Military Operations. Chaplains also perform worship services, care for the dying, and honor of the dead. They also give advice to the Commander on morals and morale as affected by religion, the impact of local religions on the military mission, and the ethical impact of command decisions. Chaplains are

⁹⁴ The brigade chaplain supervises the other chaplains as members of the Unit Ministry Team. The Unit Ministry Team (UMT) is made up of one chaplain and one chaplain assistant and they are assigned to a unit at either Battalion/Squadron or Brigade/Regiment/ or group. The unit is either operationally committed, about to be deployed, returning from deployment, or in a Garrison situation. In Garrison, the priorities of religious support must fit in with the command's primary responsibilities such as training and family support. However, when about to be deployed, being deployed, or returning from deployment, the chaplain's duties include religious support to ensure the free exercise of religion.

always available to help soldiers as long as the help coincides with the military policy.⁹⁵

However, chaplains are always willing and ready to help.

Besides the military Chaplain, religious therapies offer another variety of strategies that can assist combat soldiers in acknowledging what they have done in combat and cope with the trauma they experience because of it.

Through these coping strategies and mechanisms, soldiers should be able to obtain help when needed. It is unnecessary to jettison religious beliefs solely on the basis of internal/external contradiction. Soldiers can be and frequently are religious and in the military.

In writing this thesis, I have further confirmed my beliefs on how awful and horrific wars are. I feel for the soldiers and civilians personally witnessing or involved in combat. I am saddened for the families, friends, and loved ones who have lost someone to war. In all these instances, the tragedy of war is strengthened. Through writing this paper I have also further confirmed my beliefs in realizing that no matter how awful war is, it is sometimes unavoidable. The soldiers and individuals who fight in the U.S. military for the freedoms, safety, and well-being of others deserve much more respect and admiration than they already receive. These men and women who put their lives on the line are heroes in my heart and mind. They have a burden of doing something that I don't think I could ever do; kill another human being. I empathize with my friend Ryan, and the other soldiers who experience cognitive dissonance in war, and hope that they too, realize, as I did through this paper, that religion is a positive coping mechanism. Religion can be a

⁹⁵ "The policy is to accommodate religious practices when those accommodations will not have an adverse impact on military readiness, unit cohesion, standards, health, safety or discipline, or otherwise interfere with the performance of the soldier's military duties." "Religious Support" *Field Manual No. 1-05 (16-1)* on-line (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army) accessed November from <http://www.chapnet.army.mil/reserves/Documents/FMpercent201-05.htm>; internet.

beneficial means to balance the cognitive dissonance a soldier may feel, without completely disregarding the tension the soldier feels so that he or she may remain both a Christian and a soldier.

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