Prophetic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma: forging a constructive practical theology of lived religion from organized trauma response ministries

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Dissertation

PROPHETIC PASTORAL CARE IN THE AFTERMATH OF TRAUMA: FORGING A CONSTRUCTIVE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF LIVED RELIGION FROM ORGANIZED TRAUMA RESPONSE MINISTRIES

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PROPHETIC PASTORAL CARE IN THE AFTERMATH OF TRAUMA: FORGING
A CONSTRUCTIVE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF LIVED RELIGION
FROM ORGANIZED TRAUMA RESPONSE MINISTRIES

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Dedicated to the lives and memories of Moses, Kenny, LeVar, and Jaewon
And all those lost to and impacted by violence in our world.

“O, mortal, can these bones live again?...Prophesy to the breath, prophesy, O mortal!”
(Ezekiel 37: 3, 9)

“The dead have a pact with the living.” From Ysaye Barnwell’s song “Breaths”

“Only in the sense that we expose ourselves over and over again to annihilation can that which is indestructible be found in us.” Pema Chödrön

"My heart is moved by all I cannot save; So much has been destroyed; I have to cast my lot with those who, age after age, perversely, with no extraordinary power, reconstitute the world."

Adrienne Rich
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PROPHETIC PASTORAL CARE IN THE AFTERMATH OF TRAUMA: FORGING A CONSTRUCTIVE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF LIVED RELIGION FROM ORGANIZED TRAUMA RESPONSE MINISTRIES

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ABSTRACT

Violent traumatic events impact communities and demand ministerial responses that are not only pastoral in nature but also prophetic, challenging institutional and sociocultural roots of violence through vision and analysis. There is a noticeable gap in qualitative studies of the prophetic pastoral practices of organized trauma response ministries in addressing violence. This dissertation addresses this gap through qualitative case studies of two trauma response ministries operating in diverse cultural contexts.

The dissertation forges a beginning constructive practical theology of trauma from the voices, experiences, and practices of survivors and their trauma response ministry providers, lifting up the need for an intercultural approach and examining the results for untapped theological resources for constructive practical theologies of trauma. By integrating trauma studies into lived religion approaches, this dissertation conceptualizes survivors’ use of material objects, rituals, and surroundings to enact a ‘theopoetics of material religion.’ This theopoetics
captures the constructive theological significance of survivors’ use of material objects, rituals, and surroundings for prophetic and performative testimony and witness.

The introduction and chapter one make the case that addressing the problem of violent trauma in the American context calls for an approach rooted in prophetic pastoral care practices, one that is attentive to the particular contextual realities and resources of communities living in the aftermath of trauma. Using a lived religion methodological approach enhanced by trauma studies and a theopoetics of material religion, chapter two presents a case study of an inner-city lay-led trauma response ministry that serves family survivors of homicide. Chapter three presents a case study of a denominational-based trauma response ministry’s services to a suburban congregation following a gun assault. Chapter four illustrates the theological themes witnessed in each case study and places these in intercultural dialogue. The final chapter engages current constructive theologies of trauma and brings the insights of the case studies to bear on interpretations of theology in the aftermath of trauma. The dissertation begins to forge of a constructive practical theology of trauma and concludes with strategic recommendations for constructive practical theologians, pastoral care providers, and social and ecclesial structures.
PREFACE

This dissertation began long before the actual topic took final shape – it began in the specifics of my life world and identity as well as in specific sociohistorical events. I grew up as a 4th generation mid-western American, racialized as white but of Irish, French, German, and Welsh descent. I was baptized Catholic but generally unchurched until my late young adulthood. I also was the first in my family history to complete a college education through the generosity of financial aid at an elite women’s college, Wellesley College. My life world journey eventually led me to discovering a Unitarian Universalist congregation in Newton, MA at age 28 in late 1989, and this began a different intersection of my life with history.

In April 1991, two young boys, Charles Copney, Jr., age 11, and Korey Grant, age 15, were killed in a gang related incident in Roxbury, MA, Charles being the youngest such victim during a period of heightened violence in Boston.¹ My particular suburban congregation was involved already in racial and economic justice work,² but in the aftermath of Charles’ and Korey’s murders, my then minister, Reverend Gerry Krick, spontaneously turned his pulpit over to an African-American community activist. At the activist’s invitation, members of the First Unitarian Society in Newton began to develop a youth program primarily for African-American families and children in low-income Roxbury. This was the beginning of what would become a weekend youth ministry I led as a layperson for nearly 18 years under the Unitarian Universalist Urban Ministry. Simultaneously I entered social work school and worked for many years in


²Issues of race and class were brought to light for Boston area congregations when a white suburban man accused a black man of murdering his pregnant wife, but later admitted his own guilt and committed suicide. See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Charles_Stuart_(murderer) (accessed October 16, 2013).
urban clinical social work, including eventually as a clinic director and now educator in the social work field.

In the journey of completing this dissertation, I realized how deeply these initial career choices frame the way I view the world and human being in it through the interdisciplinary lens I bring as both clinical social worker and minister. This includes social work’s dual focus on the macro (sociocultural) and micro (clinical) levels of human ecological development, as well as its emphasis on strengths and resiliencies in human development.³ Ten years after becoming a clinical social worker, I also chose to go to seminary and became ordained as a Unitarian Universalist clergyperson and community minister. My education in both of these fields occurred during my time of praxis with this inner-city youth ministry.

In September 2006, the first semester of my practical theological doctoral studies, my African American goddaughter’s 17 year old nephew, Kenny Hall, was shot and killed in Boston, a murder that remains unsolved today. It was this tragic event that brought me into more direct contact with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, though I had been well aware of their work for many years and had previously experienced the murder of another young adult related to our youth ministry in 1995, Moses Grant. The next month, October 2006, our UU urban youth ministries experienced three additional murders within a week’s span, murders that impacted on staff and youth, including another young adult related to several of our youth,

LeVar Jackson. Once again I referred families to the Peace Institute. During this period, I also felt compelled to take pictures of the spontaneous street memorials that sprang up in the aftermath for both Kenny and LeVar, memorials that I noticed springing up more frequently since the widely covered murder of 10 year old Trina Persad in 2002.4

In the spring of 2007, I was taking an anthropology course for my doctoral program when I mentioned the phenomenon of the street memorials I had been observing and was encouraged by my professor, Christal Whelan, to engage in a pilot study of these spontaneous shrines. My research introduced me to Jack Santino’s international studies of spontaneous shrines and to Johann Baptist Metz’ use of the phrase “dangerous memories” as I considered the performative prophetic protest function of such street memorials alongside their commemorative function.5 This initial pilot study led to a separate pilot study of the funerals and specialized orders of funeral service developed by the Peace Institute.

This dissertation project thus is threaded with autoethnographic experiences and perspectives and a deep sense of commitment to the families of Boston whose lives have been so deeply intertwined with my own for well over 22 years now. My exposure to the impact of violent trauma has been up close and personal, deepening my own need to lift up the voices of those who have suffered the unspeakable as well as those who companion and serve them in the aftermath. This includes those in my own Unitarian Universalist denomination who discover


that trauma and violence cut across all the lines of race and class, as well as power, privilege, and other oppressions that may otherwise divide us in our sociocultural imaginations and limited institutions and life experiences. There are no neat “objective” lines here – trauma and violence show no respect for our desires for tidiness and control.

On more than one occasion as I wrote, I felt a deep sense of despair that I would ever finish this dissertation. Indeed, if I had not held a profound ethical commitment to those I interviewed I do not think I would have ever attempted, let alone completed, a dissertation process. I am so very grateful for the support of many in this journey that has taken several unexpected detours along the way. First, there are no words to adequately thank my families of birth (my parents, sister, and brother and their spouses and children) and of adoption (my African American goddaughter and her family) for all that they have shared with me over the years and all that I have learned from them – their practical support, their emotional support, their humor and patience, and their political commitments to a more just world. I also have been gifted to know and serve many families in Roxbury, Dorchester, and Mattapan, as well as in Unitarian Universalist congregations, particularly in Quincy and Newton, and to be part of a larger community of professional love, care, and ministry. There are also no words to adequately express all that I have learned and received from you, as well members, staff, and supporters of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, UU Trauma Response Ministry, Unitarian Universalist Association, and Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church who graciously agreed to be part of this dissertation study.

I am enormously grateful for the ongoing financial support of Boston University’s School of Theology and their Center for Practical Theology, as well as for the major scholarship I
received from the Fund for Nurturing Unitarian Universalist Scholarship under the Panel on Theological Education. Growing up working class, the need for such ongoing financial support in graduate school education is profoundly real to me. There are countless moments of supportive interactions, readings, and editing along the way that I acknowledge, with profound gratitude in my heart, by professors, administrators, colleagues, friends, and fellow students at both Boston University’s School of Theology and School of Social Work, including also those who have supported me in my work environments and congregations – you know who you are! I am particularly grateful for the opportunity to present at three different gatherings of Unitarian Universalist Scholars, as well as at the Collegium of Liberal Religious Scholars and the American Academy of Religion.

I also want to thank my advisors, readers, and dissertation committee. This includes the wisdom of Dean Mary Elizabeth Moore and the honest humor and supportive perspectives offered by Phillis Sheppard. I thank John Berthrong for his support of my Unitarian Universalist journey in very concrete ways, including through my final fellowship process by serving on my advisory committee and holding my feet to the fire! I particularly want to acknowledge the patient emotional support and disciplined attention of Dale Andrews and those regular coffee shop meetings as I initially worked my way through my comprehensive exams. Dale’s ongoing mentorship in qualitative research writing and scholarship for this final dissertation continued to be invaluable as well. Shelly Rambo, my lead advisor – you are such a powerful role model to me as an educator and writer. I don’t know if you appreciate fully how the affirmation of my mind and capacities particularly impacts me as a female scholar of working class background! You have touched the lives and scholarship of so many women, and I know your work as a
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accountable to my methodological commitments.

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finally have been able to complete this particular leg of a life journey. I look forward to our
ongoing and shared life journey and new adventures together!
INTRODUCTION

Need for a Practical Theological Response to Violent Trauma

The people of the United States are living in one of the most violent nations on earth according to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As cited by Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Howard Spivak from CDC reports, our homicide rate is 10 times as high as Western Europe, 70 times as high as Japan, and 5 times as high as Australia, Canada, and New Zealand. Of 26 industrialized nations, 73 percent of all child homicides occur in the United States. “Since 1982, there have been at least 62 mass shootings across the country, with the killings unfolding in 30 states from Massachusetts to Hawaii. Twenty-five of these mass shootings have occurred since 2006, and seven of them took place in 2012,” the year I began to write this dissertation. That year ended with the extraordinary mass shooting of 20 preschool children and 8 adults in Newtown, CT (inclusive of the shooter’s mother and his own subsequent suicide). Violence experienced by individuals and communities begets trauma—a rupturing of the experience of bodily safety, meaning-making, and communal connections. Such experiences

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1 Deborah Prothrow-Stith and Howard R. Spivak, Murder Is No Accident: Understanding and Preventing Youth Violence in America (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004), 39. Also as reported in 2011 by the CDC: “During 1991-2007, homicide was ranked as one of the top four leading causes of death each year for persons aged 1-40 years living in the United States. . . Homicide rates for males are estimated to be approximately 3-4 times higher than that for females; among persons aged 20--24 years, the male homicide rate is 6 times higher than that for females. In addition, minority racial/ethnic children and young adults in the United States are disproportionately affected by homicide. During 1999-2002, among persons aged 10-19 years, the homicide rate for blacks was estimated to be 17.8 per 100,000 population, a rate 10 times that of whites, (1.8 per 100,000) and higher than the rates reported for American Indians/Alaska Natives (AI/ANs) (6.0 per 100,000), Asian/Pacific Islanders (A/PIs) (2.9 per 100,000), and Hispanics (8.0 per 100,000).” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, “Homicides --- United States, 1999—2007,” Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, Supplements, 60(01), (January 14, 2011): 67.


of violent trauma can have practical and pastoral theological impact within communities, disrupting faith beliefs and practices and resulting in profound human brokenness at both personal and communal levels.

Despite the prevalence of violence in the United States, when a violent traumatic event occurs in a congregation or community setting, often clergy can turn only to charitable or government agencies, informal networks, and secular consultants for assistance, such as the Red Cross or local mental health agencies. It is rare to find an organized institutional trauma ministry that correlates interdisciplinary social scientific bases of trauma knowledge and experiences with spiritual or ministerial practices and rituals for personal healing and public advocacy in the aftermath of such violence.\textsuperscript{4} It is even rarer to find scholarship on what such a trauma ministry might look like or how it might function when organized institutionally.\textsuperscript{5}

Given the pervasiveness and enormity of human-made violence as a contemporary social problem, especially in the United States context, such potential for disruption of communities calls for urgent practical theological responses that are both pastoral and prophetic—responses

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\textsuperscript{4}I am distinguishing between trauma ministries that seek to critically and mutually correlate the findings of science and respect for diversity into their work from ministries which seek purely to supply concrete aid and relief and/or from ministries that respond to traumas purely from an evangelical stance and seek to use the traumatic event as an opportunity for conversion and missionary work. This also is not to deny that any ministry might struggle with its confessional tendencies when serving in the context of diversity. See James N. Poling and Donald E. Miller, \textit{Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry} (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985).

\textsuperscript{5}Generally, there is a lack of adequate research on the possible range of trauma response ministries, including intradenominational response teams. A significant pastoral care resource contribution, specifically for congregations impacted by trauma, has been by Jill M. Hudson, \textit{Congregational Trauma: Caring, Coping, & Learning} (The Alban Institute, 1998). Hudson drew on a call for case studies from congregations and culled a lengthy list of practical tips from her anecdotal studies. She did not specifically study institutionalized trauma response ministries nor prophetic dimensions of trauma response, however many of her pastoral care recommendations do correlate with findings in this dissertation. Another resource of note for congregational impact, including traumatic impact, in the aftermath of clergy misconduct is Beth Ann Gaede, ed., \textit{When a Congregation is Betrayed: Responding to Clergy Misconduct} (The Alban Institute, 2006). Gaede’s text includes one very brief chapter with tips for developing intradenominational response teams to clergy misconduct.
that heal and transform on an individual level as well as on interpersonal, institutional, and social levels. While contextual constructive theological explorations of suffering are longstanding, and those of trauma as a new theological category are growing, there are few practical theological studies of organized ecclesial or para-ecclesial responses to the psychosocial pastoral dimensions of trauma, particularly in the aftermath of violent trauma.

More specifically, we urgently need practical theological studies of organized responses that identify as trauma ministries and consciously link their ministries to social scientific studies of the impact of trauma as well as healing from trauma. The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute in Boston and the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry are two such trauma ministries, one primarily lay, para-ecclesial, and community-based and the other ecclesially

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8I use the term ‘para-ecclesial communities’ to denote intentional gatherings of groups of people, whether lay or ordained, who are shaped by faith perspectives, but who may not choose to call themselves a ‘church’ and/or who function outside the boundaries of any formal denomination or across denominations or faith groups.

9For example, organized ecclesial and para-ecclesial responses to 9/11 existed on the level of providing material resources, as well as prayer, but it is unclear which chaplaincy responses incorporated social scientific knowledge of and specific training in trauma into their ministries in the aftermath of that violent event, though it is known that the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry formed out of the aftermath of 9/11. Likewise, organizations such as the Black Ministerial Alliance and TenPoint Coalition formed in Boston in the 1990’s as responses to escalating city violence, but they do not specifically identify as “trauma ministries” or seek to corroborate their efforts with social scientific literature on trauma, in contrast to the Boston lay ministerial organization, the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute.
grounded and nationally-based. They each seek to bring together spiritual and social scientific resources and practices in an organized institutional form to assist people experiencing trauma. This dissertation addresses a gap in empirical studies of organized trauma ministries by utilizing and expanding upon a lived religion methodology in which ethnographic and phenomenological case studies of these two specific trauma ministries, and their pastoral and prophetic responses to traumatic violence in the United States context, are examined.

This dissertation asks the question: How might a lived religion approach drawing upon case studies help the church to discern both more effective pastoral care practices as well as prophetic care practices in the aftermath of trauma, and how might the study of such practices also yield implications for constructive theologies of trauma? It is hoped that research into effective pastoral and prophetic care practices in the aftermath of trauma will assist religious communities and their leaders in designing and organizing trauma response ministries through congregations, denominations, or community-based ministries, as well as encourage the academic community and the church to study such ministries. Such research may increase awareness of the different creative pastoral possibilities in spiritual practices and rituals,

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11 While this dissertation uses terms drawn from the Christian tradition, i.e. “the church,” as well as “pastoral care” and “prophetic care” from both the Jewish and Christian traditions, my hope as a Unitarian Universalist is that religious traditions beyond the Christian church (and the larger society as a whole) also might draw usefully from this practical theological study of prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of trauma. As I discuss later in this chapter, my working definition of practical theology is contextual to the relational world of the researcher and is intended to have interfaith applicability, engaging challenges posed by religious pluralism and secularism and racial and cultural diversity.

12 Beyond violent trauma is the increasing trauma posed by climate change and natural disasters that also provoke personal and communal exigencies for religious communities as well as the larger society, hence another practical reason for the importance of studying trauma response ministries.
inclusive of multi-faith practices, that foster personal and communal healing as well as prophetic public advocacy for social transformation. Such empirical research also may forge a fruitful partnership between practical and constructive theologians in nuancing and texturizing theologies of trauma.

Prophetic public advocacy is an important ministerial practice to investigate in light of the larger social impact and pervasiveness of certain kinds of violent trauma and loss among populations made vulnerable by virtue of their race, gender, or socioeconomic status. While trauma encompasses many dimensions, for the purposes of this research I focus on effective prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of violent trauma. I draw particularly on the works of Prothrow-Stith and Spivak, who label violence an acute public health problem in the United States and cite abundant statistical studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention as evidence of the extent of this public health crisis.

13 The UU Trauma Response Ministry also assists in situations of natural disasters as well as other traumatic events, but this dissertation will only examine the overlap of their work with the Peace Institute for situations of personal and communal violence. Both ministries appear to have developed practices that extend pastoral healing beyond application to loss from violence alone, and clearly this points to overlapping practices with relevancy for assisting with the impact from trauma of different kinds.

14 Prothrow-Stith and Spivak, Murder is No Accident, as well as Prothrow-Stith, Deborah, with Michaele Weissman, Deadly Consequences: How Violence Is Destroying Our Teenage Population and A Plan To Begin Solving The Problem (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991). See also Marci Feldman Hertz, Deborah Prothrow-Stith, and Clementina Chery, “Homicide Survivors: Research and Practice Implications,” American Journal of Preventive Medicine, 29 (5S2, 2005): 288-295. Hertz, Prothrow-Stith, and Chery summarize national research studies in which “the authors estimated that approximately 5 million adults have experienced the murder of an immediate family member, 6.6 million people have experienced the murder of a relative other than a family member, and 4.8 million have experienced the murder of a close friend [with overall an estimated] nearly 16.4 million people in the United States have experienced the homicide of a close friend or family member” (288). The same article stated that as of 2002 statistics: “Homicide is the leading cause of death for African Americans aged 15 to 34 years, the second leading cause of death for Hispanics aged 15 to 34 years and for Asian Pacific Islanders aged 14 to 24 years, and the third leading cause of death for American Indians and Alaskan Natives” (288). Statistics such as these have prompted surgeons general of the United States since C. Everett Koop in 1985 to view violence as a public health problem, as referenced in this same article.
Through this dissertation’s two case studies, I hope to call the church’s attention to the public dimension of prophetic pastoral care in the lived religion healing practices of these two organized trauma response ministries. I situate myself in a growing area of contemporary studies that calls for the recognition of pastoral theology as public theology. In doing so, I also draw the church’s attention back to neglected or underestimated academic voices from the 1960’s into the early 1980’s who explicitly explored a deeper intertwining of the pastoral and prophetic. I will rely on two major contemporary practical and pastoral theologians, Charles V. Gerkin and Larry Kent Graham, to develop more extensive practical theological frames for linking the pastoral and the prophetic in practical theology.


17 See in particular Charles V. Gerkin, Prophetic Pastoral Practice: A Christian Vision of Life Together (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1991) and Larry Kent Graham, “Prophetic Pastoral Caretaking: A Psychosystemic Approach to Symptomatology,” Journal of Psychology and Christianity (8, no. 1, 1989): 49-60. There are many streams that fed into the turn toward pastoral theology as public theology, including the claim of all theology as public theology – see again Tracy, The Analogical Imagination. But for the purposes of this dissertation, I am particularly interested in tracking the early dialogue partners who were using ‘pastoral and prophetic’ language to expand theological frames for ‘pastoral’ beyond the individual into larger communal and social frames of reference and transformation, hence ‘prophetic.’ This is an under examined area in historical literature. As will be explored later, both Gerkin and Graham were utilizing the phrase ‘prophetic pastoral care/practice’ over the same period but with different dialogue partners and in different contexts. They are part of an emerging zeitgeist that appears to have begun as early as the 1960’s and would lead to the development of a public theological frame for pastoral theology today. For those typically cited in the development of this public theological frame, particularly see again Miller-McLemore’s, "Pastoral Theology as Public Theology: Revolutions in the 'Fourth Area',” and her overview of
Prophetic Pastoral Care Responses

Prophetic pastoral care involves practices that serve spiritually to heal and empower survivors in the aftermath of violent trauma. The prophetic dimension of such empowerment entails practices that also publicly call attention to the social conditions that create the groundwork for violent traumatic events to occur, with the intention of disrupting and transforming those social conditions toward a larger vision of peace and justice. As seen in the prior brief literature review, pastoral theology has gradually begun to see the value of such a prophetic public turn in pastoral care for issues beyond that of violent trauma. Certain questions then arise as to the ongoing necessity and implications of this turn.

For example, in the aftermath of trauma, particularly violent trauma, do healing and growth actually require more than a focus on the individual by the pastoral caretaker? Does the pastoral caretaker need to understand the individual in a larger historical, social, cultural, and political context and then bring that perspective into the actual pastoral caretaking practices? Does sensitivity to this larger historical, social, cultural, and political context also impact our theologies, the questions we ask, and the use of sources and forms of pastoral care practice for the individual and the individual in community? Does the fullest form of pastoral care then include the need to engage in public policy advocacy to change systems on behalf of all individuals? If so, what might be examples of how this is done? It is interesting to note that the social and political turbulence of the 1960’s in the American context, and more broadly in the developments in public theology. See also Kathleen Greider, Gloria Johnson, and Kristen Leslie, “Three decades of women writing for our lives,” in Feminist and Womanist Pastoral Theology, ed. Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Brita Gill-Austern (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1999), 21-50, for a further overview of the role of feminists and womanists in shifting the paradigms for thinking of pastoral theology and care through the lens of community and context.
world, marked a brewing zeitgeist and time of increased dialogue on these types of questions and on the relationship between the pastoral and the prophetic in Christian pastoral care.18

Two contemporary practical pastoral theologians, Charles V. Gerkin and Larry Kent Graham were the first to elaborate systematically and theologically on the use of the phrase “prophetic pastoral care/practice” in answering yes to most of these questions.19 However, it also is important to recognize that their work was connected to and built upon previous academic voices being raised as early as the 1960’s. The earliest use of the phrase “prophetic pastoral care,” for example, appears to be in 1966 by Wayne E. Oates20 in a rarely referenced book, Pastoral Counseling in Social Problems: Extremism, Race, Sex, Divorce:

Pastoral care cannot so easily be separated from the social context in which the counseling takes place…Pastoral care involves the pastor in the social dilemmas of the neighborhood, community, city, county, state, nation. International situations and events that surround the pastor and his people affect the work of caring…The reciprocity

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18It is also interesting to note that the Unitarian Universalist Association was birthed at the beginning of this decade when Unitarianism and Universalism consolidated in 1961, initially creating a shared statement of principles in its by-laws and then later adding explicit theological language of “covenant” in a re-covenanting process, first in 1985 and then lastly in 1995. See appendix A for this current version as well as further history on this process in Mark W. Harris, Historical Dictionary of Unitarian Universalism (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2004). The newly formed association would be tested in many ways by the social and political turbulence of the 1960’s through the various civil rights movements; racism and what would be called ‘the black empowerment’ period; the Vietnam War and the draft; and generally the political empowerment of the voices of and actions by historically marginalized peoples (youth, women, people of color, gays and lesbians, etc.). See these additional sources for further historical perspectives and their legacy for contemporary struggles of Unitarian Universalists, such as Warren R. Ross, The Premise and the Promise: The Story of the Unitarian Universalist Association (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2001); Mark D. Morrison-Reed, Black Pioneers in a White Denomination (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1980/1994); Commission on Appraisal, Empowerment: One Denomination’s Quest for Racial Justice 1967-1982. Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1983; Victor H. Carpenter, Long Challenge: The Empowerment Controversy (1967-1977) (Chicago: Meadville Lombard Theological School Press, 2003); and Leslie Takahashi Morris, Chip Roush, and Leon Spencer, The Arc of the Universe is Long: Unitarian Universalists, Anti-Racism and the Journey from Calgary (Boston: Skinner House Books, 2009).


20Oates, Pastoral Counseling in Social Problems.
between the pastoral caring and the prophetic confronting of responsibilities of the contemporary minister is the core concern of this book. (11-12)

Oates then goes on to elucidate “principles of prophetic pastoral care”\(^\text{21}\) for reconciling the prophetic and pastoral tasks of a minister as two sides of the same coin. Gerkin acknowledged that Oates “wrote with deep conviction and great wisdom of the prophetic power of faithful pastoral care”\(^\text{22}\) and referenced the above text by Oates. Oates also would be cited by Harvey Seifert and Howard J. Clinebell in their pivotal book *Personal Growth and Social Change: A Guide for Ministers and Laymen as Change Agents* and influenced their understanding that: “Knowledge of counseling insights can make methods of social action more realistic and effective.”\(^\text{23}\) The effectiveness of pastoral and prophetic approaches were seen as mutually intertwined.

Building on Oates’ earlier work among others, Charles V. Gerkin spoke as a Christian practical theologian\(^\text{24}\) and argued that the Christian pastoral caretaker must “read the signs of the

\(^{21}\)Ibid., 18.

\(^{22}\)Gerkin, *Prophetic Pastoral Practice*, 81.

\(^{23}\)Siefert and Clinebell, *Personal Growth and Social Change*, 16.

\(^{24}\)Gerkin was deeply influenced by both his Trinitarian Christian theological commitments and the philosophical heritage of Hans-Georg Gadamer. A key Gadamer concept Gerkin explored and applied was that of “common sense” – a culture’s “commonly held understanding of the way life is or should be,” see Gerkin, *Prophetic Pastoral Practice*, 54. For Gerkin, this can include subgroups of a culture and the communal norms, what they understand to be commonly shared values of good, truth, and beauty, they seek to apply to particular situations. Gerkin argues that “common sense” can be challenged prophetically by the Christian tradition, e.g. the biblical tradition, to facilitate a larger moral reasoning on the problem at hand and a better ‘aesthetic fitting’ with the “commonly held cultural vision of the whole of reality,” ibid., 56. Gerkin also was deeply influenced by the psychodynamic tradition of psychology, particularly Erik Erikson’s writings and object relations theory, which have consistently broadened psychoanalytic theory to a more social and historical view of human development. See in particular Charles V. Gerkin, *Crisis Experience in Modern Life* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1979) and Charles V. Gerkin, *The Living Human Document: Re-visioning Pastoral Counseling in a Hermeneutical Mode* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1984).
If the caretaker desires to remain relevant in the contemporary situation, then attention must be paid to the shifting signs of a larger political and sociocultural context: “If we are to take seriously this living, historical, process-oriented understanding of what it means to live in and represent a tradition…[w]e will watch and listen for ways in which the emerging cultural issues of our time interrupt our accustomed ways of interpreting Christianity’s sacred texts.” As the Christian pastoral caretaker encounters contemporary problems, the caretaker may turn to theological sources, such as Christian texts, in different ways for new narrative meanings in the practice of pastoral caretaking.

The texts continue to speak prophetically to the new situation, calling for an innovative response to the divine in the situation and challenging a group’s (or an individual’s) “common sense” of the situation with a new interpretation of the Christian text that better “fits” the cultural context. Hence the narrative potential of the texts are multivalent and can actively shape a broader vision of possible responses within the contemporary cultural situation. The Christian caretaker can draw upon the texts to challenge and expand norms and images held by particular groups or individuals who may be in conflict and thus develop a more foundationally held shared vision and unifying values.

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26 Gerkin, Prophetic Pastoral Practice, 44.

27 Ibid., chapter two. See above footnote 23 as well.

28 Ibid., 63-64. “In Gademer’s aesthetics, sound judgment holds up before the common mind of the community the normative values of the deeper tradition that has shaped that community. In the manner of the prophets, sound judgment confronts the community with its own deepest wisdom, the wisdom of its originating narratives.” One can see that such narrative wisdom need not be only religious in nature. There can be guiding secular or political narratives with deep historical roots as well that can serve as a prophetic basis of call.
Later in the same text, Gerkin presents a “centrifugal model of Christian community” and the location of the pastoral caretaker within this model:

To embrace a centrifugal model of the Christian community will thus necessitate the valuing of movements of Christians out into the world away from the central locus of their community…Involvement in the affairs of the world, rather than privacy of commitment away from the world, will be the expectation and invitation of such a community. (133)

The schema of the people of God is then inclusive not only of the faith community and individuals within that faith community in this model, it also is inclusive of all the communities in which those individuals participate, such as the larger human community, and includes other cultures and faiths as well as the physical and environmental world.30

Within such a schema, the prophetic placement of the pastor shifts and changes depending on the circumstance but is always responsive to the foundational narrative image of Christian servanthood. The Christian narrative calls the pastor to minister not only to the congregation but also to the larger world as the pastor encounters the problems of the world in the microcosm of the congregation itself:

The Christian community seen in the image of servanthood and nurturer of community is called out of its insular self-preoccupation into interaction and self-sacrificing engagement with all the problematic nooks and crannies of family living, including such contemporary front page issues as extra-familial child and infant care, family violence and child abuse, divorce and the fractured or reconstituted family, aging families, and family members who are no longer able to care for themselves, and the like. (139)

Thus Gerkin embraced a public prophetic dimension to pastoral care practices as the Christian texts and narrative are put into dialogue with the situation. The pastoral caretaker is not restricted to the Christian congregation but is called, if not actually propelled, outward into the

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29Ibid., 132-142.

30Ibid., Gerkin’s Figure 2, 136.
world by the Christian vision of servanthood to address the various wounds of the world as they are reflected in the wounds of the congregation as well.

Larry Kent Graham also would argue that ‘care of persons’ is deeply intertwined with ‘care of world.’ However, Graham is more explicitly interested in a systemic analysis of structural power as his primary approach, rather than solely the Christian narrative. In this approach to prophetic pastoral care, the pastoral caretaker needs to have an analysis of power and domination and to engage in practices that support the deconstruction of systemic institutionalized oppressions. Graham draws liberally from his life experiences, interdisciplinary perspectives, process and feminist and liberation theologies, and sociopolitical terms and analysis – with a particular recognition of the forces of racism, sexism, colonialism, militarism, and ageism, among others. Later in his core text, Care of Persons, Care of Worlds, he coins a term, “demonic hegemony,” for the forces which can result in profound suffering and evil in both individuals and the larger society.

Formed as a young adult in the politically turbulent 1960’s, and entering doctoral studies in the 1970’s, Graham sought to resist the “polarization” of the individual clinical and social

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32 Graham, 138. Graham first used the term “demonic hegemony” in “Prophetic Pastoral Caretaking: A Psychosystemic Approach to Symptomatology,” Journal of Psychology and Christianity (8, no. 1, 1989): 49-60 (this before Gerkin’s own 1991 use of “prophetic pastoral practice”). In his fuller book Care of Persons, Care of Worlds, Graham writes: “The concept of the demonic, as I am using it, refers to the ‘principalities and powers,’ or to the pervasive social and cultural conventions that distort our lives by elevating some partial good or truth into a dominant position from which all other good or truth is evaluated,” ibid., 138. Graham consistently critiques a theological anthropology that is individualistic in orientation rather than systemic, communal, and justice-seeking. He terms the model of care he is critiquing: “the existential-anthropological model of care [which] puts the health and fulfillment of individual persons on center stage,” ibid., 32.

33 Ibid., 12.
change perspectives. He allowed the ‘lived experiences’ of his parishioners to challenge his theological thinking and ministerial practices:

…I found that the increase of sexual and domestic violence among parishioners required a rethinking of our models. To care for persons in situations like these compelled me to address more fully the culture of violence in the structures of our society, which I realized were defining it. It became clear that the psyches of these injured and injuring persons were inextricably linked to the violent cultural patterns of our society. To respond to one required attention to the other…The destiny of persons and the character of the world are intertwined... (12-13)

Graham is thus explicit in a way that Gerkin is not that “the internalized and institutionalized culture of violence” must be addressed by pastoral caretakers and that this will require “a language of care that makes the concepts of power, values, and justice central in our thinking and practice.”

Graham, like Gerkin, calls for the linking of the pastoral and prophetic perspectives, but with the explicit lens that pastoral healing requires attention to the specific historical, political, and cultural structures of oppression in the society. “The prophets did not separate the personal from the public,” Graham argued. Thus an expanded vision of pastoral care is needed in which: “The classic pastoral care tasks of healing, sustaining, guiding, and

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34Ibid., 18. The contemporary fruits of pastoral care approaches in which there is “a language of care that makes the concepts of power, values, and justice central in our thinking and practice” also might be seen in a recent book edited by Sheryl Kujawa-Holbrook and Karen Montagno, Injustice and the Care of Souls: Taking Oppression Seriously in Pastoral Care (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2009). Yet as Barbara J. McClure also argues in Moving Beyond Individualism in Pastoral Care and Counseling (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2010), the field of pastoral care and counseling remains institutionally constrained by many factors to keep the focus on the individual rather than transformation of the larger society.

35To put this another way, power has many dimensions. Gerkin rightly calls attention to the power of normativity and the setting of standards within a culture and its institutions. Graham calls attention to other levels of power, including actual resources and decision-making power at institutional and cultural levels. The more any particular group is enabled to become dominant through access to resources, decision-making, and normative standard setting power, the more that group is positioned to define what “reality” is and what will be considered a problem and what not in any particular institution or sociocultural context. I am indebted to the work of the then called Women’s Theological Center in Boston, MA for this framing of a power analysis for anti-oppression work (http://www.thewtc.org accessed October 22, 2013).

36Graham, Care of Persons, Care of Worlds, 19.
reconciling are expanded to include prophetic efforts toward emancipatory liberation, justice-seeking, public advocacy, and ecological partnership.”37

Contrasting his approach with Gerkin’s, Graham writes,

…I am haunted by Gerkin’s central emphasis upon selfhood, and his view that the self is an interpreter rather than a lover, justice-maker, and partner with nature. The moral dimensions of his model still seem to be ordered by a concern for individual self-realization and fulfillment of primary relationships. While the impact of contextual realities on individuals is highly emphasized in Gerkin’s work, the reciprocal influence and social responsibility of individuals to their context is not developed. (36)

Graham’s critique of Gerkin’s hermeneutical approach parallels Barbara J. McClure’s later critique of narrative therapy, that hermeneutical approaches tend to prioritize self-interpretations and self-meaning-making while neglecting the actual structural forces that may pose very real barriers to care of persons.38 Hermeneutical approaches neglect the additional responsibility of the pastoral caretaker to address such structural forces in practice. I note here that both Graham and McClure are making larger distinctions than may be warranted of the visional power and practical role of narrative and hermeneutics in both the lives of individuals and of individuals in community over time.

For example, the mere fact that both Gerkin and Graham come to language such as “prophetic pastoral care” signifies a reliance on a heritage of prophetic words, stories, and practices within the Jewish and Christian texts and traditions. Both are situated in larger Jewish and Christian narrative traditions that use the language of “prophet” and/or “pastor.” Graham relies on a narrative vision of the prophet to “develop” his more nuanced focus on structural aspects of power and justice. Graham also underestimates Gerkin’s focus on the “centrifugal

37Ibid., 20.
38McClure, Moving Beyond Individualism.
model of Christian community” that highlights other narrative elements of the vision of the prophet in calling all to work toward dismantling structures of oppression.

It also is true that contemporary narrative therapy, as developed originally by Michael White and David Epston in the 1980’s, was deeply influenced by poststructuralist analysis of power relations, particularly the work of Michel Foucault, that “storytelling rights are negotiated and distributed through the professional institution and its archives.”39 “The issues of power relations, structural inequalities, and ownership of the storytelling rights of personhood are central to the work of narrative therapy.”40 In contrast to McClure’s concerns, narrative therapy is not necessarily grounded philosophically in the individual narrative, though larger sociocultural, political, and economic factors indeed may pressure individual pastoral care providers and therapists to focus primarily on the individual in practice.

For the purposes of this dissertation and its focus on prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of violent trauma, I also particularly note that Graham does not dismiss the experience of “self” but locates that experience and knowledge at the site of the body as “the primary basis for connecting with our worlds and for generating our sense of selfhood.”41 Graham speaks to the disruption of self that may occur when bodies are traumatized and to possible pastoral care healing practices for the body in the aftermath:

A positive sense of self has its origin in a primal experience of physical well-being. Those whose bodies are abused early in childhood often develop truncated personalities


40 Ibid., 21. As I would discover in my case study with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, the power of storytelling and the giving of survivor testimony illustrated the usefulness of critical race theory as an additional social scientific theoretical tool for correlation to the prophetic empowerment of survivors, particularly in a community marginalized by race and class. See Lee Anne Bell, Storytelling for Social Justice: Connecting Narrative and the Arts in Antiracist Teaching (New York: Routledge, 2010).

41 Graham, Care of Persons, Care of Worlds, 73.
and painfully dysfunctional orientations to their larger world...Massage and bioenergetic therapies probably provide the most dramatic examples of how the psyche of persons can be accessed directly through the body...The ministry of care is often challenged to respond to the spiritual and emotional dilemmas encountered by persons whose bodies are in demise by illness, accident, or assault. The loss of the integrity and continuity of bodily life constitutes one of the most profound needs for care and empowerment... (73-74)

Such bodily disruption would include traumatic impact from a violent event as well. Graham argued that a prophetic pastoral caretaker needs to take into account practices that help to heal the body for full liberation and empowerment to occur. Thus Graham’s approach to prophetic pastoral care may have several useful components when correlated with treatment for the impact of violent trauma as well as with a lived religion methodology attuned to the importance of embodied knowledge. I turn now to the process of forging a constructive practical theology using lived religion methodology and case studies to open eyes, ears, and hearts to the experiences of those impacted by violent trauma. Attending carefully to the lived experiences of survivors, and those who serve them, can create points of reflection for testing and challenging theologies and practices.

**Forging a Constructive Practical Theology from Trauma Ministries**

Constructive practical theology" tests our various theological constructions and practices against the lived experiences of those about whom we may theologize. In this dissertation’s focus on two lived religion case studies, survivors, and the ecclesial or para-ecclesial ministries who serve them, are viewed as “primary theologians," providing the normative ground for

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43 Moschella, “Ethnography,” 228. While Poling does not use the term “primary theologians,” he does in fact treat survivor voices and experiences in that capacity in his works of constructive practical theology. Larry
reflection on theologies of trauma. Their phenomenological experiences of the divine, spirituality, and healing are used to test for empirical ‘fit’ with or ‘addition’ or ‘challenge’ to existing theological constructions and practices in the aftermath of violent trauma. Through such ‘testing,’ this dissertation points to how researchers may continue to expand our available constructive theologies of and practices in relationship to trauma, including untapped theological resources and practices.

When confronted with traumatic experiences, how does a person or faith community grapple with the challenges of empirical reality? Can a person or faith community allow their tradition’s beliefs and practices to be challenged by these new experiences and then re-constructed in the aftermath? James N. Poling, who has devoted much of his pastoral and academic career to working with both survivors of violence and perpetrators of sexual and domestic violence, serves as a role model. As a Christian faith practitioner, Poling allowed himself to be challenged by the experiences of the survivors and offenders he encountered in providing pastoral care – experiences that posed questions for his pre-existing classical Christian conception of God as both all-powerful and all-good, as well as for other Christian doctrines and practices. He names the methodology of his life’s work “constructive practical theology” and summarizes: “One of my assumptions is that normative claims of theology must always be tested within the crucible of everyday human life and faith.”

Kent Graham could be argued also to have engaged in a work of constructive practical theology when he was challenged by the experiences of his parishioners to rethink his own conceptions of pastoral care.

Poling, Rethinking Faith, 3.
social transformation and to witnessing to the multilayered web of oppressions that can hinder the work of both healing and social justice.

The experiences of survivors and offenders of violence can pose challenges not only to the Christian tradition but also to other faith practitioners as well, including within my own liberal religious confessional tradition, Unitarian Universalism. As a Unitarian Universalist (UU), my confessional starting place is different from Poling’s since Unitarian Universalism encompasses a wide range of individual faith beliefs and spiritual practices, inclusive of theism, atheism, humanism, pantheism, panentheism, Buddhism, and others. For contemporary Unitarian Universalists, a more central unifying theological role is played in the tradition by their: (1) theological anthropology, a belief in the finite and contextual nature of human knowledge and capacities in relationship to knowing the divine, and (2) covenantal theology, a practice of promising to be in relationship with and accountable to each other according to certain ethical principles around shared experiences of and public practices in relationship to the divine (see appendix A for the most recent version of the “UUA Principles and Purposes”). These two core beliefs and practices result in a professed public theological respect for the

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45 For example, the Universalist belief that “God is love” and the Unitarian belief in optimistic ethical progress for humankind has meant, at times, the place or role of sin, suffering, and evil in Unitarian Universalist (UU) theology and practices is less than clear. In a 2002 UU World edition (the denominational magazine) dedicated to the problem of evil in the aftermath of 9/11, Warren Ross wrote: “Lois Fahs Timmins — the daughter of the great Unitarian religious educator Sophia Lyon Fahs — once criticized her own liberal religious education for failing to address the reality of evil. ‘We spent 95 percent of our time studying good people doing good things, and skipped very lightly over the bad parts of humanity,’ she said in 1996. ‘I was taught not to be judgmental, not to observe or report on the bad behavior of others. Consequently, because of my education, I grew up ignorant about bad human behavior, incompetent to observe it accurately, unskilled in how to respond to it, and ashamed of talking about evil.’” See Warren Ross, “Confronting Evil: Has Terrorism Shaken Our Religious Principles?” UU World http://www.uuworld.org/2002/01/feature1.html (accessed July 19, 2013).
ultimate transcending mystery that underlies all human faith or spiritual quests, including secular quests for truth and justice, even if private beliefs and spiritual practices are quite diverse.  

As a Unitarian Universalist pastoral practical theologian then, my confessional core assumptions lead me to be interested in examining the context or relational world of the people and community under study, with whom are they in covenant or to whom are they accountable, particularly when faced with the disruptive experience of trauma? This also leads me to be interested in examining their respective views or experiences of theological anthropology, which aspects of the divine-human relationship are experienced as transcendent and/or immanent – particularly as reflected through our bioaffective/embodied, social/relational, and finite natures as human beings when faced with a traumatic violent experience? These core assumptions also drive the methodological approach I have selected, namely lived religion utilizing phenomenological and ethnographic case studies.  

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46 When I bring the term “public theology” to bear on Unitarian Universalism as a religious tradition, I am drawing on Bonnie J. Miller-McLemore’s definition that public theology “attempts to analyze and influence the wider social order…Different from civil religion’s generic universal appeal, public theology attempts to make a recognizably valid and self-critical claim for the relevance of specific religious beliefs and practices,” in Miller-McLemore, “Pastoral Theology as Public Theology,” 1370. For Unitarian Universalists, the term “public theology” applies both to a congregation’s particular covenant and to the larger associational covenant between congregations. Unitarian Universalists would distinguish in practice between the personal faith and practices of individuals and the public faith and practices of a congregation and the tradition. There is a unification of diverse personal theologies and practices, within any particular congregation as well as between congregations in the larger association, through profession to a public faith and practices. This public profession emphasizes respect for personal access to the divine and a covenant to ethical principles of shared practice, which then creates an umbrella under which a significant amount of public prophetic witness and social justice work may occur. Thus there is an underlying theology at play from the stance of theological anthropology and ecclesial organization that marks what results as a self-critical “public theology” in shared beliefs and practices for Unitarian Universalists.

47 Interestingly, ethnographic and lived religion research approaches were so common at the first formal Unitarian Universalist doctoral student gathering at Harvard University in 2009 that a large breakout group was formed for discussion of ethnographic methods.
My Unitarian Universalist faith context also influences the development of my definition of practical theology, particularly its ethical and soteriological focus: “Practical theology is critical and constructive reflection on the salvific truth claims of a tradition(s) in relationship to a problem(s) arising in the contemporary situation,” in this case, the contemporary problem of violent trauma. My practical theology definition is constructed to address my concern for application to different faith traditions, communities, and contexts. This is accomplished by an embodied and social theological anthropological turn to each tradition’s (or community’s) ethical conception and practices of meaning-making, human flourishing, or wholeness in the experiential face of suffering, rupturing, or brokenness for their particular context. Nonetheless, because I am committed to critical reflection, the data must be allowed to challenge my own theological assumptions and constructions and not simply reflect my observations of how the data might challenge the explicit or implicit theological assumptions and constructions of the individuals or communities studied. Thus I also commit to hold these confessional assumptions in rigorous and honest tension with the emerging data.

48 James N. Poling and Donald E. Miller, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1985), 86. In essence my definition widened the first leg of the definition found in Poling and Miller, 62, that “practical theology is critical and constructive reflection within a living community…” so that I could apply this first element of their definition to any living community rather than solely a Christian community. Then I lay stress particularly on “salvific truth claims” in relationship to contemporary problems that a particular community might face. In this latter respect, I have been more deeply influenced by the anthropological focus in liberation theology on the primacy of the context of suffering and the “pretheological human commitment to change and improve the world,” in Juan Luis Segundo, *Liberation of Theology* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 1976/2002) 39. This is a context or experience that can be shared across faith traditions and in secular contexts as well by virtue of an embodied human and social anthropology as an ethical or soteriological approach.

49 Toward this end, I also acknowledge that within our public theological tradition, my personal theology and practices are drawn toward a mystical religious eco-naturalism and my primary personal practices draw from Zen Buddhism in Thich Nhat Hanh’s tradition. I also have a deep appreciation for the Jewish-Christian heritage, including its social justice tradition and the contributions of process theology, as well as the multivalent capacity of the theological and metaphoric uses of the language of “Spirit.” I draw upon those practices as well in my Unitarian Universalist context and public ministry.
In my fourth chapter, I place the results of these two case studies in critical, comparative, and *intercultural* dialogue with each other, examining areas of similarity as well as areas of difference in implicit and explicit prophetic pastoral theologies and practices. I anticipated that there would be cultural and power differences due to the different organizational structures and populations served, as well as their different theological contexts, per the case study demographics. In pointing toward the necessity of adding an *intercultural* approach to the process of forging a constructive practical theology of trauma, I have been influenced particularly by contextual and dialectical approaches stressed in works by Edward Farley, Paul F. Knitter, and Mark K. Taylor.\(^{50}\) For example, drawing upon the field of cultural anthropology, Taylor highlights the necessity and strategic power of “intercultural hermeneutics”\(^ {51}\) as a


\(^{51}\)Ibid., 269. Intercultural hermeneutics entails description of cultural differences and potential critique of one’s own and other’s cultural life, with the social science of cultural anthropology playing a crucial role. A strategy of “defamiliarization,” 272, through epistemological critique and “cross-cultural juxtaposition,” 273, is employed, a form of ‘cultural in-dwelling,’ to become more aware of issues of cultural dominance through “reflexivity,” 270. Taylor has been particularly influenced by the works of anthropologists George E. Marcus and Michael M.J. Fischer, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Movement in the Human Sciences*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1999). Additional work in this area is also being done by Latin American feminist theologians, Maria Pilar Aquino and Maria Jose Rosado-Nunes, ed., *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latino Explorations for a Just World* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007). Aquino writes: “…the meaning of interculturality is linked to the historical context of each people and each culture, so the meaning depends on the realities, the resources, and the challenges of that context…intercultural praxis requires that we take into account the different constellations of power in order to analyze the implications and the consequences of the intercultural processes… Through communication and shared dialogue, intercultural approaches offer alternatives for deliberating about our common commitment to forging, out of our diverse cultural contexts, a world free of violence and injustice,” 14-15. I am grateful for my colleague, Sofia Betancourt, in calling my attention to Aquino and Rosado-Nunes’ text as she is also employing an intercultural approach in her own forthcoming dissertation, “Our Mothers Made Do: An Ecowomanist Ethic at the Panama Canal.” See also S. Wesley Ariarajah, “Intercultural Hermeneutics – A Promise for the Future?” *Exchange* (vol. 34, no. 2, 2005) 89-101 (13).
synchronic strategy to deconstruct the hegemony of diachronic strategies in theology. Through this approach, different cultural and political experiences may ‘speak back’ to the religious tradition rather than the tradition being universally applied across all cultures and political circumstances.

This dissertation’s fourth chapter thus begins to explore a limited strategy of “intercultural hermeneutics” through a critical, comparative, intercultural dialogue of the case study results and the usefulness of this for challenging any universalizing tendencies in constructive theologies of trauma during an era of increasing pluralism and diversity, including discrepancy of access to power. Theological language and concepts that appear to emerge from the data itself – from the voices and lived experiences of the participants in their use of their respective traditions – are drawn out, illustrated, and given normative priority for each case study. When broadly defined, traditional theological categories such as theological anthropology, soteriology, and eschatology – as well as ecclesiology as discovered in the course of the research – may prove fruitful for establishing an intercultural hermeneutic across examples of human diversity in these two case studies. In referring to these theological categories as broadly defined, I am once again influenced both by the emerging empirical data from my pilot

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52 I recognize my approach as a limited one since ideally an authentic intercultural dialogue would be between the actual participants rather than through the lens of my study at least one step removed now, though I do count myself also as a participant in this dialogue in interpretative moves made throughout.

53 However, I also recognize that the very approach of my study may be re-inscribing a colonizing and imperialist stance, minimally for those who are racially and socioeconomically different from myself, rather than participating in a fully decolonizing methodological approach. Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, 2nd ed. (New York: Zed Books, 2012). On the dangers of research, writing, and representation, Smith, 37, writes as an indigenous person that: “Representation is important as a concept because it gives the impression of ‘the truth.’…”reading and interpretation present problems when we do not see ourselves in the text. There are problems, too, when we do see ourselves but can barely recognize ourselves through the representation.”
studies and by contextual approaches to theology, particularly those developed by Farley and Knitter.

Farley writes that theology is “a mode of reflection, understanding, insight attached to a determinate religion,”\(^{54}\) recognizing that theologies can vary between religions but that the religious yearning for “sapiential knowledge”\(^{55}\) of ‘God’\(^{56}\) that translates into a “habitus”\(^{57}\) is part of our theological anthropology. Farley also terms this “salvific knowledge (wisdom) of God and of things pertaining to God.”\(^{58}\) Knitter also builds on Taylor and Farley’s works, recognizing that one aspect of the “postmodern trilemma”\(^{59}\) is the need to respond to the reality of pluralism, including theological pluralism. In marrying theological studies to religious studies through hermeneutics, Knitter calls attention to the “soteriocentric core”\(^{60}\) “within all religious traditions…[that expresses] concern for human well-being in this world.”\(^{61}\)

\(^{54}\)Farley, *Theologia*, 134.

\(^{55}\)Ibid., 56.

\(^{56}\) Within my practical theological method, I again allow for a greater diversity of terms and meanings than solely using the word ‘God’ might suggest. Different world religions and different practices use different metaphors – such as “Allah,” “Most High,” “The Ultimate,” “Mystery,” “Brahma,” “Atman,” “The Universe,” “Gaia,” “Goddess,” “Truth and Justice,” “Divinity,” “The Holy,” “Spirit of Life and Love,” and others.

\(^{57}\)Ibid., 35.

\(^{58}\)Ibid., 37.

\(^{59}\)Knitter, “Beyond a Mono-Religious Theological Education,” 153.

\(^{60}\)Ibid., 170, emphasis added.

\(^{61}\)Ibid., 170. See also Olga Consuelo Velez Caro, “Toward a Feminist Intercultural Theology,” in *Feminist Intercultural Theology: Latino Explorations for a Just World*, 248-264, ed. Maria Pilar Aquino and Maria Jose Rosado-Nunes (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2007), 248-264. Velez Caro also sees soteriological possibilities in an intercultural approach, 253-254: “…intercultural dialogue does not deny the possibility of arriving at consensus, of finding shared meanings and values, or of recognizing valid aspects for the construction of any human reality. What it questions is our resting easy with the notion of classical culture, which is inevitably taken to be Western, rational, white, masculine culture. Our proposal is that we make a decisive option for the empirical notion of culture and use it to revise all the investigations and developments of our different disciplines. Intercultural dialogue is carried on between contextual universes that manifest their will for universality through their acceptance of the polyphony of
Following these lines of thinking, and building on previous correlations of pneumatology to the study of trauma, this dissertation initially proposed an intercultural hermeneutic for its fourth chapter utilizing broadly defined: (1) concepts of soteriology concerned with human well-being and flourishing, including wholeness and brokenness; (2) concepts of theological anthropology and experiences of the relationship of “God” or the “Divine” to human finitude, cultural and power differences, and our interdependent social nature; and (3) eschatology as a pastoral theological category focused on meaning making and possibilities of hope in the aftermath of traumatic death. This dissertation proposed that these could become three key theological tools of analysis and evaluation pointing towards the forging of a lived religion constructive practical theology of trauma for its fifth chapter. As this research proceeded, however, participant responses did not neatly fit into these even broadly predefined theological categories, and ecclesiology became a more significant implicit category, with implications for the untapped usefulness of disability theologies in reframing a relationship between ecclesiology and soteriology and with eschatology as the hope for its fullest realization in ecclesial relations.

These organically emerging theological experiences, language, and concepts from participants as the primary theologians are then put into dialogue with at least some traditions voices that constitute the universal and the true.”

62 In particular, Shelly Rambo, Spirit and Trauma, has correlated pneumatology to the study of trauma previously. This dissertation seeks to expand the metaphorical correlation and repertoire of additional social scientific theories for constructive theologies of trauma and spirit, building on examples from the case studies found in chapters two and three.

63 Again, while this dissertation works within the Christian tradition and language, these theological categories are broadly conceived and defined to enable translation between religious traditions as possible while attending also to when the categories simply do not fit the experiences and language of participants.
and doctrines of constructive or systematic pastoral theology as these relate to trauma, suffering, healing, and the human condition in the fifth chapter. There are currently several significant constructive theological responses to trauma. Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker are among the earliest theologians to call attention to rethinking Christian salvific theological formulations in light of their personal experiences with violence, sexism, and racism.  

Recent works by Jennifer Beste, Serene Jones, Cynthia Hess, and Shelly Rambo have also begun to make more explicit links between theology and the social scientific language and study of trauma, albeit from the perspectives of systematic and constructive Christian theology as well as Christian ethics rather constructive practical theology explicitly.

This fifth and final chapter concludes by exploring strategic practical theological recommendations in the aftermath of trauma for theologians, pastoral care providers, the church, and the larger society as appropriate. Ultimately, this dissertation hopes to point toward how

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64 In doing so, Brock and Parker provide a case example of constructive practical theology from an autoethnographic heuristic methodology and perspective, as well as of a deep integration of personal history with social and political history and culture. Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker, *Proverbs of Ashes: Violence, Redemptive Suffering, and The Search For What Saves Us* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2001).

65 Beste, *God and the Victim*, draws attention to the need for ecclesial assistance for trauma victims, utilizing trauma theory to makes an empirical challenge to the Christian systematic theological belief that human beings always maintain a capacity for a free response to God’s grace. Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, settles for a more muted argument that grace rests in the power of the body and physical practices, in “liturgies of flesh,” 158, which have the potential to reopen the traumatized victim to “two habits of the spirit…mourning and wonder,” 161. Hess, *Sites of Violence, Sites of Grace*, also draws attention to the need for ecclesial assistance in healing trauma victims, but does so through a reconceptualization of John Howard Yoder’s argument that the Christian narrative promotes nonviolent responses to external violence. Finally, Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, makes a major constructive practical theological contribution to Christian systematic theology by exploring the neglected liturgical concept of “Holy Saturday” as a tool for understanding and honoring the liminal space created by trauma in the lives of survivors, recognizing that healing does not proceed swiftly and cleanly in a linear fashion from the trauma of Good Friday to the redemption and resurrection of Easter Sunday.

66 While recognizing the value and necessity of contextual approaches, I also re-affirm the necessity and unavoidability of the confessional movement as articulated by Poling and Miller in their practical theological method. I continue to situate myself within my communal public theological faith tradition as a Unitarian Universalist in the final chapter as I apply normative weight to soteriological concerns and ethical principles from
future research may begin to forge richer and deeper constructive practical theologies of trauma and prophetic pastoral care practices, beginning to account for the diverse range of traumatic experiences and political and cultural contexts through these particular methodological contributions to lived religion. My hope also is that the participants themselves will find some use in this study when it eventually finds its way back to them, and that they can continue this dialogue and any learning with each other, as well as challenge any interpretative moves in this dissertation that are not experienced as reflective of their lives or communities. Finally, I also hope to role model to the church and academic communities the value in following a lived religion practical theology methodology, one that recognizes and understands we have much to learn from each other through a richer examination of our embodied and material lives as well as through the privileging of these types of intercultural encounters.

my own covenantal public tradition, while also striving to be open to critique and learning from witnessing to the experiences of the participants in this study.

67 Through such ethical accountability to my participants, I still hope to be following a methodology that is more attentive to and respective of those who live with marginalization, stigmatization, and oppression in the United States context, whether racially and socioeconomically and/or through experiencing the traumatic impact of violence.
CHAPTER ONE
A STUDY IN PROPHETIC PASTORAL CARE AND LIVED RELIGION

As a study of effective prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of trauma, this dissertation uses a “lived religion” practical theological approach, building specifically on the works of Hans-Günter Heimbrock, as well as others who have extended his work.¹ Heimbrock consistently has argued that current practical theology methodologies need to be expanded to capture the full range of possible phenomenology in lived religion, that there is a need to develop additional conceptual tools for the analysis of “lived experience.”² In his essay, “Reconstructing Lived Religion,” Heimbrock issues a call “to design concrete methods appropriate to the particular phenomenon”³ to be studied, including phenomena “which at first glance are not labeled religious in a traditional sense.”⁴ Heimbrock’s intent is to enlarge empirical research and the ability to reconstruct lived religion in connection to formal religion as well as to popular culture, inclusive of material culture, while also understanding that this is an “approach [to] that which can never be reached completely.”⁵ It is only ‘a finger pointing’ to that which is larger


³Ibid., 152.

⁴Ibid., 150.

⁵Ibid., 152.
and beyond complete capture by words alone. “Theology…claims truth…in metaphoric and poetic description of reality.”

Heimbrock’s emphasis on the embodied human and material experiences that underlie religious metaphors, and on the assumption that “God’s presence is immanent to human beings in experience,” correlates well with a lived religion approach that seeks to study practices survivors of trauma find effective for their own healing and empowerment. If “God’s spirit” or the divine is assumed to move through, or be present in, material reality and human embodied existence, then both materiality and human experience are important theological sources of witness to the divine. Such sources need to be attended to through practical theological research, with the results of such research providing the capacity to ‘speak back’ to our existing theological constructions and ministerial practices.

“Lived religion” methodology thus dovetails well with a practical theological goal of testing our constructive theologies of and ministerial practices for trauma against the actual

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6Ibid., 154.
7Ibid., 145.
religious or spiritual practices used by survivors in different contexts, inclusive of popular religious or spiritual practices. Lived religion can entail a variety of interdisciplinary approaches in such study, including sociology, history, psychology, phenomenology and ethnography, among others. This dissertation emphasizes phenomenology and ethnography and draws in psychology through trauma studies as an additional lived religion conceptual tool for its case studies.

The embodied nature of a “lived religion” approach also can be uniquely suited to the study of trauma’s disruptive bodily impact and prophetic pastoral care practices in its aftermath.\(^{10}\) As Meredith B. McGuire\(^ {11}\) writes,

Lived religion is constituted by the practices by which people remember, share, enact, adapt, and create the “stories out of which they live.” And it is constituted through the practices by which people turn these “stories” into everyday action. Ordinary material existence – especially the human body – is the very stuff of these meaningful practices. Religious and spiritual practices, even interior ones, such as contemplation – involve peoples’ bodies and emotions, as well as their minds and spirits…Understanding religions-as-lived requires, then, that we take seriously the full range of human religious practice, not only as we find it in religious institutions but equally as we find it in everyday embodied practices. (197-198)

Lived religion methodological questions raised for this particular dissertation on trauma ministries serving in the aftermath of traumatic violence include: What are the appropriate conceptual tools for studying a para-ecclesial, community-based organization that provides prophetic pastoral care to survivors oppressed by race and class and which engages in a diverse
range of self-identified spiritual and popular culture practices but has no formal religious connection? What are the appropriate social scientific tools for studying trauma within practical theology that can correlate on a metaphorical level to theological categories in order to foster critical dialogue and empirical testing of those theological categories? Can such conceptual tools also be applied in a more formal religious context with an ecclesial and nationally based trauma ministry? Can two such culturally distinct trauma ministries be placed into critical and comparative intercultural dialogue using such conceptual tools to identify overlap and distinctions between effective prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of trauma?

As a starting place in addressing the current gap in empirical research, the lived religion approach of this dissertation focuses on two limited case studies of trauma ministries and their respective prophetic pastoral care practices. In doing so, the dissertation draws upon a large number of conceptual tools utilized in trauma studies to expand the social scientific theoretical base available for correlation within a lived religion practical theological approach to trauma ministries. During the initial ethnographic immersion and pilot studies with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, as well as my pilot study research on spontaneous street memorials, this researcher also became aware of particular prophetic pastoral care practices that highlighted the spiritual and prophetic performative power of material forms for testimony and witness in the aftermath of trauma. This led me to juxtapose two groups of religious literature in creating the term “theopoetics of material religion” as a way of theologically naming what I was seeing in the data, and I offer this term as yet another conceptual tool for lived religion studies of trauma response ministries. Finally, I argue that a lived religion approach to the study of trauma

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12I would like to draw particular attention to parallel work being done in theopoetics, corporeality, and materiality, albeit in an entirely different arena of religious studies, by Patrica Cox Miller, *The Corporeal*
ministries can increase the capacity to forge constructive practical theologies of trauma ministries. Such an approach enables trauma survivors to ‘speak back’ to various existing theologies of and pastoral care practices for trauma while also pointing to new areas of constructive theological thinking as well as more effective prophetic pastoral care practices.

The Trauma Response Ministry Case Studies

My lived religion practical theological research focuses on descriptive case studies, found in chapters two and three, of the prophetic pastoral care practices, themes, and vision of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute (LDBPI) and the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM) respectively. The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute serves families in the aftermath of homicide in the greater Boston, MA region. The Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry responds to a broader range of traumatic incidents related to Unitarian Universalist congregations, though this case study examined their response particularly to a...
violent shooting at the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in Knoxville, TN.

Core demographic differences between these two trauma ministries, to be outlined more specifically shortly, include that the majority of participants in the LDBPI case study were African American and that survivors and ministry leaders possessed a maximum of a bachelor’s degree, while the majority of participants in the UUTRM case study were white and educated to a master’s degree and often higher.

For these case studies, I drew upon ethnographic observations, pictures, and field notes; the published materials and documents of the two trauma ministries; and phenomenological interviews with ministry leaders, survivors, and institutional supporters of each ministry for the purpose of triangulation of data.13 Consistent with the lived religion approach described above, the study participants were treated as the “primary theologians,”14 with their lived experiences providing the normative ground15 for critical, constructive, and intercultural comparative reflection on practical theological recommendations for the church, as well as the larger society, found in chapters four and five.16


15There is ethnographic accountability in this stance as well. “Representation has consequences: how people are represented is how they are treated…interpretation holds a great deal of power,” per D. Soyini Madison, Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance, 2nd ed. (New York: Sage Publications, Inc., 2012), 4. To allow participant voices to be heard on their own terms can provide a check and balance to the researcher’s interpretations, though even the selection of which voices are heard at which points and at what length is still an interpretative ethnographic move with some ethical risk to the participants. See also Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, 2nd ed. (New York: Zed Books, 2012).

16In terms of implications for the larger society, for example, I gave an initial presentation of my pilot studies to a qualitative research class in which the majority of the students were educators, not seminarians. The prospective professional educators were grateful for insights into the meanings expressed by Boston youth and young adults regarding their practice of wearing buttons with pictures of their lost loved ones or friends, even into the school settings. Previously many of these educators had been either confused by the persistent wearing of these
The case studies involved 30 interviews with human subjects as well as research methods and tools that were submitted to the Boston University Institutional Review Board. Interview guides\textsuperscript{17} with semi-structured questions for ministry leaders, survivors, and institutional supporters were utilized (appendices B and C). Questions were generally grouped by history of ministry formation and/or involvement; experiences with personal or communal healing rituals through the respective trauma ministries; religious, spiritual, faith experiences; perceived challenges or opportunities of the trauma ministries; views of relationships to the church or religious communities and to the broader community or society; and perceptions of the ministry’s mission/vision. Opportunities for additional comments were given.

I interviewed five ministry leaders, five survivors, and five institutional supporters for each trauma ministry – thus 30 interviews overall. Interviews with people in different role relationships to the respective trauma ministries allowed for some triangulation of the data.\textsuperscript{18} Methodological triangulation was also sought through combining interviews with ethnographic observations and document review.\textsuperscript{19} An informed consent statement for the interviews was also buttons or highly concerned that this was a negative behavior that needed to be discouraged. Thus I maintain a hope that this research will prove valuable across disciplines as well.

\textsuperscript{17}Patton, \textit{Qualitative Research}, 343-348.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid., 247-248.

\textsuperscript{19}In the particular case of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, it continues to be important to note that I approached my relationship with the Peace Institute from the perspective of being a survivor of my goddaughter’s nephew’s murder and as having utilized their services initially with my goddaughter’s family at the time of his murder in September of 2006 – as well as having led a youth ministry that suffered from several homicides. I also was involved in an ethnographic immersion as a volunteer prior to the beginning of formal research for this dissertation, providing some assistance with the formation of the Peace Institute’s interfaith committee as well as providing volunteer supervision for two masters level social work interns over a nine-month period in 2009-2010. In the case of the UU Trauma Response Ministry, it should continue to be noted that I am an ordained Unitarian Universalist minister and hence have some natural immersion in and knowledge of Unitarian Universalist communities, though my prior interactions with each person interviewed for this dissertation had been minimal to nonexistent. As I found during my pilot studies, it also was impossible to completely separate the role of researcher from my role of minister when I engaged participants in questions that at times provoked painful memories and tears
utilized, as well as a demographic data form (appendix D). For each trauma ministry case study, the board of the respective organization gave permission for research to be conducted, and each study participant was given the opportunity to review, add to, or correct their interview transcript and to retain a copy of their transcript for further measures of accountability. Each participant will also receive a copy of the final dissertation when completed and approved.

For the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute (LDBPI) case study, the researcher was involved in an ethnographic immersion as a volunteer over a two to three year period and conducted fifteen interviews in the last year of formal involvement. Of those interviewed, five were Peace Institute lay ministry leaders, five were survivors served by the Peace Institute, and five were institutional supporters external to the Peace Institute. To maximize confidentiality due to the very public nature of this ministry, aggregate demographic data is shared using the above three categories of interviewees but is generally not attached to specific individuals. An exception is the founding ministry leader due to the centrality of her role in establishing mission and programs. As appropriate also due to the content of material shared, the roles, race, and/or gender of the institutional supporters interviewed are identified at different points in this case study. These institutional supporters included a mental health clinician, a public health doctor, an anti-oppression consultant, an urban minister, and a city councilor.

Of those interviewed, all survivors and four of the ministry leaders self-identified as African American or black, as did three of the institutional supporters – thus twelve of the fifteen interviewed (one ministry leader, the mental health clinician, and the urban minister self-
identified as white or Caucasian). All survivors interviewed were mothers of murdered youth and members of what was called the “Peace Warriors” group at the Peace Institute. (Four of the ministry leaders were also survivors of child or sibling homicide while a fifth ministry leader had experienced another form of traumatic loss of a friend, thus the ministry itself can be considered to be survivor-led.) All of the survivors interviewed and four of the ministry leaders, as well as four of the institutional supporters, were female, thus only two participants were men – one ministry leader and the urban minister. Finally, no ministry leader or survivor had completed higher than a bachelor’s degree at the time of the interviews (though the founding ministry leader had been granted two honorary doctorates), in contrast to four of the institutional supporters who had completed at least a master’s degree if not higher. For more detailed and nuanced demographic information and specific LDBPI case study limitations, particularly limitations for race and gender as well as evaluative capacity, see appendix E.

For the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response case study, the researcher gathered data and interviews over the course of one year in 2011, which included travel to the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC) for one immersion weekend of interviews and observations as well. Of those interviewed, five were UUTRM leaders, five were survivors from the TVUUC leadership, and five were institutional supporters of the UUTRM from the larger Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Again, to maximize confidentiality due to the very public nature of this particular church shooting, aggregate demographic data is shared using the above three categories of interviewees but is generally not attached to specific individuals, with the exception of the TVUUC minister and the former UUA president due to the centrality of their public roles in the aftermath of the church shooting. As appropriate also due to the content of the
material shared, the roles, race, and/or gender of interviewees are identified at different points in this case study, which may make these interviewees more identifiable at times to those with more direct involvement in this particular case study.

Of the five UUTRM leaders interviewed, four were direct founders of the UUTRM and all were ordained as Unitarian Universalist (UU) clergy. The five TVUUC leaders interviewed as survivors included the minister, two former board presidents, a former church administrator, and a former volunteer media coordinator, the latter four being laity at the time of the shooting (though one would go on to become clergy). Three were present in the sanctuary at the time of the shooting while the minister and media coordinator arrived on site the same day in the aftermath. The five institutional supporters interviewed included a former UUA president, a current UUA vice-president, a former UUA transitions director, and two current UUA district executives. Of the 15 total interviewed, 13 identified as white, Euro-American, or Caucasian and two as African American (the former UUA president and one UUTRM leader). One TVUUC leader who self-described as white also was living in a multi-racial family with two adopted black children.

Of the 15 interviewed, 8 were male and 7 were female (noticeable imbalances for gender were that 4 of the UUTRM leaders interviewed were female and 4 of the UUA institutional supporters interviewed were male). Finally, 14 of those interviewed held a minimum of a master’s degree and of those 6 held a doctorate as well. The TVUUC leader interviewed who held a bachelor’s degree had also done some master’s level work. For more detailed and nuanced demographic information and specific case study limitations, including limitations for

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*20 A transitions director assists with ministerial placements and transitions, while a district executive is an employee of the UUA who manages congregational support in one of multiple national district or regional offices.
evaluative capacity given that the UUTRM serves a broad array of traumas and this case study focused on one situation that also was complicated by the involvement of other service providers, see appendix F.

This research was limited in its capacity to engage in a full evaluation of each organized ministry, including the entire scope of survivors served by each ministry. Given the nature of the researcher’s access to these organized ministries, and the sensitive nature of traumatic experiences, I relied on the leaders of each trauma ministry to refer me to particular people the ministry had served in extending an invitation to be interviewed. Thus this research was not evaluative in scope but a beginning step toward investigating what organized trauma response ministries might look like and an opportunity to lift up the prophetic pastoral care practices in which they engage and the experiences of at least some survivors with the effectiveness of those practices.

Within each case study, I sought to employ conceptual tools the data suggested were appropriate for the lived religion study of trauma, particularly social scientific tools drawn from the study of trauma as well as my own integration of two religious literatures to create a bridge term for the study of theology and trauma – “theopoetics of material religion.” In doing so, I gave equal mutual critical correlational weight to the study participants’ own stated faith traditions, experiences, and language and to the research and language of the social sciences. As previously discussed, Heimbrock writes: “Theology…claims truth…in metaphoric and poetic description of reality.”21 Practical theologians James N. Poling and Donald E. Miller note that all

21Heimbrock, “Reconstructing Lived Religion,” 154. The power of metaphorical approaches to theology was initially outlined in Sallie McFague’s classic work Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982). McFague writes: “Most simply, a metaphor is seeing one thing as something else, pretending ‘this’ is ‘that’ because we do not know how to think or talk about ‘this,’ so we use ‘that’
language “is less a mirror of reality than a series of metaphors about reality, and no particular linguistic expression corresponds exactly with any experience.”

If, as philosopher linguists George Lakoff and Mark Johnson argue, all language is metaphorical and embodied in origin, this includes the languages of science, hence the capacity to correlate theological and scientific metaphors, generally through the realm of bodily or sensory experiences. Theology and the social sciences are thus seen as separate metaphorical spheres of experiential description in this dissertation, but also ones that can be correlated through the multivalent capacity of metaphor to mutually support, critique, or challenge each other, including in approaches to trauma.

**Trauma Studies and Lived Religion**

The disruption of personal meaning-making narrative and connection to community under the impact of severe suffering is well recognized and supported by the social scientific

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22 Poling and Miller, *Foundations for a Practical Theology of Ministry*, 24. Poling and Miller also reference critical correlational approaches to practical theology drawn from the works of Don Browning and David Tracy (82-86). My approach is more consistent with Tracy’s mutual critical correlational approach, particularly as Tracy has more recently highlighted the importance of an aesthetic correlation within practical theology. See Tracy, “A Correlational Model of Practical Theology – Revisited,” in *Religion, Diversity and Conflict*, edited by Edward Foley (New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2011), 49-61.

23 In *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1980/2003), George Lakoff and Mark Johnson also have argued that all language is metaphorical with embodied roots: “…we typically conceptualize the nonphysical in terms of the physical” (59). Griffith and Griffith, *Encountering the Sacred in Psychotherapy*, draw heavily from Lakoff and Johnson’s work. Miller in *The Corporeal Imagination* refers to the work of Daniel Tiffany, *Toy Medium: Materialism and Modern Lyric* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000) and his recognition of the reliance of science on poetry, images, and metaphors. “Certain plausible correspondences between science and poetry can therefore be traced to shared forms of material and imaginative practice, but also the basic inclination of materialism: to make the intangible tangible. Both science and poetry proceed, in part, by making pictures of what we cannot see (or what merely escapes our notice), by attributing corporeal qualities to inscrutable events” (5).
literature on trauma and needs to be connected more explicitly to a lived religion methodology for studying trauma ministries.\textsuperscript{24} For example, Judith Herman’s text, \textit{Trauma and Recovery},\textsuperscript{25} is an early social science classic in the field of trauma studies and an implied relationship between trauma and theology can be readily discerned in her formulations, including hints of questions of theodicy and meaning-making and the need for personal healing spiritual practices as well as communal healing rituals:

Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others. They undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim’s faith in a natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential crisis…. Traumatic events destroy the victim’s fundamental assumptions about the safety of the world, the positive value of the self, and the meaningful order of creation…. Basic trust is the foundation of belief in the continuity of life, the order of nature, and the transcendent order of the divine…. (51-52)

Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, in her classic text, \textit{Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma}, also would write: “The personal insights that are gained from one’s traumatic

\textsuperscript{24}American Psychiatric Association. \textit{Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders}, 4th ed, Text Revision, DSM-IV-TR (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2000). According to the DSM-IV-TR, the current psychiatric diagnostic manual as of the writing of this dissertation, the diagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) entails “exposure to an extreme traumatic stressor involv[ing] direct personal experience of an event that involves actual or threatened death or serious injury, or other threat to one's physical integrity; or witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; or learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate…. The person's response to the event must involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror (or in children, the response must involve disorganized or agitated behavior)…The person commonly makes deliberate efforts to avoid thoughts, feelings, or conversations about the traumatic event… and to avoid activities, situations, or people who arouse recollections of it…. ” (463-464). The diagnosis of PTSD typically requires observation of the persistence of symptoms enduring longer than three months. A DSM-V with minor changes to the diagnosis of PTSD was released during 2013. Modifications to the above definition, including removal of the requirement that a person’s response involve intense fear, helplessness, or horror, may be found through the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs’ National Center for PTSD at \texttt{http://www.ptsd.va.gov/professional/pages/diagnostic\_criteria\_dsm-5.asp} (accessed October 22, 2013).

experience have important parallels in religious teachings. Common religious themes emphasize the redemptive and strengthening role of suffering."^26

More recent social scientific literature on trauma continues to make reference to "disrupted spirituality"^27 in cases of trauma, even impacting the 'helper' of the victim (which could include, I would argue, religious helpers, whether lay or ordained). Other social scientific literature has called attention to the possibility of "posttraumatic growth"^28 for survivors, including in spirituality. This includes possible "vicarious growth"^29 for their therapists (and by implication other helping professionals, such as clergy, I again would argue).^30 There is a need to correlate this literature more explicitly and fully to a lived religion methodology in the study of trauma ministries – to the practices, beliefs, and experiences of survivors, as well as those who serve them.

There also is a need to consider this literature through the lens of how the church might be called to a deeper level of prophetic pastoral care given the various socially induced oppressions that might lead to violence and trauma. Healing from trauma, such as the murder of

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^29 Ibid., 168.

^30 Religious, philosophical, and folk traditions have for thousands of years recognized the possibility that the struggle with major losses in life can be the source of enhanced meaning in life and the impetus for positive change….The phenomenon of posttraumatic growth has been observed at least in a significant minority…., and sometimes in the vast majority…., of people who have experienced a variety of different kinds of loss….The growth experienced tends to fall into three broad domains: changed sense of self, changed relationships, and changed philosophy of life," ibid., 157-158.
a loved one or exposure to violence, is a lifelong process of re-establishing and maintaining a
new social support system that in effect becomes a new life – a radical break with one’s former
world of meaning into a new world of ongoing meaning-making in the aftermath:

Trauma survivors do not simply get over their experience. It is permanently encoded in
their assumptive world; the legacy of traumatic life events is some degree of
disillusionment. From the perspective of their inner worlds, victims recover not when
they return to their prior assumptive world but when they reestablish an integrated,
comfortable assumptive world that incorporates their traumatic experience. (Janoff-
Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 171)

Such reintegration of assumptions and meaning-making in the aftermath of trauma may require a
supportive communal structure, which could include a religious or spiritual community, in
addition to individual pastoral care or therapy.

The largest body of secondary literature upon which I draw for correlation in the case
studies is from neuroaffective trauma studies, as well as attachment and bereavement studies and
relational-cultural and narrative therapies. I argue that these theories *metaphorically* can be
integrated with and correlated to an *embodied and social* theological anthropology within a lived
religion methodology for studying trauma ministries. Memory, time, and bodily connection are
key elements in neuroaffective studies of the impact of trauma on the sense of self,
understanding of reality, and connection to others. Experiences of powerlessness and being
overwhelmed by the threatening experience also can be part of the experience of trauma.

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31 Some classic resource literature supporting these statements include Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*;
Trauma and Trauma Treatment* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2000); Daniel J. Siegel, *The Developing
Mind: Toward a Neurobiology of Interpersonal Experience* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1999); Daniel J. Siegel,
*Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology: An Integrative Handbook* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company,
2012); and Bessel van der Kolk, Alexander C. McFarlane, and Lars Weisaeth, ed., *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of
Exposure to a traumatic and violent event means one’s sense of safety can be disrupted and memories can become inaccessible or repressed because they are encoded differently by the brain, or even damage the brain’s functioning, when associated with highly charged affective situations and flooded with chemical brain reactions. Healing components re-establish a sense of safety and control as well as connection to others, establish commonality (a shared understanding of reality), and create possibilities to reintegrate the trauma into one’s narrative sense of self and identity so that new meaning-making can occur. A religious community, for example, can serve this purpose through particular forms of embodied spiritual or liturgical practices if prepared and trained.

In drawing upon this secondary literature, I suggest that the turn back to the physiological body as the site of embodied relational knowing, and its correlation to the metaphoric and analytic capacities of relational-cultural and narrative theories, provide more suitable tools for a study of trauma ministries seeking to use a lived religion methodology. Such conceptual tools may actually assist in the radical re-construction of an embodied and social theological anthropology, compatible also with the prophetic pastoral care theologies of Gerkin and

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33For example, Barbara J. McClure, *Moving Beyond Individualism in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, 188, recently has argued that there is a need to re-envision a “radically socialized self” within our pastoral care paradigms of theological anthropology. This dissertation agrees with the need expressed by McClure’s aims, but also argues that McClure has not adequately attended to the neurophysiological dimensions of the body as revealed by trauma and attachment studies for support for her aims. I also argue that McClure has not fully grasped the contemporary literature and practices of either relational-cultural theory (which she calls by its older theoretical name, “self-in-relation”) or narrative therapy theories when she critiques these as failing to contribute adequately to her stated aims as well.
Graham and with the multivalent uses of metaphorical theologies of trauma and “spirit.”

This dissertation revisits each of these theories more completely in relation to the results of its ethnographic and phenomenological case studies of the two trauma ministries.

To illustrate, for example, if all of our knowing is truly embodied knowing, both in verbal and nonverbal expression, particularly as trauma survivors experience, then our theories and their metaphorical formulations need to be re-examined at their bodily roots. Jaak Panksepp has argued that cognitive psychology has yet “to deal effectively with the proximal neural causes” of behavior patterns:

In other words, something is lacking. I would suggest that a missing piece that can bring all these disciplines together is a neurological understanding of the basic emotional operating systems of the mammalian brain and the various conscious and unconscious internal states they generate…I have chosen to call [this new perspective] affective neuroscience…I look forward to the day when neurophilosophy…will become an experimental discipline that may shed new light on the highest capacities of the human brain – yielding new and scientific ways to talk about the human mind. (5)

Designing new “scientific ways to talk about the human mind” actually may mean finding new metaphoric ways of talking about human psychology, metaphors that are more embodied and

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34. “Spirit” has been translated from Hebrew to mean “breath” and has been associated in biblical terms with numerous ecological images, including “wind,” and with having characteristics of movement, vibration, and energy, as well as wisdom, knowledge, and liberation, drawing metaphorical implications and applicability for interfaith dialogues as well. Some examples of how pneumatology has been expanded in the Christian theological tradition recently include Catherine Keller’s works such as *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003) and *On The Mystery: Discerning Divinity in Process* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2008), as well as Peter C. Hodgson’s works such as *Winds of the Spirit: A Constructive Christian Theology* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1994) and “The Spirit and Religious Pluralism,” in *The Myth of Religious Superiority: A Multifaith Exploration*, ed., Paul F. Knitter (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 2005), 135-150. Within one Eastern tradition as well, Thich Nhat Hanh, upon hearing that the Holy Spirit could be interpreted as the energy of God, would say: “It confirmed my feeling that the safest way to approach the Trinity is through the door of the Holy Spirit,” *Living Buddha, Living Christ* (New York: Riverhead Books, 1995), 13-14.

relational and which can enhance a lived religion methodology in correlation to a more embodied social theological anthropology.

Attachment and bereavement literature provide two such avenues into new metaphoric ways of talking about human psychology for lived religion, supporting both the traumatic physiological impact of the loss of a key attachment figure, such as an immediate family member, and correlating well with the task of developing a more socially attuned theological anthropology. Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon provide a useful summary of some of this literature, inclusive of integrating the history of neuroaffective and attachment studies. They argue that human beings need “limbic regulation to give coherence to neurodevelopment.” Pointing to a wide variety of studies on humans and other mammals that demonstrate, through observable physiological data, the negative impact of failure to attach in childhood (whether by neglect or abuse) – impact that ranges from protest to despair to actual death – Lewis, et al. conclude,

…even after a peak parenting experience, children never transition to a full self-tuning physiology. Adults remain social animals: they continue to require a source of stabilization outside themselves… Stability means finding people who regulate you well and staying near them… This necessary intermingling of physiologies makes relatedness and communal living the center of human life. (86)

Lewis, et al. also have created a new metaphorical language based partially in musical language, “limbic resonance,” to describe the regulating and contagious role of emotions between mammals, including human beings. We are not bounded, separate, autonomous, entirely rational individuals, as much of Western philosophy has often viewed human nature as well as ‘the body’. Instead, the past 50-80 years of science has demonstrated our physiological

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interdependence and permeability of ‘bodies’ through our limbic systems. “Emotionality is the social sense organ of limbic creatures…A mammal can detect the internal state of another mammal and adjust its own physiology to match the situation…a capacity we call limbic resonance – a symphony of mutual exchange and internal adaptation whereby two mammals become attuned to each other’s inner state.”

Phyllis Silverman’s studies of loss and grief also support a more embodied socially oriented theological anthropology and have challenged classic psychoanalytic paradigms and metaphors that tend to regard “continuing bonds” with the dead as pathological. Silverman and Dennis Klass argue instead that these “continuing bonds” can be, or are in fact, living, growing, and shaping bonds in the ongoing life of the grieving person:

‘Internalization’ as used by the psychoanalytic school of thought does not accurately describe the process occurring in the experiences reported on in this book. What we observe is more colorful, dynamic and interactive than the word ‘internalization’

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37 Ibid., 62-63.

38 See Dennis Klass, Phyllis R. Silverman, and Steven L. Nickman, ed., Continuing Bonds: New Understandings of Grief (New York: Routledge, 1996) and Phyllis Rolfe Silverman, Never Too Young to Know: Death in Children’s Lives (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000). Note that contemporary psychoanalytic theory has attempted to move toward a more relational theoretical frame through object relations theory, self psychology, and intersubjectivity theories but the foundational core of psychoanalytic theory and metaphoric language remains framed philosophically by and caught in a Western individualistic anthropology. For more on this, see Renee Spencer, “A Comparison of Relational Psychologies.” Project Report 5 (2002, Wellesley Centers for Women, Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA) for a feminist critique and review of this literature and shifting paradigms in psychology. See also an edited collection by Robert Neimeyer, Meaning Reconstruction and the Experience of Loss, 4th ed. (Washington, D.C.: American Psychological Association, 2005) that reviews shifting paradigms in the literature on loss. For an additional creative effort, however, to push the boundaries of psychoanalytic theories beyond purely intrapsychic or intersubjective formulations and encompass attention to the impact of culture and social oppression on the lives of women of color through the use of Kohut’s recognition of the existence of cultural selfobjects, see Phillis Isabella Sheppard’s Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). See also a lesser known essay by Thandeka, “The Self Between Feminist Theory and Theology,” in Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition, and Norms, Rebecca S. Chopp and Sheila Greeve Davaney, ed. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 79-98 in which she also pushes creatively the metaphoric boundaries of psychoanalytic language in reflecting on a social ontology, “self,” and the language of spirit by utilizing the work of D.W. Winnicott in particular, as well as Kohut.

39 Klass, et al., Continuing Bonds.
suggests…Memorializing, remembering, knowing the person who has died, and allowing them to influence the present are active processes that seem to continue throughout the survivor’s entire life. (16-17)

Silverman and Klass continue by proposing the need for new rituals as well as new language for these forms of connection, ones that are countercultural to classical Western conceptions:

The idea of meaning-making as a continuous process requires that we develop a more adequate language for talking about and to the deceased…Most other cultures in the history seem to have supported the notion that the deceased continue to live in some form after death, and they provide mourners with rituals to sustain an appropriate relationship…In the model of grief we propose, we would find a new language [emphasis added] to talk not only about loss and the person who is gone, but about connections in general. (19-20)

A neurophysiological and narrative link is also made for this phenomenon of “continuing bonds” in bereavement literature by Edward Rynearson and Alison Salloum, drawing upon an analogy to the phenomenon of “phantom limbs” in the case of amputees. “After death, the living representation of an attachment figure (a part of self ‘dismembered’ rather than a part of body amputated) is predictably ‘remembered’ and experienced as a ‘phantom’ presence.”

Additionally, Marci Hertz, Deborah Prothrow-Stith, and Clementina Chery note that there is a particular impact for survivors of homicide that goes beyond both grief and PTSD and which needs more theoretical attention: “Homicide survivorship is qualitatively different from survivorship of other violent crimes…There is no real ‘post’ in their compilation of symptoms.”

grief, complicated grief, and traumatic grief,\textsuperscript{42} support that there is a crucial need for new metaphorical language and studies of communal rituals, including religious or spiritual rituals, which promote healing from traumatic loss and which normalize the ongoing power of ritual embodiment and attachment in human life. Again, this is a purpose that religious communities possibly can serve if prepared for and trained in, and further empirical studies in lived religion, such as this dissertation, may make contributions toward meeting some of these needs.

Along with a language of “continuing bonds,” this dissertation explores relational-cultural theory as another form of “new language to talk…about connections in general,” more “colorful, dynamic, and interactive,” per Silverman and Klass above. Rather than metaphoric language rooted in psychoanalytic terms such as ‘objects,’ or ‘selfobjects’ (terms that metaphorically can connote solidity, separation, and stability), relational-cultural theorists (formerly known as self-in-relation therapy)\textsuperscript{43} speak metaphorically of “relational images,”\textsuperscript{44}

\textsuperscript{42}For further studies and summary of the history of developments in psychology in the area of grief, see additionally works by J. William Worden, \textit{Grief Counseling and Grief Therapy: A Handbook for Mental Health Practitioners}, 4\textsuperscript{th} ed. (New York: Springer Publishing Company, 2009); Therese A. Rando, \textit{Treatment of Complicated Mourning} (Champaign, IL: Research Press, 1993); Neimeyer, \textit{Meaning Reconstruction}; and Selby Jacobs, Selby, \textit{Traumatic Grief: Diagnosis, Treatment, and Prevention} (Philadelphia: Brunner/Mazel, 1999). See also Hertz, et al., “Homicide Survivors,” for further recommendations of the special needs of homicide survivors, inclusive not only of immediate family and friends but also the broader communities impacted. Hertz, et al. note in particular a gap in several areas of research and health provider trainings in relationship to these needs.

\textsuperscript{43}Jean Baker Miller is widely regarded as the founder of what is now known as Relational-Cultural Therapy, particularly beginning with her \textit{Toward a New Psychology of Women} (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976). Judith Jordan’s latest book \textit{Relational-Cultural Therapy} (American Psychological Association: Washington, D.C., 2010) is the first collation in one monograph of the theoretical terms and definitions of relational-cultural therapy (RCT) and is drawn upon heavily for primary definitions throughout this dissertation. Most of RCT’s theoretical work is spread out through collections of multiple essays, often focused on direct therapeutic care rather than being organized into an overall theoretical frame, which is what has made this recent volume by Jordan helpful for those who might seek to apply their work across disciplines. RCT theorist Maureen Walker also would emphasize that “relational-cultural work represents a worldview or philosophical approach to healing and human development” rather than simply a collection of therapeutic tools or techniques. See Maureen Walker, “How Relationships Help,” in \textit{How Connections Heal: Stories From Relational-Cultural Therapy}, Maureen Walker and Wendy B. Rosen, ed. (New York: The Guilford Press, 2004), 7. While RCT theorists kept their language simple and accessible, the totality of the worldview shift should not be underestimated through oversimplification of their concepts, and the therapeutic practice requires a high level of relational engagement and mutual vulnerability, recognizing power
which are embodied “pictures” that are not necessarily frozen or static but can shift and change over time in the fluid encounter with new relationships. Relational images are defined as

[inner pictures of what has happened to us in relationships, formed in important early relationships. As we develop these images, we are also creating a set of beliefs about why relationships are the way they are. Relational images thus determine expectations not only about what will occur in relationships but about a person’s whole sense of herself or himself. They often become the unconscious frameworks by which we determine who we are, what we can do, and how worthwhile we are. (Jordan, 107)

“Discrepant relational images” formed in the context of different or new relationships can become a means of changing negative relational images that may be dominant. A link can be made between relational-cultural (RCT) and narrative therapies through the framework of beliefs that shape into the stories we tell ourselves as well as the expectations that guide our relationships. As discrepant relational images can become a basis for fluidity and change, narrative therapy practices would look for the “alternative stories” we tell that can become a basis for change as well. RCT founder Jean Baker Miller wrote: “As other perceptions arise…the total vision of human possibilities enlarges and is transformed.” As discussed previously for Gerkin’s theology of prophetic pastoral care, this can be the crucial role of narrative visioning as a precursor for action.

differentials in the therapeutic relationship rather than distancing and objectification.

44 Jordan, Relational-Cultural Therapy, 49, 107.
45 Ibid., 27, 49, 103.
47 Madigan, Narrative Therapy, 163.
48 Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women, 1.
Such guiding metaphoric and relational images also are long familiar for pastoral care practitioners, particularly classic ones such as Seward Hiltner’s ‘the solicitous shepherd’ or Henri Nouwen’s ‘the wounded healer,’ and increasingly newer ones encompassing a broader range of social relationships and responsibilities, such as Margaret Kornfeld’s ‘the gardener’ and Bonnie Miller-McLemore’s expanded re-conception of Anton Boisen’s ‘the living human document’ into ‘the living human web’. Relational-cultural therapy combined with narrative therapy concepts offer another theoretical frame within a lived religion methodology for correlating to the power of the guiding and visioning role of pastoral religious imagery. This includes the expansion of such imagery for expressing a social theological anthropology that recognizes that pastoral images are always relational images with a potential to determine action.

In contrast to older critiques of relational-cultural therapy, RCT also has developed, and continues to develop, a power analysis of domination and subordination through various categories and experiences of oppression (race, class, gender, sexual orientation, among others) in its theoretical work. As discussed previously, Graham believes such a power analysis to be central for effective prophetic pastoral care. It also would seem a necessary tool for a lived religion methodology used in case studies based in communities either privileged or oppressed by race and class. This power analysis was initially developed through the feminist lens RCT founder Jean Baker Miller brought to psychoanalysis, but RCT has also evolved to incorporate concepts by other anti-oppression writers, such as Patricia Hill Collins’ concept of “controlling

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49 For more on each of these pastoral care images, see Robert C. Dykstra’s *Images of Pastoral Care: Classic Readings* (St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2005).

50 See, for example, how McClure, in her text *Moving Beyond Individualism in Pastoral Care and Counseling*, continues such critiques but does not explore equally RCT theorists’ responses and later developments.
images,” defined by RCT as: “Images constructed by the dominant group that represent distortions of the nondominant cultural group being depicted, with the intent of disempowering them.”

Within a lived religion methodology, relational-cultural therapy (RCT) concepts also can be useful in understanding the healing and energizing function of connection with others in the construction of an embodied social theological anthropology. “Connection” in RCT is defined as “an interaction between two or more people that is mutually empathic and mutually empowering. It involves emotional accessibility and leads to the ‘five good things’ (zest, worth, productivity, clarity, and desire for more connection).” Strategies of connection and disconnection are central tenets of relational-cultural theory. Such “growth-fostering” connection (possibly including ecclesial connections brought through religious or spiritual rituals) permits mutual empowerment and can counteract the disempowerment and isolation of trauma, or “traumatic

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51 Ibid., 102-103. See also Patricia Hill Collins, “Mammies, Matriarchs, and Other Controlling Images,” in *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*, 2nd edition (New York: Routledge, 2000), 69-96. Phyllis Sheppard also works with Collins’ concept of “controlling images” or “controlling icons” in her creative work with Kohut’s cultural selfobject, see *Self, Culture, and Others in Womanist Practical Theology*, 49-50, 135. RCT was initially criticized in much academic literature for what was perceived as its essentialist feminist stance as well as for being initially developed by white middle class female academics, but it is important to recognize that it has theoretically grown substantially over the years, including in participation by women of color who identify as RCT theorists, and that some critiques also were misunderstandings of their theoretical frame. See Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, for further in response to these critiques. See also recent work by clinical psychologists recommending the use of RCT for exploring experiences of class differences in therapy, Lauren Appio, Debbie-Anne Chambers, and Susan Mao, “Listening to the Voices of the Poor and Disrupting the Silence About Class Issues in Psychotherapy,” *Journal of Clinical Psychology: In Session*, Vol. 69(2), 152-161, (2013). In a lesser known essay, Catherine Keller also briefly discusses the context of her shared perspective with myself that these early feminist works were misread in many ways, see “Seeking and Sucking: On Relation and Essence in Feminist Theology,” in *Horizons in Feminist Theology: Identity, Tradition and Norms*, ed. Rebecca S. Chopp and S.G. Davaney (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997), 62. RCT remains a relatively young theoretical movement but one that I argue shows unexamined metaphoric promise for integration into lived religion studies of trauma ministries.

52 Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 25, 41, 103. The language of “zest” has particular associations with energy by definition.

53 Ibid., 76, 103.
disconnection” in RCT language. Such concepts may prove fruitful for metaphorical dialogue with the study of prophetic pastoral care and trauma, as well as for metaphorical correlation and dialogue with constructive theologies of trauma and “spirit.”

For example, per Heimbrock’s emphasis on the immanence of the divine in lived religion, these experiences also may be correlated to and conceptualized through the lens of theological anthropology and pneumatology, rather than psychology, and in terms of the experience of ‘spirits’ or of the ‘Holy Spirit’ or of ‘God’ or the ‘Divine.’ The neuroaffective base of human embodiment may account for a commonality across cultures to the experience of phenomena such as ghosts and spirits and ancestor worship in different religions. Additionally, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson have argued that all spiritual experience is embodied experience and that “imaginative empathic projection,” which is an embodied neuroaffective function, is the transcendent and immanent root of all spiritual experience, a theological form of panentheism.  

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54Ibid., 5-7, 83-84, 108.


56Ibid., 567. In a volume edited by Heimbrock and Scholz, Andrea Bieler cites the work of Johnson and Lakoff in her own argument for embodied knowing: “It is in, with, and through our bodies that we come to know who God is: this is where we receive a felt-sense of the holy….It is through the emerging felt-sense that embodied knowing finds ways through movement and language to express what I have called the pragmatic consciousness,” see Andrea Bieler, “Embodied Knowing: Understanding Religious Experience in Ritual,” in Religion: Immediate Experience and the Mediacy of Research - Interdisciplinary Studies, Concepts and Methodology of Empirical Research in Religion, Hans-Günter Heimbrock and Christopher P. Scholtz, ed. (Germany: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2007), 52-53. See also an essay by Astrid Dinter on the importance of “nonverbal oriented religious forms such as ritual and meditation as helpful for a reconstruction of meaning,” “Searching for a Construction of Meaning: Ritual and Meditation as Necessary Part of Pastoral Work,” in Lived Religion: Conceptual, Empirical and Practical-Theological Approaches, Essays in Honor of Hans-Günter Heimbrock, Heinz Streib, Astrid Dinter, and Kerstin Söderblom, ed. (Boston: Brill, 2008), 223.
This perspective also dovetails with the work of Andrew Newberg, Eugene D’Aquili, and Vincent Rause, who argue that finding a neurobiological basis for our spiritual experiences does not invalidate an alternative theological interpretation. In other words, ‘God’ or the ‘Divine’ needs to communicate revelation through some means and that means can be our neurobiological and somatic nature. Within theological anthropology, the body becomes a point of connection for the experience of ‘God’ or the ‘Divine’ and makes a contribution to a deeper theological understanding of human existence in relationship to ‘God’ or the ‘Divine’ as well as to other human beings.

Combined together, the above social scientific theories are useful conceptual tools to enhance a lived religion methodology for studying trauma and the effectiveness of the prophetic pastoral care practices utilized by the trauma ministries in these two case studies. For illustration, if we are neuroaffectively related in our attachment, as Lewis, et al. argue, then some desire for or possible experience of ‘being present and alive’ may remain after the death of a loved one in the very neurological fibers of our body, as also suggested also by Rynearson and Salloum in their analogy to phantom limbs. This desire or experience is part of mutuality and energy in relationships, per the relational-cultural therapy theorists, and also potentially generates “continuing bonds,” per Silverman and Klass, that may last a lifetime. In the pilot studies referenced in my preface, for example, young adults uniformly said that wearing buttons

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or t-shirts with a picture of the murdered loved one led to an actual *visceral* experience of the person still being alive, present, and connected to them, a prophetic and performative pastoral care practice of testimony and witness that led me later to name this practice theologically as a form of *theopoetics of material religion*. I turn now to this final contribution to a lived religion methodology for the practical theological study of prophetical pastoral care practices of trauma ministries.

**Theopoetics of Material Religion**

In my previous pilot research, and also observed in my ongoing ethnographic immersion with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, I became aware of the prominence of artistic and embodied ritualized expressions of traumatic grief as a prophetic pastoral practice. These included spontaneous street memorials\(^{59}\) (Fig. 1), as well as displays of pictures of, letters to and poetry about the lost loved one in the Peace Institute’s redesign of funeral orders of services. They also included buttons with the picture of the lost loved one and the Peace Institute’s use of sandplay with miniature objects for spiritual healing (these will be discussed and depicted further in chapter two). I realized that such ritualized, albeit popular cultural expressions, could be considered examples of “material religion”\(^{60}\) within a lived religion approach to trauma studies.

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\(^{59}\) Street memorials are a separate spontaneous phenomenon and do not represent a specific practice of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute, however, many survivors have participated in this spontaneous practice as well.

\(^{60}\) See E. Francis King, *Material Religion and Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2010) and Colleen McDannell, *Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995). Material religion draws on the broader field of material culture studies, and per McDannell, religious material culture is a neglected area of study. For examples of purely material culture studies, see Daniel Miller’s works, such as *The Comfort of Things* (Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2008). In arguing for greater attention to material Christianity, McDannell states that the line between the profane and the sacred is much more blurred than religious scholars often credit. Items of popular material culture can be given religious or spiritual significance by virtue of human relationships, actions, and interpretations.
Fig. 1. Scenes from Two Spontaneous Street Memorials:  Top, a typical street memorial at the site of the murder with stuffed animals and flowers wrapped around a street lamp pole; Bottom, the bottom portion of a different, more elaborate street memorial depicting food offerings, hairbrush, liquor bottles, and candles.
These material expressions often were associated with specific religious and/or spiritual content, including biblical quotes, images of the cross, prayers, and wishes for victims to rest in peace.

Material religion is an anthropological theoretical frame that is rarely applied in practical theology and which also may be particularly useful for a lived religion approach studying trauma and prophetic pastoral care.\(^{61}\) Material religion encompasses four specific categories of material culture: “artifacts, landscape, architecture, and art”\(^{62}\) (See Fig. 2). Use of images and material objects reflect our embodied nature, relationships, and extended sense of self, as E. Frances King points out, and when linked to media, “the power of the image is almost limitless”\(^{63}\) as a form of poetic and performative testimony to spiritual and religious ways of being:

Focusing on the material, rather than the aesthetic or symbolic quality of objects, means that we take into account the haptic (touching) interactions that are…a significant element in the human response to, and engagement with, material goods. No matter what their aesthetic criteria, images and pictures and statues are there to be touched, smelled, and sometimes tasted as well as looked at: along with other artifacts they are materialized in physical form. (xiv)

Writing specifically about material Christianity, and dovetailing with Meredith McDannell’s understanding of lived religion, Colleen McDannell argues that it is through the

\(^{61}\) Special note should be made, however, of the work of at least one other practical theologian: Stephen Pattison, *Seeing Things: Deepening Relations with Visual Artefacts* (London: SCM Press, 2007). Pattison has studied the human tendency to create personal relationships with visual artifacts. I build upon his work but turn particular attention to the relationship between the expression of material religion (including use of visual artifacts) and the psychosocial experience of trauma. I particularly explore the possibilities in material practices beyond the visual dimension for a more fully embodied range of sensual material expression (sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste). I am also interested in the use of material culture and religion for prophetic and performative testimony and witness, again drawing upon Jack Santino’s work in making this particular link as well.


Fig. 2. Public Artistic Memorial: Two pictures from a public artistic memorial created by a public charter school class using shoes to represent people lost to homicide. It was displayed at a health center for a few years with a lengthy plaque including the words “Our goal is to eliminate violence and bring forth a new community…In order to prevent more deaths we must understand how violence affects everyone in our whole community. Let us come together as a community and make sure there are no more empty shoes. We should use these shoes as the beginning of our journey to PEACE.”
“physical dimensions of religion” that human beings both internalize and express their theologies and identities:

Throughout American history, Christians have explored the meaning of the divine, the nature of death, the power of healing, and the experience of the body by interacting with a created world of images and shapes….The symbol systems of a particular religious language are not merely handed down, they must be learned through doing seeing, and touching….Experiencing the physical dimensions of religion helps bring about religious values, norms, behaviors, and attitudes. Practicing religion sets into play ways of thinking. It is the continual interaction with objects and images that makes one religious in a particular manner. (1-2)

Pastoral care with victims of trauma requires attention to the somatic rupturing of self and body, and counter-practices may include reconnection to material objects, physical spaces, and one’s surroundings. As I became more deeply aware of the various practices of the Peace Institute in both pilot studies, conjoined with the spontaneous street memorials from my first pilot study, I realized that such practices seemed to be empowering when performed publicly as prophetic testimony and/or protest by survivor families and youth. I also realized that greater exploration of such material and embodied practices could yield explicit or implicit theological content regarding “the meaning of the divine, the nature of death, [and] the power of healing…”.

Specifically, I realized there was potential methodological fruit for both lived religion and constructive practical theology by combining analytic perspectives from “material religion” with the literature of a “theopoetics” of testifying and witnessing. This combination seemed

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64 McDannell, Material Christianity, 1.

65 On the prophetic dimension of theopoetics, Rebecca S. Chopp writes in “Theology and the Poetics of Testimony,” Criterion (Winter 1998), 2-4: “The poetics of testimony is my way of naming the discursive practices and various voices that seek to describe or name that which rational discourse will not or cannot reveal…The poetics of testimony, expressed in a variety of particular and distinct forms, is fundamentally concerned with human and earthly survival and transformation, and thus renders a moral claim on human existence. This imperative is also theological, or at least for those of us who live Christianity as practices of emancipatory transformation or, in the
uniquely suited to exploring the implicit theological dimensions of embodied and material artistic practices of prophetic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma. A “theopoetics of material religion” thus becomes one **bridge tool** between a lived religion incorporation of material religion (purely as anthropology) and the construction of theologies based on the prophetic pastoral care practices of trauma ministries. Rebecca S. Chopp writes: “As compared to rhetoric, poetics seeks not so much to argue as to refigure, to reimagine and refashion the world.” As we witness the embodied, material, and performative practices of trauma ministries, we realize they may testify prophetically to alternative lived experiences of trauma as well as alternative visions for theology and the world.

My argument is that “poetics” as an expression of beauty, imagination, metaphoric juxtaposition, or moral call, need not be restricted to verbal or literary expressions – that a form of poetic testimony, witness, and prophetic challenge can occur through material expressions as

words of Albert Schweitzer, as a reverence for life.” Beyond *discursive* practices can be a *material* dimension to testimony and witness in calling a larger community to moral transformation, I argue.

66Ibid, 6.

67Deepening this connection between poetics and the prophetic, Chopp continues, 6-7: “Poetics is the discourse that reshapes, fashions in new ways, enlarges, and calls into question the order of discourse within…the ‘social imaginary’….By ‘testimony’ I mean the discourse that refers to a reality outside the ordinary order of things…Testimonies enact a moral consciousness and communal, even at times, global responsibility…. testimonies…are collective and social…testimony is both private and public…Testimony invokes a moral claim; it is from someone to someone about something. A decision is called for, a change in reality is required.” (6-7). She writes further on the connection between a poetics of testimony and theology: “In the theologies formed as a poetics of testimony, transcendence is a matter of the power and spirit of transfiguration…Transcendence is, quite simply, not a conceptual problem but a moral summons to imagine hope….Understanding theology as engaged in continually negotiating to sanctify life may enable us to keep theology more fluid and more multi-dimensional – indeed, more Spiritual – and may allow us a way to combine poetics, rhetoric, and hermeneutics in theology. Imagining theology as engaged in negotiating practices to sanctify life by means of tracing Spirit allows us to appreciate theology as a type of cultural intervention” (10-11). Thus poetic testimony through material religion can have powerful prophetic implications for a society and its culture and can lend itself to theologies of spirit and trauma.
well. For example, as discussed in my preface and initial pilot studies, spontaneous street memorials (Fig. 3) created in the aftermath of homicide are artistic material renderings and mark implicit, at times explicit, public prophetic protest. They testify metaphorically and theologically to the “dangerous memories” of precious lives lost by virtue of being performed in public spaces, with the potential of such testimony being magnified by the additional public witness of the media. Families, youth, and young adults also often resist the removal of such street memorials from the public space, as self-reported in my pilot studies. In an essay on theopoetics and liberation, Rubem Alves writes: “Politics begins not with the administration of the dead but with the resurrection of the dead.”

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68 The language of “theopoetics,” as I am using the term, is traced to Amon Niven Wilder, *Theopoetic: Theology and the Religious Imagination* (Lima, OH: Academic Renewal Press, 1976/2001), who also held a broader vision of theopoetics than simply verbal or literary expressions and was inclusive of the cultural arts in many forms, though this was undeveloped in his work. Wilder wrote, 1-5: “Before any new theologies however secular and radical there must be a contemporary theopoetic…Religious communication generally must overcome a long addiction to the discursive, the rationalistic, and the prosaic…I speak of the need for a richer agenda…this new sensibility is also evident in the arts with their heightened awareness of the elements of perception, the wonder of what is immediately presented to consciousness in touch, sight, and sound…I speak of the need today for an enrichment of the methods of theology…wide scrutiny today of the relation of religion and the arts has opened up the deeper dynamics of communication and meaning.” It should be noted that Wilder gives credit to Stanley Romaine Hopper for first describing “theopoetics” in its literary sense, though again, Wilder’s own broader conception needs further recognition and development.


71 The placement and removal of such public street memorials has been such a point of controversy in Boston that the Boston City Councilor interviewed for this dissertation noted that her plan to call a public hearing in this area.

Fig. 3. *A Different Spontaneous Street Memorial: Top*, photo of full spontaneous street memorial; *Bottom*, close-up of a portion of the street memorial. Street memorials are known to remain up often for a year or more and rarely are disturbed in any way.
In addition to the above examples from the Peace Institute’s ministry, I was aware through public documents\textsuperscript{73} of the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry’s work with a congregation in Knoxville, TN prior to my own research with members of this congregation. On July 27, 2008, a gunman specifically targeting Unitarian Universalists killed two adults and injured seven others during a children’s performance of a play. At the rededication service for the sanctuary on August 3\textsuperscript{rd}, ritual re-inhabitation of the space, elements of material religion, and a metaphoric transformation of a song all were used to reclaim safety and testify to renewal of hope, also as witnessed publicly by the media.

My growing awareness of the combined practices of the Peace Institute and the UU Trauma Response Ministry called my attention to the methodological potential of combining these two different literatures through the phrase “theopoetics of material religion” as a way of theological naming such performative practices. I turn now to an examination of the two case studies using a lived religion methodology, as well as a mutual critical and metaphorical correlational of trauma studies and a theopoetics of material religion, to draw out and highlight prophetic pastoral care practices. The voices, language, and practices of survivors, and those who serve them, as they experience or seek God/the divine and sustance and healing in the aftermath of violent trauma serve as my normative point of practical theological reflection.

\textsuperscript{73}Public documents were accessed through the Unitarian Universalist Association and the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry. See http://www.uua.org/search.shtml?q=knoxville (accessed March 9, 2013) and http://www.traumaministry.org/tragedy-in-knoxville (accessed March 9, 2013)
CHAPTER TWO

CASE STUDY ONE: THE LOUIS D. BROWN PEACE INSTITUTE (LDBPI)

One day, Louis was in his bedroom playing with his cousin Antonio and his friend Anthony. They were talking about what they wanted to be when they grew up. Louis said to them: “I am going to be the first black president of the United States when I am thirty-five years old.” Antonio was so happy to hear that, he jumped off the bed where he was sitting. “Wow!” he said. “That means you will also be the youngest president ever. Fantastic, then I will be your vice president.” “Good,” said Louis. “I want you guys and all my friends to be with me in the White House.”

One night, Louis was watching the news on television. The news anchor reported that earlier that day two young men had been arguing about drugs, and one had shot the other and killed him. Louis got very sad. He looked at his father with tears in his eyes. “Too many kids are dying on the streets,” he said to his father. “Why are there so many guns around? Why do people have to use drugs? That stuff can hurt you, and it can kill you.” Louis sat silently for a moment. Then he shook his head and said to his father: “If things don’t change by the time I become president, I will be alone in the White House – none of my friends will be around. They will all be in jail, all addicted to drugs, or all dead.”

History and Organization of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute (LDBPI)

History of Formation

In the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, Boston was struggling with a rash of homicides and street violence, reaching a peak of 152 murders in 1990. Amidst this context, on December 20, 1993, Louis David Brown, age 15, was on his way to a Christmas party being given by the

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2For more detailed information on this period of Boston’s history and the organizing efforts to reduce homicides, including an unprecedented cooperation between clergy and police represented by the Ten Point Coalition, see “Religion and the Boston Miracle: The Effect of Black Ministry on Youth Violence” by Jenny Berrien, Omar Roberts, and Christopher Winship in Who Will Provide? The Changing Role of Religion in American Social Welfare, edited by Mary Jo Bane, Brent Coffin, and Ronald Thiemann (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 2000) 266-285.
organization *Teens Against Gang Violence* when he was shot and killed, caught in a crossfire between two rival gangs though he himself had never been involved in a gang. His mother and co-founding ministry leader of the Peace Institute recalls that Louis wanted to be the first African American president, and he is quoted in Peace Institute in-house pamphlet literature as saying: “If true peace is to be achieved it will be up to my generation, regardless of which side of the streets we come from.” Current ministry leaders of the Peace Institute, who had never met this young man, would cite the legacy of his life and story as foundational to their work and guiding mission. One would state: “[The Peace Institute] became a safe place in the community for people who lost somebody to violence – because of Louis’ story.”

The initial years of the Peace Institute took two directions, directions that continue to inform their work and ministry today: (1) creating peace curriculums and education based in large part on Louis’ life story for use in the Boston public schools; and (2) providing outreach and advocacy education to family survivors of homicide. A third direction today is the coordination and training of other providers who serve families of homicide victims. The Peace Institute’s peace curriculums are deeply intertwined with their overall mission and became nationally recognized during the Clinton administration for assisting in the reduction of juvenile crime in Boston. However, it is their survivor outreach services, including their Leadership Academy, and work coordinating Boston area human service providers that have remained their primary source of recognition locally. These latter services are the main focus of this particular dissertation examining the Peace Institute’s prophetic pastoral care practices, practices that

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educate and empower families to become peacemakers and advocates for justice in their larger communities.⁴

Mission

The formal mission of the Peace Institute, as cited throughout their in-house pamphlet literature as well as the Peace Institute website, is: “to create and support an environment where families can live in Peace and Unity.”⁵ They further state on their website that the focal point of their programming includes schools, families, and the broader community. The overarching tag line throughout their literature and this website is: “transforming pain and anger into power and action,” as well as an emphasis on their Seven Principles of Peace: “love, unity, faith, hope, courage, justice, and forgiveness.” While some study participants spoke to more or fewer dimensions of this mission, depending on their experiences, none contradicted this perception of the Peace Institute’s mission. Sample survivor comments included: “The model is…take your pain anger and turn it into power and action…” as well as “…the mission is to help empower the family to find the strength…to cope with…this journey, this life change, this life-altering experience…to…help us create that peace environment…to help stop the cycle of violence…like a wrap-around or comprehensive place for that specific goal….”

For the founding ministry leader, this mission is linked to larger oppressive historical forces and a country founded on violence: “Again this country was founded on violence and…in

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⁴It is important to note that the Peace Institute is currently moving in the direction of a greater focus on training providers in the methodology of their work and ministry in the hopes of replicating it and decreasing their focus on direct service outreach. This is due to their own recognized limited capacity in staffing and funding to enable their vision and mission to have the type of prophetic reach they desire.

⁵See their website in particular: http://www.ldbpeaceinstitute.org/mission.html (accessed April 20, 2013) for the mission statement and quotes that follow above. Note that since this dissertation began to be written, the Peace Institute mission statement has been updated to clarify further what was initially written above, including the integration of “restorative justice theories” language. See http://www.ldbpeaceinstitute.org/content/our-mission (accessed November 29, 2013).
the name of peace, we go to war and we think it’s okay, so…what’s our role in all of this, you know? We’re quick to blame people [but] where do we go and how are we accountable?…[H]ow are we leading by example? In the prophetic pastoral philosophy of the Peace Institute, each person first must learn how to foster peace within so that one then can foster peace out in the larger community. Several institutional supporters also would use language such as “comprehensive” and “wraparound services” to describe the mission of the Peace Institute. They would state that the Peace Institute’s overarching mission is not only to support survivors in the aftermath of violence but also to prevent violence by “support[ing the survivors] in making this link between personal healing and policy…to educate survivors in policy and systems change” and to foster “safer and healthier communities.” This intertwining of a pastoral care focus on internal peace with the need to engage in the prophetic work of system change is highly consistent with the prophetic pastoral care theology of and focus on power analysis by Larry Kent Graham.

The motto threaded throughout the Leadership Academy literature remains striking in this regard: “transforming pain and anger into power and action.” This philosophy of “healing through action” comes from the Honduran culture and lived experiences of the founding ministry leader, an immigrant to this country as a child with her family. She would speak of her culture as teaching her to believe that there is an inner wisdom and capacity for “healing” anger and grief through one’s personal capacity for transformative and embodied action. She would explicitly attribute her experiences and beliefs to racial, class, and cultural differences:

I don’t know…as whether it’s white people that you have the luxury of going to a counselor and sitting, and in my country as a poor person, that’s not a luxury you have, so you find your way of not denying but of dealing with your issues whether it’s sewing, cooking, cleaning but different methods of dealing with grief…[you don’t] have this
luxury of grievin’, of a safe space, you’ve got to go, go, go because you have other children and that’s just the way the world is, you don’t have luxury of goin’ to a support group because that’s not what we believe in…

Though not an explicit component of their public mission statement, leaders of the Peace Institute also clearly experienced and identified their work as ministry, and some survivors and institutional supporters did as well. Ministry in this sense centered on meeting people where they were at and serving immediate needs, but doing so with a deep and connected sense of compassion and love. This sense of ministry was grounded in each leader’s Christian faith tradition or background as lay people and a common belief in “servitude” rather than a specific religious form of Christianity. This stress on servitude parallels Charles V. Gerkin’s emphasis on the narrative image of Christian servitude. Ministry leaders most often experienced the work as a calling or mission from God to help with providing love and healing and opportunities for the transformation of pain and anger into power and action. Formal degrees were not considered necessary for this work so much as a strong base in love and humility as well as personal experience with survivor needs.

As mentioned in their mission statement above, threaded throughout all of the programs and services of the Peace Institute are their seven Peace Principles: Love, Unity, Faith, Hope, Courage, Justice, and Forgiveness. All ministry leaders agreed that the principles had a biblical base as they understood them. The founding ministry leader specifically would describe them as coming to her as a message from God in 2002 after she and her husband separated and she became the sole director of the Peace Institute. She explained emphatically (pounding on the desk during the interview) that these principles were divinely revealed to be the core of her peace work. For the founding ministry leader interviewed, a sense of connection to and calling by God
also was part of the narrative that turned her outward, pushing her to grow in her own self-confidence and transform her own pain and anger. She experienced her work as a God-given mission not only to impart the seven principles of peace to survivors but also to the larger community as well, in her language to work toward “the fullness of God’s peace.” This turning outward and drive to perform prophetic pastoral care through her internalization of the Christian narrative also is consistent with Gerkin’s perspective on the roots of prophetic pastoral care. Thus both Graham’s and Gerkin’s specific emphases in prophetic pastoral care can begin to be seen in Peace Institute ministry practices.

Some correlation to the psychosocial literature on “post-traumatic growth”⁶ is possible here also given that each of the ministry leaders were themselves survivors of trauma. As the Peace Institute ministry leaders “struggle[d] with loss” and being a “catalyst for change,”⁷ they experienced “traumatic growth” as survivors themselves as well as “vicarious growth”⁸ when in the role of caring for other survivors as ministry leaders. They used their personal survivor experiences as a relational basis for empathy in their ongoing learning.⁹ These experiences in turn nurtured practices at the Peace institute that were designed through their Christian narrative to foster a sense of inward control and peace on the personal level, as well as an outward

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⁶Calhoun and Tedeschi, 157-172.
⁷Ibid., 167.
⁸Ibid., 159 and 168.
⁹Calhoun and Tedeschi, 159, cite studies of survivors who reported growth in the aftermath of trauma. While the survivors reported increased awareness of vulnerability, paradoxically they sometimes experienced themselves as “stronger and more capable” too. They also could report “an increased connectedness with others and a deepened sense of empathy and the ability to connect emotionally with other people.” It should be noted that not all survivors report experiencing post-traumatic growth and certainly not all go on to found organized ministries.
capacity for public action and impact in challenging the larger society (“transforming pain and anger into power and action”) – or “leading by example” as the founding ministry leader stated.

While ministry leaders at the time of the interviews identified as coming from lay Christian backgrounds, a newer dimension of the turning outward of their ministry was their engagement in interfaith work through the use of these seven Principles of Peace. They discovered that these peace principles could be seen as universal aspects of human experience. This allowed them to operate equally well in a secular public school setting as in an interfaith setting, enhancing the Peace Institute’s overall missionary capacity and drive to end suffering and create lasting peace. The founding ministry leader would pull out and recite a quote by the Cambodian Buddhist monk, Maha Ghosananda, to the researcher: “We must find the courage to leave our temples and enter the temples of human experience, temples that are filled with suffering. If we listen to the Buddha, Christ, Mohammad or Gandhi, we can do nothing else. The refugee camps, the prison, the ghettos, and the battlefields will then become our temples. We have so much work to do.” Thus she and other ministry leaders learned from different religious traditions, looking for points of connection with their values and practices, while also remaining firmly grounded in their own Christian values and narrative.

Philosophical Influences

Two models and philosophies of anti-violence intervention, the public health model and an anti-oppression analysis, both would help to shape the mission of the Peace Institute in its founding years and also be recognized in the grassroots work the Peace Institute was already engaging. The respective models were introduced to the founding ministry leader by fellow black female leaders and institutional supporters, both of whom she experienced as important
relational mentors in her life. The public health model of violence prevention is most deeply associated with the work of Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith, whom the co-founders met in the early 1990’s and who would assist in the writing of the Peace Institute’s Peacezone curriculum for grades K-5. A ministry leader spoke of the public health model as giving “language” to the work in which they were already engaged.

The public health model consists first of recognizing that violence is a systemic public health problem, not solely a criminal justice problem, and that as a public health problem it is preventable through a range of services, programs, and approaches. Before meeting the founders of the Peace Institute, Prothrow-Stith would write that, as a public health doctor, she rejected “that the medical community was powerless to prevent young black males or members of any group from hurting one another.”

In her view, all social institutions have a role to play in preventing violence by providing diverse and integrated educational programs to address anger management as a realizable goal:

My own view is a pragmatic one. To me a problem that destroys health by causing so much injury and death is a health problem…I am convinced we can change public attitudes toward violence and that we can change violent behavior. What is required is a broad array of strategies; strategies that teach new ways of coping with anger and aggressive feelings. I believe we can and we must mobilize schools, the media, industry, government, churches, community organizations, and every organized unit within our society to deliver the message that anger can be managed and aggressive impulses controlled. (28)

The second model and philosophy of anti-violence intervention that both helped to shape Peace Institute services and was an intuitive match with work they had already engaged was a

10 While the Peace Institute is known best for its Peacezone curriculum currently, the founders had also developed other nationally recognized peace curriculums based on literature and community service learning prior to the Peacezone curriculum. There are multiple Peacezone curriculums for different grades, but one sample is Peacezone: A Program for Teaching Social Literacy, Grades 4-5 Teacher’s Guide by Prothrow-Stith, et al.

11 Prothrow-Stith, Deadly Consequences, 132.
model of anti-oppression analysis. This model also gave the staff language and tools for deepening their understanding of their work, language and tools that were seen to match with the public health violence prevention model with which they were already familiar, particularly in gun violence prevention. The anti-oppression institutional supporter interviewed affirmed that it was a natural match with the Peace Institute’s focus on internal insight work as the grounding for effectively engaging in peace and social justice work in the community – in other words, it was a match with the Peace Institute’s prophetic pastoral care approach:

…our approach to community engagement and to community change is based on the assumption that we have to look personally inside – interpersonally – and then at the systems around, as well as at the culture that we’re all swimming in…survivors need to do personal healing, and they also need to develop advocacy skills…’Cause we can heal every individual, and then if we don’t do something about the policies and practices that create this condition, then we’re still stuck.

As a consultant to the Peace Institute’s Survivor Leadership Academy, this institutional supporter developed educational programs to enable survivors to be effective in engaging in social justice and policy advocacy. These programs made explicit the links between the personal and the public at four levels – the personal, interpersonal, institutional, and cultural – and provided language for anti-oppression concepts as well as education in history and policy (e.g. modern racism, classism, sexism, heterosexism, religious oppression, etc.). This approach also integrated well with the public health model’s focus on primary preventive care through teaching personal and interpersonal skills of conflict, grief, and trauma resolution. A focus on emotional and cognitive literacy was tied to the ability to engage in effective public policy advocacy for both models. The Peace Institute’s ministry leaders recognized that personal pastoral awareness

enhanced the skills of systemic prophetic action, and this was foundational to the shape of their ministry.

This institutional supporter also stressed that the theories introduced were a match with what the Peace Institute was already doing on a grassroots level, but that the provision of *theory and language* enabled the ministry leaders to engage their work more explicitly. It helped them to understand their own need to heal and communicate with each other, as well as to educate the survivors they were serving on this more explicit level:

[I]t's kind of given them a language…how do you communicate…with awareness of power differentials, which be they race or gender or status or age or whatever, and how do those impact how well we do our work?…It's a language…and giving them some more tools for how to understand their feelings, how to talk about it with each other, and then also, I don't think that they had explicitly made the link between racism, oppression, and the institutionalization of gun violence…I mean, it wasn't like it wasn't there, but I don't think they had been focused on how do you *teach* people about that, and I think they're beginning to do more of that.

While both of these particular institutional supporters interviewed stressed that the Peace Institute was already engaged in work reflecting a public health violence prevention model as well as an anti-oppression stance, ministry leaders affirmed that trainings by these institutional supporters gave them language and theory for sharpening their understanding of the healing and advocacy work in which they were engaged. Language and theory gave them tools of analysis that enabled not only post-traumatic growth but also their ability to become more effective *imaginaries and teachers of prophetic community peacemaking.*

In bell hooks’ essay, “Theory as Liberatory Practice,”¹³ she affirms the importance of theory as a liberative means of interpreting and healing personal pain by linking with systemic oppression. She writes:

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¹³bell hooks, *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* (New York:
Living in childhood without a sense of home, I found a place of sanctuary in “theorizing,” in making sense out of what was happening. I found a place where I could imagine possible futures, a place where life could be lived differently. This “lived” experience of critical thinking, of reflection and analysis, became a place where I worked at explaining the hurt and making it go away. Fundamentally, I learned from this experience that theory could be a healing place…When our lived experience of theorizing is fundamentally linked to processes of self-recovery, of collective liberation, no gap exists between theory and practice. (61)

LDBPI ministry leaders and survivors consistently reported they came to understand the power of theory and language in this way, as both a source of ‘healing’ and liberation through deepened understanding.

Charles V. Gerkin’s emphasis on the innate power of narrative (in his case, the Christian narrative) to create a prophetic stance, combined with Larry Kent Graham’s stress on the need to understand larger social systems of oppression to enact that prophetic stance effectively, share a common ground in hook’s attention to the imaginary and liberatory function of theory. Ministry leaders reflected that the combined power of their various Christian prophetic perspectives with the theoretical tools and language of social analysis (public health and anti-oppression) provided a means of recognizing power relations in the larger society and of honing their programs to resist cultural domination.14

Together these tools and practices enabled them to be countercultural and imagine a different narrative and relational world – one in which “peace is possible,” per the founding ministry leader. In this case study, the Peace Institute ministry leaders (as well as survivors interviewed from their “Peace Warriors” group) vigorously resisted the belief that violence and

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14It can also be said that they were enabled better to resist “cultural hegemony” through such tools. Madigan, Narrative Therapy, 164. “Cultural hegemony” is a term utilized within narrative therapy and initially created by Marxist theorist Antonio Gramsci to recognize “the dominance of one social group over another” in the normalization of one cultural and ideological way of being (e.g. Graham’s focus on “demonic hegemony”).
murder are the norms of an urban context and that particular racialized bodies are dispensable, a form of “controlling image”\(^\text{15}\) often normalized when the media reduces urban lives lost to mere statistics. Ministry leaders (as well as fellow survivors) would embrace these two models and philosophies for creating peace in their communal mission and through their programs.

**Programs and Infrastructure**

At the time of these interviews, the Peace Institute consisted of four paid staff and a large number of volunteers managing the vast majority of referrals for families whose lives had been touched by homicide in and around the greater Boston area. There were two main departments which reflected their early origins, (1) Peace Education, under which their ongoing work with their various peace curriculums in Boston public schools fell; and (2) Survivor Outreach Services, under which they provided a variety of healing, educational, and empowerment programs for survivor families. While these departments were separated to prioritize staff responsibilities, there was often an intertwining of program influences and developments.

For example, sibling and teen groups offered to survivors through outreach services also were seen as related to peace education work being done in schools. The public health institutional supporter interviewed stated: “[It] became clear that helping children deal with fear and anger and pain and loss was an absent part of the typical violence prevention education activity. That people were going in, teaching character, teaching conflict resolution, teaching skills, but not at all addressing that emotional trauma.” One Peace Institute ministry leader spoke of the Survivor Outreach sibling program as arising from the use of their peace

\(^{15}\)As discussed in chapter one, “controlling images” is a relational-cultural therapy term, derived from the work of Patricia Hill Collins, that also can be related to the concept of “cultural hegemony” as used in narrative therapy or Graham’s use of “demonic hegemony.” Controlling images are: “Images constructed by the dominant group that represent distortions of the nondominant cultural group being depicted, with the intent of disempowering them.” See Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 28-31, 102-103.
curriculums in the public schools and the desire “to literally teach peace to children,” particularly since many children already had been exposed to violent traumatic losses in Boston.\(^{16}\)

Ministry leaders saw the work of sibling groups as crucial to the prevention of further generational violence. Such groups affirmed that these youth were “peculiar people” who could be stigmatized, isolated, and otherwise at-risk for striking back in pain and anger.\(^{17}\) Per a ministry leader, such youth needed opportunities to connect with their fellow peers and to learn different vehicles, including artistic ones, for expressing pain and loss:

> [W]e like to use the slogan “hurt people hurt people”…predisposed possibly, potentially, to violence themselves. They feel the sense or the need to retaliate often, and many times that takes place very subconsciously, if you will…So recognizing that, [the] Peace Institute sought to develop a siblings program where we could provide…an atmosphere where these young children could come and could recognize that there are other folks or other children like them. They are not the same people that they were prior to that experience of murder and bereavement and funerals and that whole picture. They are peculiar people, if you will…imagine a young kid who is asked about his brother’s murder in school or in the playground or wherever. You can only imagine the trauma that he goes through having to try to answer…“What happened to your brother? Was your brother in a gang? Was your brother a gangbanger? Was he on drugs?”…So in an effort to address that, the Peace Institute sought to have this group, and it helps these young kids express themselves through arts, express themselves through writing, through poetry, through song…through different positive avenues of expression, then that sort of takes the place of expressing themselves in negative ways…

\(^{16}\)The public health doctor interviewed estimated “that something like 10 percent of the children [in Boston] had witnessed a significant episode of violence by the age of 6.”

\(^{17}\)The work of James Gilligan on the role of shame and honor in the creation and perpetuation of violence, particularly for men, is useful in understanding the importance of peer groups for adults and youth, as well as the importance of providing alternative vehicles for expressing emotions and reducing stigma and shame. See his work *Violence: Reflection on a National Epidemic* (New York: Vintage Books, 1997). Other writers who speak specifically to the African American male experience include Geoffrey Canada, *Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1996) as well as his *Reaching Up For Manhood: Transforming the Lives of Boys in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), and also John A. Rich, *Wrong Place, Wrong Time: Trauma and Violence in the Lives of Young Black Men* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009). A final interesting historical and cultural perspective on the impact of slavery, violence, honor, and shame that bears on contemporary struggles is an older work by Bertram Wyatt-Brown, *Honor and Violence in the Old South* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).
Today, the Peace Institute is best known for its crisis management services under Survivor Outreach, providing support services to families in the immediate aftermath of a homicide. These services include the use of the Peace Institute’s *Burial and Resource Guide: What to Do After Leaving the Hospital, A Step-by-Step Workbook,* as well as the creation of specialized orders of funeral services and memorial buttons. From personal experience, the founding ministry leader would talk of the confusion and sense of being overwhelmed with feelings and logistical tasks in the face of a family homicide – from experiencing the emotional trauma itself, to where to start with funeral arrangements, to suddenly having to cope with police and media presence as well as the judicial system in one’s life, to needing to find immediate and significant financial resources for the burial and notify as well as coordinate family and friends, to being bombarded with service providers or abandoned by service providers, etc. Each of the Peace Institute ministry leaders was available when a homicide occurred to provide pastoral care, no matter their official paid role. Such care involved immediate, supportive crisis counseling services and walking the family through practical logistical details to find or advocate for the resources they needed.

Once a family moves through the initial crisis management pastoral care, other prophetic pastoral care programs are available to them through Survivor Outreach Services, including their newly named Holistic Healing Center activities (inclusive of various art activities and body healing practices) and many programs of the Leadership Academy. These latter include:

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19 As a point of autoethnographic information, one of my most vivid memories during the time of my goddaughter’s family gaining support from the Peace Institute in the aftermath of Kenny’s murder is of the founder getting on the phone with a Boston City Councilor and demanding that the City of Boston find a way to pay for Kenny’s burial. She vehemently insisted that the City of Boston was responsible when the murder of a young person occurred on its streets. My personal perception at the time was that you ‘didn’t want to mess with’ the Peace Institute founding ministry leader.
educational and empowerment workshops (such as court preparation, understanding police processes, networking with human service providers, public policy advocacy, etc.); “By Men for Men” (an individualized program for male survivors led by the male ministry leader); and “Tuesday Talks” (a weekly evening support group for adult survivors, which would come to be named the “Peace Warriors” by those who attended, and also an organizing basis for giving public testimony about the needs of survivors and advocacy for public policy changes). Their current outreach to the broader community includes the monthly meeting of the provider service network known as “Serving Survivors of Homicide Victims”; a wide variety of public events during the Survivors of Homicide Awareness Month (Nov. 20th-Dec. 20th annually by proclamation of the Massachusetts governor); as well as their annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace (their major fundraiser and community event on the streets of Boston). Several of these prophetic pastoral care programs and practices will be explored more deeply now, including their correlation to the social scientific literature on trauma and a theopoetics of material religion.

Prophetic Pastoral Care Practices

Transforming Pain and Anger: Story and Image

“Transforming pain and anger into power and action” is the core principle and end goal of every aspect of the Peace Institute’s prophetic pastoral care practices, an end goal of creating communal peacemakers. The initial drive, by the co-founding parents of Louis, to create and sustain an organized peace ministry itself involved a central power-filled act of meaning-making in the aftermath of violent traumatic loss. This act was not inward focused but exemplified their conscious realization that ‘care of persons’ and ‘care of world’ are deeply intertwined, as Larry Kent Graham has argued in linking pastoral and prophetic care. Additionally, meaning-making
through the use of story – the life story of their son Louis – was a core initial practice and has remained so, embodied in material form throughout their various peace curriculums and peace principles, as well as in the very name of their agency and the ministry leaders’ connection to their sense of mission. Louis is lifted up as one who dreamed of and worked towards peace.

The development of the *Peacezone: A Program for Teaching Social Literacy K-5*\(^{20}\) curriculums arose as a partnership of Prothrow-Stith (who was then at the Harvard School of Public Health) with the Lesson One Company\(^{21}\) and the Peace Institute founders in response to these needs for trauma resolution and peace practices. Each curriculum in *Peacezone* opens with the story of Louis D. Brown and his life values and dreams, as well as the trauma of his murder and its impact on his family and friends. Feelings in response to this story, as well as other stories from Louis’ life, are threaded throughout the curriculums’ focus on the development of emotional literacy and advocacy skills, such as safety and commitments to peace. This focus is developed through various art activities, games, writing assignments, stories/literature, and community service projects.\(^{22}\) These various peace curriculums are illustrative overall of the Peace Institute’s holistic pastoral prophetic care philosophy, further practices of which will be explored in the next section. Their methodology for accomplishing inner peace and communal

\(^{20}\)For the purposes of this dissertation, only the teacher’s guide for grades 4-5 is referenced in the bibliography, as a sample of one among many LDBPI peace curriculums. See Deborah Prothrow-Stith, et al., *Peacezone*.

\(^{21}\)More information about Lesson One can be found at their website: [http://lessonone.org](http://lessonone.org) (accessed August 27, 2013).

\(^{22}\)The Peace Institute also recently completed and published a new workbook for children, *Always in My Heart: A Workbook for Grieving Children* (internal 2011 publication of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute), which again, similar to their other peace curriculums, is based on an emotional literacy approach with a focus on art and writing activities, though this workbook is particularly structured around the use of the seven Principles of Peace in addition to the story of Louis D. Brown. It also should be noted that the drawings used throughout the *Peacezone* curriculums reflect the ethnic diversity of the Boston student body as the curriculums’ primary target audience.
education and advocacy encompasses the arts, bodily awareness, and emotional and cognitive literacy and integration, as well as public action in the community on behalf of peace.

This use of their son’s life story testifies to the power of Charles V. Gerkin’s reclaiming of Anton Boisen’s classical image of “the living human document.”23 A person’s life, in this case Louis D. Brown, becomes a living text, even in death, of revelation, testimony, and inspiration for prophetic pastoral care practices. The biography of Louis written for 4th and 5th graders in Peacezone includes many anecdotal stories of his desire to become the first black president of the United States and how his parents reinforced this dream. They would tell Louis that he was a “guiding light for peace” in choosing to work toward “helping teens stop acting violently and stop using guns” when he joined Teens Against Gang Violence, and he would say in response: “I want to teach people how to make peace and live peacefully.”24

In narrative theory and relational-cultural terms, Louis’ life story becomes an “alternative story”25 that helps to break down some of the stereotypes, the “controlling images,”26 of and meanings assigned to murdered young black men in urban America – images that they are always gang-involved and with implicit meanings conveyed that they are generally less than worthy recipients of society’s embrace and support. Because Louis is lifted up as a young black man who specifically was working on gang peace issues at the time of his murder, even though he had not been involved in a gang, his life story becomes a potential imaginary and


25Madigan, Narrative Therapy, 33-36, 66-70, 163.

26Jordan, Relational-Cultural Therapy, 28-31, 102-103.
transformative bridge for those who might otherwise dichotomize the black community into
good and bad people via the media or in other ways. As a ‘liberatory practice,’
these peace curriculums also provide young people with language and tools for imagining an alternative
vision and transformative peacemaking possibilities for their lives and communities.

This use of Louis’ life story as a prophetic pastoral care practice also can be seen as a
lived religion practice in popular culture, one in which meaning-making and a vision of
communal peace can happen outside formal religious contexts. A “continuing living bond” with their son is both expressed and transmitted to others through prophetic communal imagination, a material and embodied communal imagination through the use of the arts and specifics of his life story in their various peace curriculums. These practices engaged through Louis’ life story also then are exemplified in lifting up and transforming, through material art form and testimony, the life stories of others lost to homicide – a performative example of a theopoetics of material religion explored next.

Transforming Pain and Anger: Story and Material Art

The shape of transformative action takes many forms in the LDBPI’s prophetic pastoral
care practices, from the personal level to a more public level, and led several survivors to talk of
an eventual transformative impact on their lives overall. On the personal level, the Peace Institute has long found value in the use of the arts for expression and transformation of internal

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27hooks, *Teaching to Transgress.*

28Transforming a tragic loss – whether by violence or in other ways – into foundations or institutions named after the person lost can be observed widely in society and also might be understood and labeled as a form of prophetic pastoral care practice when the socially transformative intent is made explicit in their mission.

29Klass, Silverman, and Nickman, *Continuing Bonds.*
pain and anger, particularly now through their Holistic Healing Center. In the aftermath of trauma in an already oppressed community, participant responses support that the use of the arts to convey one’s story and experiences has particular power as a prophetic pastoral care practice.

One ministry leader spoke of the need to find alternative ways for survivors to express traumatic experiences, ways that allowed the neurophysiological and embodied dimensions of healing from trauma to be unlocked. An example she gave, among others from their Holistic Healing Center, was sandplay (Fig. 4), in which miniature objects are used to create a symbolic and metaphoric yet somehow living world in the sand (including other earth elements such as fire and water when desired):\(^{31}\)

I think that it’s so hard to talk about [the trauma] that you have to provide different ways to express…sand tray gives you alternative ways to kind of spark that, whatever’s going on inside of you to bring it out and be processed. And it’s like trauma and these things that are happening, like they can’t always be explained in words. You have to feel it and one way that you can feel it is through art and music and literature and sand tray…when you play in the sand and just touch it, it opens up that part of your brain that the trauma affected. And…the process of playing in the sand and…creating [with] the figures…a world allows for the trauma to…kind of come to the front of the brain to be processed.

\(^{30}\)See for example their use of art and literature activities even in their early years through their various peace education curriculums as previously discussed. They also utilized a well known local arts therapy university for additional group programs, and ministry leaders frequently incorporate art activities into their work with both the teen and sibling groups and the adult groups, such as the Peace Warriors.

\(^{31}\)It should be noted that the Peace Institute founding ministry leader was specifically introduced to the technique of sandplay when she spontaneously requested to accompany this researcher on a training during the researcher’s early period of ethnographic immersion and volunteering. Given the Peace Institute’s commitment to the power of the arts in “healing,” I thought this particular art form might be of interest to the founding ministry leader, though her initial request to accompany me was entirely spontaneous. Little did I expect how fully and completely the Peace Institute ministry leaders, as well as some survivors, particularly teen survivors, would embrace this particular technique, now regarded as a major component of their Holistic Healing Center with a room fully dedicated to sandplay. Ministry leaders have embarked on further trainings on their own, though it also needs to be noted that I was asked to lead a few early trainings for ministry leaders and some survivors. The particular technique the Peace Institute was initially introduced to and trained in for sandplay (that this researcher is also trained in) is what is known as Sandtray/Worldplay by Dr. Gisela De Domenico (see http://vision-quest.us/vqisr/about_us.htm, accessed April 20, 2013).
Fig. 4. Peace Institute Survivor’s Sandplay Example. Sandplay performed by a participant following a visit with her son's murderer in jail. In the picture, the participant indicated she was reflecting on self through the figure placed by the mirror. She also indicated she was reflecting on reconciling the perpetrator's innocent child self with the horrific action in which he had later engaged through other figures in the tray. Small white figures perched on the edge of the tray were indicated to be spectators.
By arranging material objects in the sand tray, the survivor both can give theopoetic testimony to their metaphoric world of experiences and also be empowered as a witness to the world they have created as well, often a witness in partnership with others. Such theopoetic testimony and witness is performative and embodied, functioning on a more visceral level of connection to the traumatic loss as material objects become touched by emotional energy – the world is enlivened in the process. One survivor would describe her sand tray to me as demonstrating her ongoing and transformed connection to her deceased son and to her prophetic and eschatological “hope” for “peace in the dark world,” revealing also through her words, sighs, tears, tone of voice, and touch the multivalent and metaphoric use of material objects as theopoetic living and performative symbols in the sand:

This is my world in here. This is the barrier I want to keep between the outside world and my family. This is the angel watching over my whole world. That’s my husband, me, and my younger son. This is the enemy I’m trying to bury. This is my [deceased son – uses an eagle for the symbol]. When I see eagles in the sky, I think of him. I keep him near our home. This is the love for my family that is sometimes questioned. The mirror is on hope – I have hope and I want my family to see that too. That was one of my [deceased son’s] favorite toys – guarding our family between two worlds. This is the bright world. This is the dark world. I put peace in the dark world hoping for that. [She rubs the stone lettered “peace.”] If there’s peace in the dark world, it can’t hurt my world.

Such artistic material expressions through sandplay, quilt, collage, or drawing (Fig. 5) often conveyed the survivor’s continuing bond to their lost loved one, as well as the ambivalence of unresolved and often unresolvable pain of severed connections, including struggles with forgiveness. Through sandplay and other artistic renderings, participants gave narrative and metaphoric witness to the hidden depths of their personal and communal feelings of loss and separation (e.g. an enemy needing to buried, a love that is sometimes questioned, and a barrier dividing the world into brightness and darkness in the above). Yet they also testified
Fig. 5. Other Art by Peace Institute Survivors. Displayed on Peace Institute walls, Top, a patchwork quilt, and Bottom, a survivor’s artistic rendering on forgiveness.
theopoetically to their prophetic and eschatological hopes for transformation, peace, and ongoing embodied and living spiritual connection (e.g. a mirror rests on hope, a peace stone is placed in the dark world, an angel and the son’s favorite toy guard the world, and an eagle persists as a symbol of spiritual connection kept near the home).

The founding ministry leader also would speak of the power of using sandplay to give her control over what she would and would not choose to confront in relationship to her own trauma, a sense of control over her own testimony, witness, and movement through the play, a sense of control that she did not necessarily experience if she chose to engage in talk therapy. Through the play, she maintained control over the pace of her own transformative role in the living world she was creating, whether metaphorically in the moment with one particular sand tray, or also implying real world prophetic steps she might choose or not choose to take. Here she talks both of her preference for sandplay and her ambivalence as well:

I don’t hafta sit and talk to anybody if I don’t want to, you know…that I have the power…to choose my course, that I have the power within me to select. Again, the landmines are there, my child was murdered, my husband left me, I can’t change that no matter what I do. Do I wanna stay stuck in grief or do I wanna move through the next phase of the journey, and I think that’s what it does for me, it really – and sometimes I wanna stay stuck, I won’t even do sandplay because if I do it, I’m gonna reveal somethin’ that I know but I don’t wanna go there right now, I wanna stay right here, and, again, that’s a choice….

Relational-cultural theory would identify such ambivalence in moving toward and then away from the relational and living power of these forms of artistic embodied and material expressions in the aftermath of trauma as the “central relational paradox,” where there is always a desire for growth and connection, for relational life, but various hurts or traumatic violations can build up over time and result in powerful “strategies of survival and disconnection.”

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serve as a paradoxical form of protection of relational life from further relational hurts, wounds, or traumatic violations. Relational-cultural theory would advise a prophetic pastoral care provider that such strategies needed to be honored with “radical respect”\(^{33}\) for their wisdom given a particular context of relational experiences and images available to the survivor, hence also supporting the survivor’s strategies of needing control in the aftermath of trauma. In the experience of participants, including the founding ministry leader, sandplay provided this type of needed control as a prophetic pastoral care practice, as did many of the artistic material mediums provided, though these types of comments came up most specifically in relation to sandplay.

As previously stressed, the Peace Institute ministry leaders recognized that a multitude of holistic prophetic pastoral care practices are necessary in “transforming pain and anger into power and action,” but the value of the various artistic peace practices they offered was spontaneously emphasized by several survivors. These included the above practices as well as the sibling group art activities, including the creation of “safe boxes” and “Peaceville” (a three-dimensional ideal city of peace).\(^{34}\) The Peace Institute’s emphasis on family participation and inclusion in these artistic peace practices was particularly valued. One survivor would say: “I think it’s really important when it’s a family affected that you go at the same time. Even though we’re not in the same room that we’re both reachin’ out or getting services around a loss because once again you don’t really talk about your feelings.” Another would report that her daughter had shut down initially in the aftermath of losing her sibling but after working with the Peace

\(^{33}\)Ibid., 37, 104, 106.

\(^{34}\)“Safe Boxes” was an art project in which the youth decorated boxes and put materials into the boxes that helped them to feel safe. “Peaceville” was another interesting example of a theopoetics of material religion as a prophetic pastoral care practice when the youth created their ideal city of peace, a large artistic construction project that amounted to a hoped for fully realized eschatological vision and it was eventually placed on display at the Massachusetts State House and later within the place of the Peace Institute itself for a period of time.
Institute ministry leaders she gradually began to open up and “express herself.” Thus even for the youth, these prophetic pastoral care artistic peace practices would allow them to “transform their pain and anger into power and action,” as an additional survivor would report:

…I have a younger son, so he attends the youth program during the year when there’s a particular project, like they did Peaceville…and they did an appearance at the State House. So he spoke there, him and another youth that are involved at the Peace Institute… He spoke to different people that were there about his project, and the news reporters that had questions for him… He’s now 13. And he’s able to articulate what he feels and expresses himself, whether it’s with his hands or verbally.

The Peace Institute’s discovery over the years of the prophetic pastoral power of art activities and body work, including more recently sandplay and their latest use of yoga, massage, and acupuncture, dovetails with other research that supports the use of embodied modalities in trauma and “healing.”35 This can be witnessed in survivor use of home altars as well (Fig. 6). An appropriate cautionary note was raised by ministry leaders and survivors alike that these modalities are so powerful in their embodied experiences that one must in some sense be ready to work with what emotional and visionary energy is revealed in their use – this came out most strongly in relationship to material on sandplay, but the Peace Institute’s use of massage, yoga, and acupuncture may prove similar once those modalities are more fully engaged. Above all else, participants stressed that survivors cannot be pushed into post-traumatic growth and the capacity for leadership – the pace of their own “healing process” must be fully in their own control for participation in particular prophetic pastoral care practices.

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Fig. 6. *Home Altars.* Artistic memorial practices continue in the privacy of home as well. Home altars, including a poster used in peace marches (Top) as well memorial buttons (Both) and t-shirt (Bottom), created by two different families in memory of their murdered child (pictures used with family permissions).
Transforming Pain and Anger: Testimony in the Public Square

When the pastoral and the prophetic are successfully linked through a survivor’s participation in Peace Institute practices from both their Holistic Healing Center and their Leadership Academy, then a survivor is positioned more effectively to be able to take public leadership, such as has been done by the “Peace Warriors” group. Specifically, when these same artistic and storied expressions are displayed or performed in a communal context they become prophetic in their ability to challenge the controlling images of the dominant culture and to educate and call a broader public to action. Within the broader community, for example, the Peace Institute is most well known for their specialized funeral orders of service (Fig. 7) as well as for the memorial buttons they produce. The funeral orders of service, designed by families with the support of Peace Institute ministry leaders, include the standard obituary and order of service, but also give families an opportunity to include multiple pictures of their loved one, as well as letters to or poetry about their loved one, and to shape a unique narrative of their loved one’s life, sometimes in counterpoint to stories and stereotypes that were being portrayed in the media. The funeral orders of service become enlivened by the family’s embodied participation in their construction in a process similar to the construction of sandplay worlds – and this enlivened construction then functions as a theopoetic testimonial for a broader community to receive in witness.

A separate unique contribution to these funeral orders of service by the Peace Institute is the inclusion of information about trauma reactions, symptoms, recommendations, and resources. This is both for the sake of the family and also to give prophetic pastoral guidance to the larger community (sometimes hundreds attend these funerals). Through this information, the gathered
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When the tragedy and trauma of homicide strikes, countless lives are affected. From siblings to parents, spouses, partners, grandparents, aunts, uncles, cousins, to coworkers, friends and neighbors, we all deal with loss differently. Shock, anger, revenge, self-blaming guilt, and shame; the flood of emotions we go through are seemingly endless. And only through love, support, guidance and compassion can we even begin to make sense of all the grief and pain. Many times when someone we care about is grieving we don’t know how to act around them. We may unintentionally end up doing or saying the wrong things.

Here are some suggestions. While it may sound like simple common sense, this advice is coming directly from those of us who have been there, the survivors of homicide victims. It's important that all survivors have a supportive team around them and that they are connected to the proper resources. This is a community in need of specific and targeted intervention that starts with the death notification and goes far beyond the burial, and in some cases the trial.

Keep in touch: Do more than simply visit at the time of the funeral. Call or visit during the weeks and months ahead for these are the loneliest times. As other friends and family begin to go on with their normal routines, your calls and visits will become more valuable than you can possibly imagine.

Learn about loss and grief: This is a natural part of life. The more you know the better you are able to help.

Reading Resources For Adults
Talking With Children About Loss, Maria Trozi with Kathy Massimini
Azim’s Bardo: A Father’s Journey From Murder to Forgiveness Azim Khamisa
The Bible

Reading Resources For Teens
Fire In My heart, Ice In My Veins A Journal For Teens. By Enid Tiraismean
The Bible

Reading Resources For Children
After the Funeral: Jane Loretta Winsch, Pamela T. Keating (Illustrator)
Am I Still a Sister? Alicia M. Sims
The Children’s Illustrated Bible- The Children’s Encyclopedia of Bible Beliefs

Fig. 7. Peace Institute Funeral Order of Service, Resource Page. Resources with recommendations and advice given to attendees at the funeral so that they may help survivors better in the aftermath of the homicide.
community is guided in how to continue to support the family after the funeral, including the importance of remembering special dates and anniversaries and watching for signs of unhealthy grief. The community also is engaged in learning the 7 Principles of Peace\textsuperscript{36} and a Peace Prayer, with various recommended personal and communal actions to be taken as well, such as selecting a principle of peace to focus on as a spiritual practice and committing to making schools and neighborhoods Peace Zones.

At the time of a funeral, the Peace Institute also is known for the creation of buttons with the loved one’s picture on it and some wording from the family (sometimes wording related to a peace principle), which are then distributed at the family’s discretion to family and friends.\textsuperscript{37} One button also is retained for the Peace Institute’s Traveling Memorial Wall of Buttons (Fig. 8), which is prominently displayed at major public events, such as their annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace. Of the wider purpose of these buttons, the founding ministry leader would say, strikingly emphasizing embodied connection with the language “touches,”

I…wanted the larger community to see that violence touches all of us, you know, whether it’s inner city, gang violence, domestic, sexual abuse, whatever it is, violence touches everybody, and I wanted the photos to be more than just a number, you know? I wanted people to see the faces are real, the names are real and the impact that it has on the

\textsuperscript{36} One interesting example of the power of such material witness in the space of the Peace Institute itself is the prominent display of 7 bricks painted by former social work interns with the principles of peace. These two interns had clearly absorbed the importance of embodied and material practices in their year with the Peace Institute and considered this an appropriate goodbye gift as a thank you, which it happily was received as, hence the prominent display.

\textsuperscript{37} After wearing these memorial buttons had become a prominent practice in the Boston community, young people and families also began to create t-shirts with their loved one’s picture displayed as well. These would be worn in different settings, such as the march known as the LDBPI’s annual Mother’s Day Walk for Peace or for family gatherings. In my pilot studies, the young people interviewed (rather than the adult parents focused upon in this dissertation) would state that these memorial buttons and t-shirts gave them a visceral embodied feeling of connection to their lost loved one, a sense that their loved one was physically present when the button was worn – more than simply a memory – and that when more family members wore these buttons or t-shirts at family events, the stronger this energetic sense of connection and presence became for them. This included experiencing the loved one as witnessing events, not being “left out,” and feeling the loved one’s “vibe.”
Fig. 8. Uses of Peace Institute Memorial Buttons. Top, the Traveling Memorial Wall of Buttons that is displayed at various events. Bottom, while buttons are typically worn on a person’s clothing or bags, this one is viewed in placement on a street memorial (picture used with family permission).
community…. I mean more than the homicide statistics that they show in the inner city…take off this myth that it’s only gang related in a concentrated area…

A “theopoetics of material religion” is clearly demonstrated in these various Peace Institute prophetic pastoral care practices. From the funeral orders of service to the memorial buttons, each of these become powerful and energetically living material and artistic vehicles of prophetic testimony to, and then received in witness by, the larger community, speaking to the need to remember the dead and to construct a poetic and visual narrative through material expression of the lives lived and lost but not gone or forgotten. A continuing bond of living energetic connection is initiated and performed in the testimony of love, conveyed through new material forms with hope for receipt in witness and commitment by a larger community on behalf of peace and justice and calling forth a life beyond merely statistics. Through these practices, the dead are marked as and transformed into powerful and still living motivating forces for resistance and prophetic transformative action in the community.

Rebecca S. Chopp writes on the theopoetics of story and testimony: “The telling of these stories is for life, for the mending of life, the healing of life, the ability of life to live and survive and thus conquer…extremity…If one is not authorized to live, then surviving is both resistance and hope. These testimonies are discourses of survival for hope and of hope for survival.”

Lives are indeed lost in one embodied form; yet they also live on in the public square through a performative testimony that is embodied as much via the material as the oral or literary. They live on in new artistic poetic and material shape through the narratives and pictures of the funeral orders of service, memorial buttons and t-shirts, and banner displays on the streets of Boston

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38 Chopp, “Theology and Poetics of Testimony,” 7.
during the annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace. They continue to challenge prophetically the dominant culture’s marginalization of lives lost to violence. As prophetic pastoral care practices, they bear the mark of embodied spiritual energy and an eschatological hope for peace, thus becoming fuel for constructive practical theologies of trauma.

**Significant Emerging Themes**

**Theme: The Question of “Healing”**

As I sought to explore the prophetic pastoral care practices Peace Institute participants found helpful, I assumed that the word “healing” would be a noncontroversial equivalent to the word “helpful” in my questions. While I also intended to explore what “healing” meant to participants (see appendix B), the use of the word “healing” triggered such a range of reactions from study participants that a pause for more careful thematic attention was signaled. As I listened carefully to participant responses, their lived experiences of conflicted relationship to this word as a normative reference point for pastoral care practices began to make more sense. Some participants readily accepted the use of the term without a need to qualify, including most of the Peace Institute ministry leaders and institutional supporters, yet it was viewed as problematic or needing to be rejected as adequate language by some survivors, as well as the institutional supporter who served as a mental health clinician with survivors. The founding ministry leader herself recognized why the word and concept can be challenging and ambivalent in the aftermath of trauma: “Yeah healing means more trauma [laughter] because you’ve got to go through some crap to get to that point, so healing is traumatic.”

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39 My clinical trainings led me to think of the word “healing” in terms of “health,” per one root linguistic meaning, and my theological trainings in terms of “wholeness,” per another root linguistic meaning. I will be exploring these assumptions more deeply in chapter five as these responses and struggles with alternative language drove me to alternative literature for constructive practical theologies of trauma as well.
The mental health clinician interviewed as an institutional supporter would struggle with words as she expressed the difficulty in finding an alternative language to “healing” for survivors of homicide, recognizing that this word tended to imply a closure not experienced by survivors in practice. She suggests that “movement” might be a better alternative for the care provider to use, a word that doesn’t challenge the survivor’s right to name, and thereby own, an experience they would rather have never had:

I think language is complicated and…you can’t assume that you’re using them in the same way or that the concept is the same and I think “healing,” that word, as with some other words to survivors, suggests…that there will be an ending to this experience of loss. That there will be a time at which you’re over it…how do you participate in life again once you’ve gotten through to surviving, how do you participate again in a way that maybe you can imagine, at some point, meaning and purpose… It suggests movement. We talk a lot about movement, movement, so that things can shift, they can change…it [laughter] takes more – more language, more words than one to sort of get at what the person might be thinking or talking about or contemplating and what we might be doing with them…and “movement” is a word that comes up a lot because…that doesn’t challenge what belongs to them. As much as they don’t want the experience, it’s theirs.

For the survivors interviewed, words such as “process,” “cope,” and “being able to function” and “get up,” as well as continued daily movement despite the pain, came up most frequently, including an outright rejection of the possibility of “healing” by some. One survivor called it an “open wound” and that she needed to keep moving or risk being attacked:

I don’t think that you ever heal… Am I healed? No. Just trying to…put one foot in front of the other or just goin’ to work…. I just feel like it’s an open wound…I think that you learn ways of copin’. I think that just tryin’ to maintain…it feels like runnin’, just stayin’ busy…just like the minute you stay still you’re attacked by it… Like I just feel like as long as I stand up and can keep my feet movin’ I’ll be able to function and make it through the day. But I don’t feel it as healin’, I don’t, I just get up.

Another survivor would say that she had learned to look at “healing” differently, as an “ongoing journey,” or “a big circle,” and as having enough other “pieces” in place to heal some
of the “1,000,001 pieces wounded.” She comes to know she will no longer “shatter,” though she might “lose pieces” at times and need to “replace them”:

It’s huge. I don’t know. It’s so many different ways you can look at it, but for me I guess one is just to be able to get up and function… I think because healing is so broad, I think you work on little pieces at a time, of yourself. It’s not like one straight thing… Something may happen, a experience may happen that may contribute to help heal a certain part of what’s wounded inside you, because I feel like I have 1,000,001 pieces wounded inside of me, and today I might feel like I’m okay in this area, and this process has helped me… Something else might come up, and I might forget about that process that I did… because now this over here has taken over – overshadowed – what I felt over here, but you don’t totally forget about that, and so sometimes you have to reach back into what you’ve already have to help you work on the next piece, but I think healing is an ongoing journey…it’s just a big circle, and you just continually keep going. It’s like endless, but you do get to a place where you – for me, anyway – you get to a place where you’re not gonna shatter. You might lose a little piece, but you’re not gonna shatter… I just lose pieces and try to replace them.

For the Peace Institute ministry leaders, there was use of a similar metaphor and recognition that many different “pieces” are needed for a “kaleidoscope” of practices of “healing” by survivor families, “one size does not fit all,” per the founding ministry leader:

[I]It’s not this one-size-fits-all, you know… healing from trauma is like lookin’ in… kaleidoscopes… It’s not the same thing, you know? Many different people can look inside that kaleidoscope and see something completely different… bein’ able to heal from trauma, there’re a lotta different little pieces that we must provide to families and I think that’s one of the things that has helped me...

Participant remarks around the language of “healing,” “movement,” “wounded pieces,” and “kaleidoscope” were particularly striking. Though it became a problematic word in my questions, I did not have a pre-association to the term “healing” that it meant closure rather than an ongoing process, particularly when one has experienced the loss of a child to homicide. However, it was clear that to some survivors, as well as the professional mental health clinician interviewed, the word “healing” can have the metaphoric association of expected closure when
used by a care provider in practice. As Hertz, Prothrow-Stith, and Chery indicate, there is no “post” to the homicide of a family member – there is no moving beyond or over.40

The language of being in “wounded pieces” and needing a “kaleidoscope” of different “pieces” in the ‘healing process’ also has resonance with the primary cognitive metaphor used by Ronnie Janolff-Bulman in her book on trauma, *Shattered Assumptions*, though the ‘shattering’ expressed by survivors extended along bodily and emotional levels beyond purely the cognitive. This form of ‘shattering’ resulted in an “endless ongoing circle” of losing and replacing wounded pieces. The founding ministry leader would reach for the metaphor of a “kaleidoscope” to describe their pastoral care practices. A kaleidoscope image is also a circular one, constantly shifting and elusive – pieces move and disappear and often reconnect to form in new ways with new images, but still with some familiarity and recognition and still held by one embodied container. The lost piece simply comes to be seen in a new image and form.

The kaleidoscopic and “holistic” nature of “healing” and practices in the aftermath of trauma was repeatedly stressed by the ministry leaders, as one said: “Yeah, healing’s just like a lifelong process and it’s not any one thing that’s gonna help, it’s a holistic thing: physically, mentally, spiritually.” Connecting and helping survivor families get what they need “in real time” in the immediate crisis period, and on a practical and logistical level, can be the first step in providing effective prophetic pastoral care help and affirmation, this as well as empathically normalizing the full range of their feelings and responses, as another ministry leader stressed:

…the more you can contain the immediate crisis and trauma event, the better. And the way that you can do that is like making sure people know step by step what’s gonna happen so that there’s no like mystery. They know exactly where they can go to get whatever it is that they need. They know who’s in place to help them, they know what their rights are, and they know that there’s somebody that’s gonna be there to help them

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40Hertz, Prothrow-Stith, and Chery, “Homicide Survivors.”
exercise their rights. Validating them so they don’t feel like they’re crazy for whatever it is that is on their mind because half the time it’s pretty similar for most people and unless you experienced it then you might think it’s crazy.

Most specifically, ministry leaders associated “healing” with “regaining control” in one’s daily life, as another would state: “…being aware of how the trauma is affecting you on a day to day, physically, mentally, emotionally…noticing that you don’t eat or you eat too much, [then] how are you gonna take steps to kind of control that? So I think healing is really regaining control.” This regaining of control requires a holistic range of practices – from assisting with practical logistic details such as raising funds for a burial to providing emotional validation of and normalizing their status as “peculiar people” (adults as well as children) to connecting with others and engaging in healthy body and spiritual self-care practices.

*Body practices*, such as breathing techniques, emphasized in the LDBPI peace curriculums also now are extended through yoga, massage, and acupuncture in their survivor outreach Holistic Healing Center as well. The ministry leader who recently introduced bodywork to the Peace Institute would talk about the importance of having a variety of “holistic health options” because “some individuals did not respond to traditional talk therapy as others may.” She particularly stressed that it was important to offer survivors of color in her community alternative forms and paths of “healing,” this in light of their spiritual reliance often and solely on God:

Sometimes with a lot of survivors, in particular survivors of color, it’s like we have two options; we go to God or we just deal with it in our way which may be unhealthy or you just, “Okay, that’s what we need to do. We’re resilient people. We’re just gonna bounce back or life goes on.” You’re dealing with these inner struggles. So this leaves two things that happen. It’s not to say oh you don’t bring it to God but sometimes we need some additional support. So taking care of yourself in this way as another way to take care of yourself I think is important to have and…know that it’s a healing option…Then the connection between massage and psycho-therapy and that there’s been a lot of good
research in terms of that connection of bringing those two different modalities together to kind of help people who are suffering from some type of traumatic experience.

Establishing peace in spirit and body was seen as key to working toward communal peace for survivors of color living in an oppressed community. As mentioned in chapter one, Larry Kent Graham also recognized the importance of body practices in healing for the fullest sense of liberation and empowerment to occur.

Finally, for at least one institutional supporter of the Peace Institute, the connection the Peace Institute makes between personal “healing” and the impact of oppression, their stress on the prophetic change of larger social institutions, was seen as one of the most valuable aspects of the Peace Institute’s kaleidoscopic or holistic embodied approach to “healing” in the aftermath of trauma. Through such prophetic pastoral care practices, “blaming the victim” for what are actually societal problems is avoided:

[M]ost of the folks that I am aware of that the Peace Institute works with are…oppressed. Their social conditions make the likelihood of this kinda thing higher than if they were living in a different situation…I think if those who are historically excluded understand that that's a social issue and not a personal fault or a fluke, then we will be able to better advocate for our own social and physical and mental health…[because otherwise] they could blame the victim. They could blame themselves and/or their family or community, or…they could become depressed and hopeless because they could say there's no way out. It helps instill hope and power as opposed to just be depressed and giving up.

However, ministry leaders and survivors also were aware that transformation of their pain and anger into power and action on such a societal level was a delicate process that often required pacing and an emphasis on the survivor’s own control over the process. Prophetic pastoral care providers seeking to implement any of these practices would do well to heed those cautions.41 Survivors need ample time to foster peace within first before they can be expected to

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41 Indeed not all survivors would utilize these extended offerings of the Peace Institute, either their Holistic Healing Center or their Leadership Academy. Many survivors of family homicide only come to interact with the
foster peace in a larger community. When successfully engaged through such initial pastoral practices for internal transformation of pain and anger, however, survivors were then positioned to enter the public square with prophetic power and action, as were the young people above in the display of their “Peaceville” at the local State House.

Overall, participant responses led me to ask if the language of “healing” could be reclaimed for survivors of family homicide or if it needed to be abandoned in psychosocial scientific literature, as well as prophetic pastoral care practices, and new metaphors developed and utilized, such as “movement” and a “kaleidoscope” of holistic prophetic pastoral care practices. As has been recognized, there is a certain “unsayability” to the experience of trauma, one in which “more language,” per the mental health clinician, is needed. When validated for the right to name their own experiences by a care provider, embodied metaphors are pushed and reshaped by survivors such that ‘fracturing’ and ‘movement’ appear to be emphasized over stability and solidity, as well as the sheer strength of will to “get up,” “cope,” and continue to “function” despite the “open wound,” despite losing and needing to replace the “pieces.” It is clear that there is more theoretical and metaphorical work needed to encompass the lived experiences of these particular survivors of family homicide living in already oppressed communities.

Peace Institute for its crisis management services, though some may return many years later for their other services. The long-term availability of the Peace Institute, given the need for survivors to pace and control their “healing” in the aftermath of trauma, is a prophetic care practice to be noted by would be care providers.

42 Annie G. Rogers, The Unsayable: The Hidden Language of Trauma (New York: Random House, 2006). This may be why symbolic play with material images can be so powerful for survivors of trauma, as seen in the street memorials from my pilot studies as well as in the Peace Institute’s use of sandplay and other art forms. The missing metaphorical words for relational images and experiences sometimes can be more deeply and poetically conveyed through shifting, changing, tactile objects and images, which bears further investigation.
Prophetic pastoral care providers and constructive practical theologians of trauma may find some additional theoretical and embodied metaphoric resources by integrating the psychosocial literature of continuing bonds. Survivors experienced themselves as being physically weighted down by and bonded to their lost loved one, such that it was a challenge to get up and function, let alone put one foot in front of the other. Yet the desire expressed was not to sever the bond but to learn to carry and move with it in a different way so that the loss did not “attack” and paralyze them completely. Perhaps the relational and metaphorical images of such bonds could be reshaped as ongoing physiological bonds that are recognized to be experienced naturally as embodied connections. The task would be to emphasize survivor control in reimagining the weight of carrying this bond more lightly rather than severed, and also perhaps with an elasticity that prevents shattering as well as an adhesion that allows for the reassembly of lost pieces – including pieces that take new theopoetic but physically lighter material form in their expressions.

Seeking alternative embodied metaphors for healing that are more consistent with the lived experiences of survivors of family homicide dovetails with existing narrative theory and practice. This also is consistent with a prophetic pastoral care practice of empowerment and liberation that prioritizes a survivor’s ability to claim their particular language for owning experiences they would rather not have or carry. Exploring the potential in such metaphors to illustrate a more socially attuned and embodied theological anthropology, including the power of a theopoetics of material religion for prophetic pastoral testimony and witness, also may open the

See Griffith and Griffith, *Encountering the Sacred in Psychotherapy*. Griffith and Griffith are pastoral psychotherapists who speak to the importance of “multichannel listening,” 61, and “eliciting multiple metaphors,” 67, when working with clients. No single metaphor is usually sufficient in facilitating a client’s capacity to reframe their life story for healing or movement and empowerment.
door to additional correlations for constructive practical theologies of spirit and trauma, as will be explored more deeply in chapter five.

Theme: The Significance of Place and Culture

One of the strongest common themes related to questions of “healing” or “helping” that emerged in the language of nearly all study participants was the power of an embodied spiritual culture of peace and safety in the physical space and place of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute. Words such as “comfortable,” “safe,” “touchstone,” “spiritual,” “aura,” “like family,” “supportive,” and “culture of peace” repeatedly came up in interviews. It was clear that to the ministry leaders themselves, as well as to survivors and institutional supporters, that Peace Institute leaders strove to model what they preached to others and to create an environment in their physical space that gave witness to this culture as well. This was so much the case that several people would speak of being drawn to connect and visit with the Peace Institute if they were merely in the area. A survivor would say: “I just felt like it was a place that I could just go talk, but I didn’t know what I was gonna talk about ‘cause I really didn’t realize what I was feeling or whatever. I just felt comfortable being there, and so I would go by and sit and talk…”

Even an institutional supporter would say:

I think again…it is sort of a touchstone…that provides some thread of continuity…there is certainly something that takes action on their part to sustain it, to create that kind of space and culture over time…I think it’s also a place where sometimes people just want to stop by. It represents something. It’s solid, it’s in the community, it’s there. They have associations with it. There’s a welcoming sort of aura there and I often use it as a place where I’ll stop by…I think it’s relationships…shared experiences…over time…

Survivors stressed that the survivor-led nature of the Peace Institute gave them a feeling that they did not need special permission to call or a particular appointment to come over to the Peace Institute or that they needed to explain their presence – they were simply accepted and
understood: “You have that outlet like no matter what time…[the ministry leader] stayed with me on the phone for like an hour…I could call and cry or don’t say anything and they know. They give you that…” Survivors were provided with a “safe space” to share whatever needed to be shared, and they did not need to share the specific details of their stories: “When you’re a survivor, it just seems like we don’t ask each other those questions. We know why we’re there. The story is someone shot and killed your child. That’s the story…they don’t need the details…They know why we’re there, and it just seems like we all have that one particular connection. So it’s very helpful at times for me to be there.”

Both the physical setting and survivor-led culture enhanced the spiritual “aura” of peacefulness and safety experienced by survivors to connect and express the full range of their feelings, even if they were more often distrustful of people, as one survivor would report: “I’m like a hard nut to crack…[and I think] like there’s just an aura around that place, and it’s just peaceful. And you know that they have spirituality in their lives and you know that they’re good people. So you connect. There’s no question about what they’re tryin’ to do. They’re not taking advantage of you. They’re experiencing the same thing you have.” A Peace Institute ministry leader also stressed that “this space is healing in itself” and that “it’s a very spiritual space.” From the perspective of also being a survivor who has now come to work at the Peace Institute, this ministry leader would continue: “…for me knowing that…an organization like the Peace Institute existed was healing in itself because at least we can say that we have an organization that does this work in our community and in our state.” This ministry leader also would call their work a “survivor-based methodology” that is “real” and “unique” because so many of the
ministry leaders have had their own lives touched by homicide, thus there is no “stigma” or “shame” in their connection with the families, “it brings down any walls.”

The primacy in value given to consistency of culture and stability of place by nearly all participants was also striking. For a lived religion methodology attending to effective prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of trauma, these experiences appear relatable to relational-cultural theories of the power of empathy, mutuality, and connection. However, an additional correlational tool also might be postmodern place theory, as utilized by Mary McClintock Fulkerson in her ethnographic study of a multicultural church. Drawing on the authors of postmodern place theory, Fulkerson writes: “Place is a structure of lived, corporate, bodied experience…a category that characterizes all knowledge…”.

It is through place that unity of experience creates a sense of reality that is fully embodied in our senses and feelings, one that can also hold “conflict and contradiction.” The people and the place embodied by the Peace Institute came to represent both a place that could retrigger ambivalence and painful memories of loss, but also a place of ‘spiritual healing,’ peace, and restoration. All of these lived experiences were contained and held via place through a spiritual “aura” similar to church, where the material architecture of place became a form of theopoetic testimony and witness itself.

Uniformly, ministry leaders also would talk of creating an embodied culture of peace, love, and support for each other, threaded with their spiritual sense of Christian “calling” as a lay ministry and practicing what they “preach.” This meant they strove to be “like family” and to

44 Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Places of Redemption: Theology for a Worldly Church (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 26. I appreciate Fulkerson’s use of ethnographic and autoethnographic descriptive terms such as “visceral” in this study. I have found a correlative use for this type language with RCT’s use of “zest” and “power” for describing energetic connections as well as in relationship to young adult descriptions in my pilot studies for their experience of their connection to their lost loved one while wearing memorial buttons and t-shirts.

“check each other with love,” supporting each other in pastoral practices of self-care while role modeling this pastoral care practice as a prophetic practice to the broader community as well:

We are very much a family unit, if you will. And that’s appropriate because much of what we try to teach or preach or train is that peace starts at home. It starts within. So if we’re in turmoil all the time, in chaos all the time and can’t see eye to eye with one another most of the time, then what are we? And who are we to preach or teach peace?...[W]e eat together, we talk together, we share together, we cry together, we give ourselves to one another…we lift one another up rather than tear one another down. If someone makes a mistake, we don’t tear ‘em down. We lift them up. We help them with that mistake, help ‘em figure it out and get it right. All those things that we would like for the community to do and to be, we try to be, you know.

The central pastoral care ritual for supporting each other as ministry leaders revolved around their use of the Peace Institute’s 7 Principles of Peace and striving to internalize them for the culture of staff meetings, as well as board meetings, through check-in’s and close-outs:

“[W]hat principle are we lifting up today or struggling with today and what do we need to help that struggle?…So we just stay engaged with one another so that we’re assured that one another is safe.” But equally important was shutting down entirely for lunch together, where business was not allowed for discussion, as well as allowing the space for the ministry leaders to partake in the same healing activities available for families, such as art activities, massage, and Bible study. Ministry leaders realized that their own pastoral care of self practices were profoundly important for sustaining the prophetic missionary dimension of their Christian lay ministry, and they were self-conscious in implementing this role modeling to others.

Their embodied spiritual culture of peace and safety, of role modeling being a “healthy family” as fellow survivors, also fostered a sense of mutuality, empathy, energy, and
empowerment in this “place.” This would expand their capacity for connection to their broader community as well, a connectional expansion consistent with relational-cultural theory⁴⁶ (RCT):

When empathy and concern flow both ways, there is an intense affirmation of the self and paradoxically, a transcendence of the self, a sense of the self as part of a larger relational unit…The primary channel for this kind of mutuality is empathic attunement, the capacity to share in and comprehend the momentary psychological state of another person. It is a process during which one’s self-boundaries undergo momentary alteration, which in itself allows the possibility for change in the self. Empathy in this sense, then, always contains the opportunity for mutual growth and impact. (82)

For such interactions to grow to their fullest fruit obviously would require a sturdy foundation in pastoral care practices of trust, safety, and stability over time, particularly in light of trauma theory emphasizing that disruption of control and re-establishment of control are key to creating a sense of safety and connection again. Continuity of ministry leaders and their embodied spiritual culture of peace and safety holding⁴⁷ these shifting “kaleidoscopes” of feelings, “pieces,” and practices in a particular place became a repeated value reflected across participant interviews. This stability allowed survivors interviewed to pace their interactions and created a context for a slow post-traumatic growth in feelings of empowerment and confidence as they took the opportunity for any particular connection or practice. Providing such continuity


⁴⁷It is the case that certain psychoanalytic frames of analysis also could be fruitfully applied to this same data, such as D.W. Winnicott’s “holding environment,” however this dissertation is seeking to highlight the metaphoric and conceptual possibilities in other social scientific theories, such as relational-cultural theory (RCT), not typically used for correlation with theological language, to experiment with their metaphoric fit (e.g. RCT’s embodied sense of energy and connection and the language of Spirit). For another effort to push the boundaries of the psychoanalytic conception of self and a creative use of Winnicott’s concepts in application to theology, including an affirmation of the embodied self and an examination of the relational space between selves via air and water metaphors, see Thandeka, “The Self Between Feminist Theory and Theology.” The difficulty with Thandeka’s efforts in her essay, as at times with other psychoanalytic correlations to religion, can be the perceived reduction of religion to psychology, e.g. the reduction of the “Holy Spirit” to Winnicott’s concept of the “transitional object,” rather than holding theology and psychology as separate metaphorical fields to be mutually correlated, not reduced one to the other, as is my focus in this dissertation.
also would require a certain level of vulnerability on the part of ministry leaders as prophetic pastoral care providers, both in their ongoing commitment to these relationships in a particular place as well as in their commitment to authenticity in disclosures and sensitivity to impact in relationships, core values expressed also in relational-cultural theory and practices.

An unexpected theme⁴⁸ that emerged in response to my questions relating to institutional religious communities as a potential ‘place’ of support (appendix B) was a heavy sense of disappointment with and frequently anger toward the institutional church and clergy by several survivors, as well as at least one ministry leader. Passionate survivor critiques centered on the failure of senior ministers to visit with survivors; a perception that the churches often were more eager to help with the high-profile murders of “innocent youth” than with others deemed “gang-involved”; and anger that the church’s status with wealthier congregants who commuted from the suburbs was perceived as of greater concern than the welfare of the urban communities in which the church was located. When the lived experience of the institutional church failed to embody the power of a spiritual culture of peace and safety, the contrast of survivors’ embodied para-ecclesial experiences with the Peace Institute became even more significant. A survivor who experienced discrimination by clergy due to the circumstances of her son’s murder would say: “…I’m so in tuned with the Peace Institute because to them, everyone is equal. Even the perpetrator has an equal right of some sort. And that holds a lotta weight with me. A whole lotta weight with me.”

⁴⁸My assumption was that the church would be experienced minimally as a helpful resource for the families in the aftermath of homicide through pastoral care and visitation. Hence I was surprised that this was not the experience of most of the survivors interviewed and this was admittedly disturbing to my own value system as a minister.
While not every survivor has a disappointing experience with a church or clergyperson, it was clear that the quality of pastoral care experience a survivor has in the aftermath of a family homicide can have a lifelong spiritual impact on the survivor. This includes their capacity for prophetic engagement of society if support is not given to their experience of righteous anger – unless they find support elsewhere, as many did through the Peace Institute. The founding ministry leader provides one example of a successful pastoral encounter, though she also did speak initially of the priest at her husband’s church where her son’s service would be held as failing to reach out personally to the family. Instead, a different priest came to visit on the recommendation of a friend, and this person became an ongoing supportive presence in her life for several years.

In his first impression, he quietly visited their household “like everybody else” and spoke to people and then simply asked to pray with them before he left, continuing this pattern for the next few days. While she and her husband continued at her husband’s church in the meantime, this priest from a different church would become important in simply being with her through her process of anger with God, struggles with forgiveness, and ultimately transformation into her present journey and ministry. She specifically experienced him as “humbling” himself and really listening to and learning from her, and she in turn began to respect and engage with him as a result:

…I had stopped going to confession because all he wanted me to do was forgive and I’m like, “No, that’s too big for me. I’ve done everything God wanted me to do, I’ve donated to the needy, I attended mass, I read the Bible, I help my children understand, I believe I’ve done good and then you’re tellin’ me that this is God’s will? You got to do better than that, you’ve got to help me to understand.” And I think him really humbling himself and realizing that, “You can’t just tell me forgive, you really can’t just tell me to come to confession and ask God to forgive if you haven’t taken me through and helping me to understand why would this happen to me…when I was doin’ everything I believed God
wanted me to do?" And I think he understood that and didn’t take it personally when I
told him I couldn’t do that, when I told him it wasn’t fair that he is not even helpin’ me to
understand this journey, he didn’t take it personally, he would give me books, he would
call me after mass and he really, without even ministering to me, he was ministering to
me in a way that I respect…

Visitation by clergy that was experienced as a more gentle unassuming “presence,” and
as a recognition of the extent of the survivor’s pain and anger rather than a push toward a
particular theological experience or action, was often valued or desired by survivors, and ideally
and preferably from the clergyperson who was the leader of the church where the survivor
actually attended. Support of this nature can also take the form of “survivor ministries” to
embody a spiritual culture of peace and safety in congregations, as survivors interviewed
suggested and agreed based on their experiences with the Peace Institute. Participants suggested
that checking in on families during holidays or anniversaries or providing care baskets and
support groups also can be experienced as very helpful for surviving families, again particularly
when the senior clergyperson embodies such support.

Theme: The Experience of God

When asked about questions of “healing” and spirituality or faith (see appendix B),
embodiment in their experience of spirituality and faith – a physicality to the experience of
spirituality and God – was another significant theme to emerge in relation to the prophetic
pastoral care practices of the Peace Institute. For example, the survivor whose sandplay story
was illustrated above spontaneously spoke of sandplay as spiritual and that “something just took
over my body,” something she couldn’t explain though it did not frighten her. This survivor was
so powerfully affected that she brought in sample trays and objects to lead a mini-training as an
act of prophetic and theopoetic testifying and witnessing for her human service college class:
And I was tryin’ to explain it to my professor. I said, “It just took me somewhere spiritually. I just went somewhere, and I began to just put things in the sand tray…I would pick up the pieces and say, ‘This is my family,’ and then I put my family, I put the house in, and I could remember I felt like I needed to protect my family. I can remember, like, ‘Okay, if I put up this wall, I could protect my family.’ Then I would move stuff because it didn’t represent this, and whatever,” but I’m tellin’ you like, I can’t even really explain that feeling to anybody. I was like, “You have to experience it personally to even understand it ’cause, I’m tellin’ you, I felt like something else took over me.” But it was a feeling that I wouldn’t mind feeling again and again. When I left there, I kept thinking about, “Wow, how did that happen? Okay, God, what’s really going on?” I wasn’t scared, but it was different.

A ministry leader also spoke spontaneously of sandplay as a spiritual experience of God, as “God working through me” and that it required “a leap of faith” in what God was trying “to show” her:

I think just the whole process of building the world and then not really knowing where it’s going… it’s like taking a leap of faith because I don’t know, you’re going somewhere. You’re going somewhere that you might not necessarily want to go and then once the world comes to you, then you can either shut down or you can explain where you fit in there… it’s just a real deep spiritual moment that happens in sandplay… I mean that God’s working through me and working through me building the world and really trying to show me something.

A different ministry leader would talk about the principle of peace that is “faith” as representing an embodied movement of spirit. She would say that faith could mean a particular religion, but it might also mean just being spiritual, with spirituality for her meaning a force of energy and connection, a higher power guiding her or placing particular people in her life:

I think spirituality is hard to explain. It’s more of like a feeling, something that you just know, energy, people being connected, and I think that’s through spirit…Like I feel a higher power or something like speak to me or put me in different situations. Like I think that just me being at the Peace Institute is like an example of me following something spiritual. I didn’t ever think that I would end up here.

If a theopoetics of material religion also reflects the movement of God or Spirit in embodied material form, then these artistic and peace practices can be correlated to
neuroaffective studies of an embodied experience of “God,”\textsuperscript{49} as referenced in chapter one. They also may be correlated to relational-cultural theory when it speaks to “energy, power or ‘zest’” in human relationships,\textsuperscript{50} if re-conceptualized in part as one’s relationship to God or Spirit as well:

The movement of relationship creates an energy, momentum, or power that is experienced as beyond the individual, yet available to the individual…Empowerment is based on the capacity to turn toward and trust in the relationship to provide the ongoing context for such interaction. This action or movement of relationship, then, transfers to action in other realms as the person has become increasingly response/able and empowered to act. (Surrey, “Relationship and Empowerment,” 168)

Such a metaphorical correlation to the embodied movement of spirit or God in the relationship also has possible constructive practical theological implications for the experience of power and control in one’s relationship with God, as well as the location of God. Some of these reported experiences included that spirituality was associated by the ministry leader above with “energy” and “people being connected” – she spoke of “feeling” her spirituality. The founding ministry leader would speak of a “sense of a warm blanket inside of me, on me” when she attends church and says something similar happens for fellow survivors when they enter the Peace Institute. In regards to the sandplay in particular, one survivor said above: “I felt like something just took over my body”; and another ministry leader would similarly say regarding sandplay that: “like taking a leap of faith…God’s working through me…building the world and really trying to show me something.” “God exists here,” another ministry leader would say of the Peace Institute itself. God was an embodied presence in the space and was tangibly expressed in

\textsuperscript{49}Newberg, et al., \textit{Why God Won’t Go Away}.

the quotes and other decorations on the walls. This spirit lingered and created an “aura” for the place of the Peace Institute as a whole, as discussed in the prior section.

Each of the above statements by participants, as well as others by survivors who spoke to their personal experiences of God outside the context of the Peace Institute, reflected not an abstract distant experience of God or spirit but a relational image that was fully embodied, deeply personal, and directly connected, including God being the sustaining force helping a survivor to get up in the morning or being the mysterious presence creating the appearance of a cup of coffee just when needed. God’s movement was experienced spiritually through human embodied connection, as well as through that human embodied connection to material objects in sandplay and other artistic expressions created. As explicit language of hope and peace, or a “leap of faith,” was used, *a theopoetical interpretation* also began to enter for these material expressions, one with ecclesial and eschatological suggestions. I will continue to explore these findings and their constructive practical theological implications more deeply in chapters four and five.

Finally, it is important to recognize the role that the evolving theology of the Peace Institute’s founding ministry leader has played in shaping prophetic pastoral care practices in light of personal survivor relationships with God, one that complicates the idea that God controls each event of the world. Based on her own, as well as survivor experiences, she has made a policy recommendation of what to say and not to say to survivors regarding this personal experience of God. This includes never to say: “It was God’s will” in reference to a survivor’s family member’s homicide. Pastoral care recommendations such as these are given theopoetic material testimony in the Peace Institute’s specialized funeral orders of service (Fig. 9). A more
Comfort the surviving children. They are grieving the loss too and they are often forgotten. They need to express strong emotions that may seem awkward to others. Holding their hand, placing an arm around them or giving them a hug are simple ways of showing your emotional support. Be prepared for your gentle touch to set off a flood of tears that they may have been holding back. As difficult or uncomfortable as it may be for you, the greatest gift you can give the children is to give them the freedom and permission to cry openly. Being able to release their pent-up emotions will help them to feel better and to cope with the difficult days that still lie ahead.

Statements to avoid making to, or in the presence of, the family:
“IT was God’s will” - “He was with the wrong kind of people”
“You shouldn’t cry so much.” - “I understand how you feel.”
“You must be over it by now.” - “He lived the wrong kind of life.”
“You have to be strong.” - “You should let him rest in peace.” “Wrong place at the wrong time” - “At least you don’t have to worry about him anymore.”
While you may be trying to help, these type of declarations usually do more harm than good.

Be on the look out: Sometimes survivors of homicide victims run into a complicated grieving pattern. Watch out for signs that may indicate their grief is becoming unhealthy, such as an appetite change resulting in dramatic weight gain or loss, or alcohol and drug abuse. You may need to be especially vigilant when survivors are going through unusually difficult times, e.g., birthdays, the anniversary of the murder, holidays, etc.

Remember them on special days: The first year after the murder is especially difficult. Anniversaries, birthdays, Father’s Day, Mother’s Day, Thanksgiving, and religious holidays can send survivors reeling. What were once festive occasions may now be times of sadness and despair. Call, visit, or send a brief note to the survivors letting them know that they are in your thoughts and/or prayers.

Fig. 9. Peace Institute Funeral Order of Service, Pastoral Care Advice. Pastoral care recommendations the Peace Institute also makes to those who attend the funerals, including theological statements to avoid saying and awareness of days when a survivor may be in need of particular care and attention.
nuanced theological perspective and experience arose in the founding ministry leader’s own personal connection to and discernment of God’s will and her missionary calling in the aftermath of her son’s murder. Theologically, as she has struggled to come to terms with the murder of her son, she arrived at the belief that human beings experience free will, but God can set an ultimate timetable for individuals, an understanding derived in part from Ecclesiastes 3:1-8: “…I don’t think it was ever God’s will for Louis to die the way he did… He could’ve been hit by a car…anything could’ve happened but that was his time….There’s a given time when we are born, there’s a given time when our life is no longer here on this earth…I think it says somewhere, ‘A time to live and a time to die, a time to mourn…’.”

For the founding ministry leader, God also can express a desire for how individuals choose to deal with the timetable set, though God will not mandate the outcome. Instead God works actively to prepare individuals for God’s calling and desire, though it remains up to the free will of the individual to recognize and receive that preparation:

[B]ut I also believe…that we were bein’ prepared for Louis not bein’ here, and I can only say that now. I can only say that, really now, and now, understanding, why we say, “God won’t give you more than you can handle” but in that beginning that’s not whatchoo wanna hear…the choices I could’ve made was to stay home, to deal with my anger in a different way and that would’ve been justified because something bad did happen to me but that just wouldn’t seem right with…what I believe I’m being called to do, with what I believe the purpose on earth, my purpose, or we each have a purpose on earth, or with what I believe, again, “Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

This calling and preparation then has implications not only for a particular individual but also for the larger community and society and is an understanding that again may come only with time. For the founding ministry leader, her experience of her call from God became an embodied call to make God’s message of peace an eschatological reality in her community and beyond. This mission of peace could take both human and material shape, and the Peace
Institute’s prophetic pastoral care practices would be deeply shaped by her embodied experience and vision of this call.

Theme: Survivors as Experts

A very strong theme that emerged across all participants as a prophetic pastoral care principle, no matter the question at hand, was the view that survivors and the Peace Institute are experts in the causes of trauma as well as human and social needs in the aftermath of trauma, experts who need to be supported and whose wisdom and voices need to be listened to by religious and social institutions. Most institutional supporters directly spoke of the Peace Institute as “unique,” as “experts,” and as a model of successful and effective collaboration, including in faith-based collaboration as well as in creating secular human service provider networks for serving survivors. The public health doctor interviewed as an institutional supporter would say: “…there’s so much we don’t know and…survivors really haven’t gotten the level of attention that is necessary…they still remain the experts at this point, and their stories and their experiences and how they’ve gotten better represent a starting point for this.” She also would go on to say regarding religious institutions:

I think that the churches and…the religious institutions and the funeral homes together should understand the expertise that the Peace Institute has, and together work toward creating protocols that allow for more fluid referrals, but also allow people to do what they do best and not do other things that need to be done but are better done by somebody else. And again, I think until that kind of innovative partnership explores the options, we won’t have the best set of strategies for people.

In response to questions exploring the supportive role of social rather than religious institutions (appendix B), all participants interviewed agreed that while various social institutions provided some support to survivors in the aftermath of homicide, it was far from enough, particularly financially and culturally, and the voices and experiences of survivors were not
given the priority that they should in establishing needs and goals. A ministry leader said that
this would require a major cultural shift in awareness, a “mindset shift”:

[A] lot of what can be done on a society or a cultural level is really like that basic
understanding…how do you expect somebody to go to work after something like that
happened? But our culture it’s like, “Okay, get over it. Like go back to work,”
and…society is like, “You’ve just got to move on. Like you just got to go back to life as
normal.” So I think it’s bigger than any services or things that could be put in place, it’s
really like a whole mindset shift in how to really respond to families impacted by
violence…in order for institutions really to better serve people impacted by violence, I
think that the policies and things in place should be driven by the people impacted.

The Leadership Academy is the most explicit example of the Peace Institute’s prophetic
pastoral care practices in supporting, through training and advocacy, the post-traumatic growth
of survivors and their recognition as “experts” and “Peace Warriors,”\textsuperscript{51} whether teens or adults.
The Leadership Academy educates and empowers survivors and allows the public to witness
their often newfound confidence as experts, or as one ministry leader would say: “…[it] is really
good for personal healing because it kind of like flips the script, like survivors are now the
experts. And sometimes people who’ve never felt like an expert in their life but now they are,
they are an expert, and you have a program backing you up that you can refer to when you’re
trying to talk about your own expertise.”

For example, one survivor appreciated that, through the Leadership Academy, the Peace
Institute encouraged and allowed a fellow survivor, who did not have an advanced degree, to
lead the sibling survivors group for a period of time. She argued that more than degrees,
“experience was the best education” – that expertise in the ability to connect and help comes first
and foremost from being seen to have survivor rather than textbook experience:

\textsuperscript{51}The language of “Peace Warriors” came about from one mother attending the “Tuesday Talks” who said
she was not a “survivor” so much as a “warrior,” and most survivors attending that night embraced this new
language. However, one survivor interviewed did express ambivalence for this new language, akin to the
ambivalence expressed for the word “healing,” stating that she felt more like a “survivor” than a “warrior.”
I mean, I’m a firm believer in you can have all education in the world that you need, but sometimes experience is the best education, and dealing with the loss or grief through homicide, you can only educate through experience…if you’ve never gone through something so traumatic as such, you haven’t a clue…one of the surviving mothers…actually had a hand in doing the leadership for the youth sibling survivors. And I thought that was awesome…Because those children know why this one mother is here…It really helped for them…it’s better than having a child psychologist come…It’s just *not* something that you learn about in a textbook.

In an effort to bring this expert survivor witness from the Peace Institute to the halls of government, a listening hearing organized by the Boston City Council in 2010⁵² allowed survivors to give testimony on their experiences and needs, and to begin to use that as a basis for developing some hoped for protocols among service providers. This hearing came about as a partnership between a Boston city councilor and the Peace Institute following two high profile youth murders of what are often termed “innocent victims” on Boston streets, yet other murders also had happened during that time and were not getting the same level of political attention, per a ministry leader. When one politician’s office asked the Peace Institute for the phone numbers of these two high profile families, this ministry leader reports “scolding” this politician’s office for not being concerned about the other families. The Boston city councilor, in contrast, was reported to approach the Peace Institute with a simple question of how to help and with an expression of overall concern.

Reflecting the understanding of survivors as experts, the city councilor interviewed as an institutional supporter said that this call was only one among several made to the Peace Institute whenever shootings occurred and that: “I thought it important that these families be empowered, that government not speak at them, but work with them because as I often sort of define it, they

⁵²See the Report of the Committee on Women & Healthy Communities to Members of the Boston City Council: *Family Voices: Strengthening Homicide Response and Family Support in the City of Boston*, by Ayanna Pressley, Chair (Boston, December 15, 2010).
have PhDs in suffering and they are authorities on violence, and we should be engaging them as
stakeholders in the solutions to ensure that they’re fully informed.” Thus the first ever “Family
Voices Hearing” was born. Through her behavior as an ally to survivors, this City Councilor
exhibited humility (in this case political humility), a quality frequently called for and appreciated
by survivors in any person seeking to be a care provider.

Advocacy with police departments, district attorneys, employers, funeral homes,
hospitals, and the media\footnote{The media is often critiqued by the ministry leaders and survivors for setting an immediate narrative as to who is considered an “innocent victim” – hence “good” and worthy of more attention and action – and who is considered “potentially gang involved” – hence “bad” and less worthy. Again, the creation of the specialized orders of funeral service becomes the Peace Institute’s way of giving control of the narrative back to the family, as well as any assistance they provide with drafting statements for the media. One other poignant area that has been a source of personal dismay to me as a minister as I came to know the work of the Peace Institute has been the added burden placed on families during the initial period of trauma in the struggle to find money to bury their loved ones in their preferred culturally appropriate way. One survivor shared that she was told by a cemetery that the gates would be locked upon their arrival if she did not come up with the money in advance for the burial site. Understanding the importance of and desire to bury their loved one well, often times at quite a bit of expense, was a time of my encountering and accepting and supporting a deep difference in theological beliefs and cultural ways. This was due to my own background as a Unitarian Universalist and my comfort with the lesser expense as well as the theological meaning of cremation.} were all discussed in this hearing and throughout these interviews as
important areas of needed prophetic education for social institutions regarding survivor struggles
and their painful experiences. The Peace Institute’s Leadership Academy was often cited as the
means by which survivors gained support in navigating each of these systems and being affirmed
in their sense of injustice when a system failed. However, they were not only affirmed in their
“pain and anger,” they also were given opportunities to affect change and “transform their pain
and anger into power and action,” including through this City Council listening hearing and a
later meeting with the Massachusetts governor among other programs and events, such as their
annual Survivors of Homicide Awareness Month.

Two final areas of themes worth noting in survivor testimonies as experts were their
expectations of the mental health profession as well as the church and other religious institutions.
Ministry leaders and survivors both expressed feelings of ambiguity toward the professional mental health field, some having positive experiences but many experiencing the programs and activities of the Peace Institute as providing more “therapy” than traditional forms of “talk” therapy. Feeling “listened to” and having shared experiences of loss and connection were contrasted with experiences of therapists setting an “agenda” for the survivor, therapists who may not have had a baseline for a shared experience. As one survivor pointedly said:

I even said that to my therapist. I said, “I love you, and you’re a great support to me, but the Peace Institute is doin’ my therapy.”...at the Peace Institute it’s about how I’m feeling about my loss, how do I get past this, is this normal, did this happen to you – just we connect. We connect because I’m talking to someone who may not know exactly how I’m feeling but have a idea of what I’m going through, not me just talking to you and you’re like, “Mm-hm,” just lookin’ at me, and I’m saying to myself, “You don’t even have a clue.”

The founding ministry leader’s advice to professional mental health clinicians, which has implications for prophetic pastoral care counselors as well, is to place oneself in a more humble, listening, and learning position with survivors – a prophetic pastoral care position of being an ally to the survivor as the expert in their own needs:

...just...stop tryin’ to fix somebody. Just really don’t if you’re gonna work with survivors, don’t go in with the notion that you’re gonna fix ‘em that you know, really don’t. Really, really, really don’t...Go with the attitude of sharing and learning, teaching and learning, hearing and speakin’, giving people the opportunity, hear the fullness of what someone is sayin’, you know? Don’t go in I’m-gonna-help-you, go in and ask them the question, ‘I am here, what can I do?’ and go in bein’ patient. This is not a one-two-three, this is not gonna be as pretty as your textbook.

And most particularly, the founding ministry leader would say, do not make a survivor “dependent” on you as the care provider so that when you are gone, they no longer know what to do. Instead, it remains vitally important to “transform pain and anger into power and action,” into the survivor’s own ability to work toward communal transformation and peace.
Peace Institute ministry leaders also uniformly spoke out on the need for the church and clergy to be a counter role model to the typical conflicts and competition exhibited in the larger society, a need they felt the church often failed to meet. Ministry leaders experienced church leaders as participating in “infighting” and as having “turf issues” in a way that was similar to what caused “gang violence.” In their experience, there was little sense of collaboration and more of a sense of competition for grants and money within the faith-based community.

“…we’re not acting as a peaceful people. To be violent is not just to be physically violent. You can be violent in a very silent way, and by omission we can be violent by not doin’ certain things,” one ministry leader would say. All providers, from the secular realm to the religious realm, were called upon to exhibit a deep sense of “cultural humility” in respecting survivors as experts in their own needs.  

Theme: Transformation Through Power and Action

As survivors were empowered in body and spirit as experts and called to step into the public square to give testimony and bear witness to their experiences, they carried their continued bonds with their murdered loved ones in bodily and material theopoetic form – in the voices they raised on the streets of their communities where they marched, in the halls of their

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54 Tervalon, Melanie and Jann Murray-Garcia, “Cultural Humility Versus Cultural Competence: A Critical Distinction in Defining Physician Training Outcomes in Multicultural Education,” *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved* (May 1998: 9, 2) 117-125. Tervalon and Murray-Garcia write of the need for a greater level of “cultural humility” rather than continued “cultural competency” trainings by human service providers. Though they focus particularly on medical doctors in their study, their recommendations could apply equally to mental health professionals, law enforcement officials, politicians, the media, and the church. They write that practitioners and institutions alike need, 120, “to identify and examine their own patterns of unintentional and intentional racism, classism, and homophobia,” committing themselves to, 118, “continually engage in self-reflection and self-critique as lifelong learners and reflective practitioners.” The concept of “cultural humility” supplements previously discussed concepts of “power” within relational-cultural theory and “cultural hegemony” within narrative therapy, as well as Graham’s concept of “demonic hegemony.” Per participant responses, it is a necessary additional conceptual tool for a lived religion methodology examining the aftermath of trauma, particularly violent trauma in communities marginalized by the systematic oppressions of race and class.
local government where they gave testimony, and through the memorial buttons or t-shirts they wore or pictures or other memorial objects they carried. Survivors demanded to be seen and heard as prophetic peacemakers, expecting communal transformative action against violence and supported by prophetic pastoral allies in the ministry leaders of the Peace Institute and their institutional supporters.

One survivor spoke of the Peace Institute’s holistic prophetic pastoral care practices and spiritual focus as giving survivors the strength to become peacemakers in their communities: “…we’re taking it back, and we’re sharing it with our families, we’re sharing it with our coworkers, we’re sharing it with our…churches…we’re creating a trail of…peacemakers.” A ministry leader noted that faith and spirituality became unexpected prophetic components of the public testimonials of survivors, and that this was important to their pastoral healing as well because it was language coming directly from their community. They felt confident in witnessing to the power of their relationship with God first and foremost rather than the authority of secular systems or programs:

…the way that we talk about faith and spirituality on a public level in the circles that we talk about it in is sort of unheard of…especially when you’re like talking to people either in government or like the health world or in academia too…I think it’s more of a community minded approach. So I think when the community sees us doing it in those settings, it’s healing because it’s like that’s how I feel. They can see themselves in the work. They can see themselves, a piece of themselves in it, and it’s in a language that they know and that they drive, you know?

The public nature of the Peace Institute’s focus on spirituality even prompted the institutional survivor who is the antiracism consultant to refer to their annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace (Fig. 10) in theopoetic terms, that “It feels like church”: “I think the march is
Fig. 10. Annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace. Hundreds participate each year, carrying banners of their murdered loved ones, with buttons clearly displayed.
spiritual…just that it's a time of the year when hundreds of people come to share that few hours together in a way that's an honoring of the dead and a call for life…for the survivors. I find it very moving. It feels like church…It's having a neighborhood witness.”

Some of this newfound confidence as experts can be traced to the prophetic pastoral education provided to survivors through the Leadership Academy and the use of theory to understand their pain not as an individual problem of self-blame but as a communal problem demanding communal action. If trauma is pathologized as purely an individual intrapsychic problem, there is a neglect of the social relational context of trauma and the potential for transformative possibilities in the relationship of self to society. The rejection of this individualization of trauma was a strong and consistent thread throughout survivor, ministry leader, and institutional supporter responses.

For example, survivors often spontaneously referenced the intersections of race, class, and gender, regardless of the specific question at hand, and these references often revolved around profound questions of “why?” in the aftermath of traumatic violence. Their responses alternated between despair and anger – as one survivor painfully demanded: “Why, like why the African American male? Why did we go through the slavery? Just goin’ back to like all of that, and why are these certain areas, like the drug infested and then the projects and why aren’t African Americans more motivated...?” Survivors repeatedly questioned why their communities were targeted, particularly when such violence should be preventable – where were the sources of resistance? These questions became even sharper in tone when further prophetic education, such as that provided by the Leadership Academy, brought deeper levels of insight.

and motivated ongoing learning by survivors. One illustration of the transformative impact this
prophetic education brought in empowering and motivating survivors to testify as experts in the
public square is found in a survivor’s comments:

I think the Leadership Academy is the most empowering tool that they have…I’ve never
been to college, didn’t know nothing about social change, didn’t really care about what
was going on in the community as long as like the kids were okay…and even though this
unfortunate tragedy brought me to the Peace Institute, it has brought me to a place in my
life where I thought I would never be. Like I said, I’m getting ready to graduate from
college. The hunger that I have to wanna just try to make a difference in my community
and find out what is needed and where do I fit in and where do I belong and how am I
supposed to do this…

Relational-cultural therapy would identify the prophetic pastoral care of the Leadership
Academy in empowering survivors as experts to be exhibiting some of their core principles in
the provision of “growth-fostering relationships” through “mutual empathy” and “mutual
empowerment.” Such prophetic pastoral care provides resistance to a pattern of social
stigmatization of survivors that can lead to “condemned isolation,” to the pathologizing of the
trauma as an intrapsychic problem, resulting in social shame and isolation, rather than as a
relational problem attributable to and needing to be engaged by the larger community. Per
Jordan: “The growth that occurs is both affective and cognitive and leads to an enlarged sense of
community…a feeling that one’s vulnerability will not be taken advantage of or
violated…people in any growth-fostering relationship are experiencing more aliveness, more
clarity, and a greater sense of possibility and potential agency.”

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57 Ibid., 28, 102.
58 Ibid., 10-105.
This education and empowerment of marginalized people who experience the interlocking systemic oppressions of race, class, and gender is addressed in other historical literature as well, such as the “pedagogy of the oppressed.”\(^{59}\) In linking the pastoral and prophetic, Larry Kent Graham demonstrated his awareness of this literature in his use of Paulo Freire’s phrase “conscientization,” which Graham viewed as an important prophetic pastoral care principle for caretakers to adhere to in fulfilling the goals of their ministry:

For pastoral caretakers to transform symptomatic situations they must help careseekers combine an awareness of the impact of the social order upon their personal difficulties and assist them to fashion strategic actions to neutralize, change, or transform the destructive elements in the social order. This principle rests on the assumption that therapeutic insight and awareness must be expanded to include social analysis and political action for change to be in keeping with the goals of ministry…It looks particularly at the structure of domination and subordination, with an eye to who benefits and who suffers from the intact power arrangements…Specifically, the principle of conscientization enables the pastoral caretaker to address matters such as abuse, racism, ageism, sexism, heterosexism, and lifestyle as issues of care as well as issues of social justice.\(^{60}\)

The Peace Institute’s provision first of \textit{pastoral care} in immediate crisis management – assisting with practical logistics and empathically holding the family’s pain – would exhibit “relational competence” to survivors and help to build “relational confidence,”\(^{61}\) in the Peace Institute. These initial practices then become a relational basis for the longer term educational and empowerment work of their Leadership Academy in providing families with “conscientization,” the \textit{prophetic} tools of analysis and advocacy. Pastoral care and prophetic

\(^{59}\)Paulo Freire, \textit{Pedagogy of the Oppressed} (New York: Continuum, 1970/2003, 30\textsuperscript{th} Edition); hooks, \textit{Teaching to Transgress}.

\(^{60}\)Graham, “From Psyche to System,” 331.

care are deeply intertwined in the Peace Institute’s philosophy and practices, which is also affirmed by Graham’s perspectives above.

Relational-cultural theory would define “power” and empowerment as “most fundamentally ‘the capacity to produce a change.’”62 In fostering group work through their Tuesday Talks format for survivors, as well as their sibling and teen groups, the Peace Institute is also fostering a model of “power with” rather than “power over” others – experiences of collaboration, creativity, and action, of mutuality and support, rather than experiences of professional distance and talking analysis that was sometimes cited by participants as a barrier in more traditional therapeutic relationships. Narrative therapy theory shares a similar analysis of power as “a relation” and “productive,” operating “at the most micro levels of social relations”63 and that such relational power needs awareness by the caretaker. Bringing a prophetic power analysis to pastoral care, for those survivors ready to receive it, brought an added level of insight and effectiveness to their capacity to assume leadership in public context.

A Vision of Prophetic Pastoral Care in the Aftermath of Trauma

The prophetic pastoral care vision, programs, and practices of the Peace Institute’s ministry, through their Holistic Healing Center and Leadership Academy, illustrate Larry Kent Graham’s theological focus on the intertwining of personal insight with systematic political analysis and change. They also are consistent with Graham’s focus on the principle of advocacy and supportive empowerment, being an ally, in the provision of prophetic pastoral care. Such

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62Ibid., 105.

63Madigan, Narrative Therapy, 169.
advocacy and supportive empowerment is based on listening for the “resilient hope” of those marginalized in order to empower their own voices in the public square, while using the prophetic pastoral caretaker’s power in partnership and collaboration as an ally.

The call to attend to the experiences of the marginalized in hearing this “resilient hope” parallels also the call to support survivors as the “experts,” rather than the professionals as always the experts, ones who also may have “power over” the survivors. Relational-cultural theory would call this attending to the “relational resilience” of the survivors: “[their] movement to a mutually empowering, growth-fostering connection in the face of adverse conditions, traumatic experiences, and alienating sociocultural pressures; the ability to connect, reconnect, and/or resist disconnection.”

It is a call and vision for the pastoral care provider to follow and be guided in prophetic pastoral care by those who are most directly impacted – to trust that survivors as a group understand their own needs best and that they have wisdom to offer the larger society.

Ultimately, the Peace Institute ministry leaders envision a communal transformation would result minimally in owning their own Peace Institute building and ideally in the creation of “peace zones” in every major city. The founding ministry leader views such centers as a place where “all stakeholders” can come together – “victims, perpetrators, stakeholders within the

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65 Jordan, Relational-Cultural Therapy, 36, 107.

66 It is important to stress that the call to heed survivors as experts is one that occurs in para-ecclesial community for Peace Institute survivors, that wisdom is gleaned through shared dialogue in spaces such as the “Tuesday Talks” and “Peace Warriors” group. It is not an individualized process.
community” – to “invest” in a model of nonviolence and peace education. The desire for resources to implement this larger vision, including through increased participation in the Peace Institute’s annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace, led to the creation of an Interfaith Committee at the Peace Institute, but with some unexpected results according to the founding ministry leader: “…we got more support from our white suburban faith community and our white urban faith community than the black faith community. We got a lotta support from the survivors in the African-American faith community that would come, and we’ve got [only] some support from the African-American faith [community leaders]…”

While experiences of racism and classism posed both very real systemic and emotional barriers, the enormity of the challenges faced in eliminating violence and in implementing their vision of peace would push ministry leaders to confront their own stereotypes or prejudices. The founding ministry leader, for example, spoke to carrying internalized stereotypes prior to the murder of her son and of being a “wannabe suburban mom.” She would draw upon her Christian faith, including the Good Samaritan parable and question of “Who is my neighbor?,” to help her in her own internal transformation of motivation on behalf of the “fullness of God’s peace.” This included working with her “white neighbor[s]” and learning not to divide people into good and bad, despite her anger, and instead to see their common humanity. The Peace Institute’s drive toward inclusiveness would extend to perpetrators of violence as well as victims, while also holding perpetrators accountable through a restorative justice approach. The founder experienced this interfaith opening, through the lens of her Christian tradition, as a new “calling”
of and vision for the Peace Institute. She believed there was professional and pastoral training they had to offer not only to secular providers but also to clergy based on their expertise.\textsuperscript{67}

Contemporary critical race theory\textsuperscript{68} provides some final insights into the unique barriers posed by racism and classism in following a lived religion methodology for studying trauma in such communities. Survivors and ministry leaders interviewed were aware of the unique struggles of their community, of oppression and stereotypes imposed from within and without. The “Storytelling Project Model”\textsuperscript{69} incorporates critical race theory’s emphasis on narrative and on the need to lift up voices of color and alternative narratives in antiracism education. This model talks of the differences between: (1) “stock stories” that are passed down through cultural forums and educational venues which reinforce racism and white privilege; (2) “concealed stories” that are the hidden stories often undergirding the success of the stock stories; (3) “resistance stories” that speak to the history of antiracism struggles; and (4) “emerging/transforming stories” that are the stories that assist in a radical re-visioning of social equality and justice.

It is clear that many survivors drew upon the Leadership Academy in challenging stock stories of the media and society, learning their concealed stories, and beginning to seek resistance stories and form transforming stories in their communal struggles for peace (narrative

\textsuperscript{67}The primary advice of ministry leaders to clergy in the immediate aftermath of violence was not to focus on theology but to focus on \textit{practical logistical care}. Time and again, survivors would say that this type of compassionate and practical case management was an aspect of the Peace Institute’s crisis management services that they most valued. If they did not have the money to bury their loved one or if they had a housing crisis, the Peace Institute’s focus was first and foremost there on these logistical practical details of care to reestablish survivor safety and control.


\textsuperscript{69}Bell, 2010.
therapy also would say that they were engaged in a process of “re-storying” by learning “alternative stories”). For the founding ministry leader, as well as other ministry leaders, the Christian narrative, including the parable of the Good Samaritan, served as a “resistance” and “transforming” story, guiding survivors through the various “barriers” created by race, class, and gender toward becoming more inclusive of their “neighbors,” no matter their circumstances.

Thus critical race theory also can highlight the transformative power of narrative in a lived religion methodology for studying trauma in an oppressed community. This also is consistent with Gerkin’s focus on the power of the Christian narrative specifically in pastoral care to engage the caretaker in prophetic and transformative work in the larger society. For ministry leaders and their fellow survivors, God is a source of spiritual strength and power, of ongoing spiritual connection and availability (even if in mysterious ways), especially working through the place and holistic practices of the Peace Institute and through the very bodies and material expressions of the survivors. God enabled and sustained both personal movement and growth for survivors and for survivors to become peacemakers in their communities and to give theopoetic material and embodied testimony publicly. I will return to an examination of the constructive practical theological implications of these survivor experiences in chapter five.
CHAPTER THREE

CASE STUDY TWO: THE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST
TRAUMA RESPONSE MINISTRY (UUTRM)

A Scene from July 27, 2008 in Knoxville, TN: I was the church administrator and I was going to see the children’s play to show some support for the music director…I usually go to the left and I decided I would go to the right…And later I thought boy, that had a lot of impact, that little decision…So I was on the bad side for the shooting…And then as it happened it was a very scary moment in the play where little orphan Annie’s backing away with her flashlight through the woods thinkin’ people were gonna get her. And then all of a sudden, just this enormous loud sound. And my first though was, as an administrator…somebody really screwed up because we’re gonna get a lot of complaints about this, whatever it was…And I was jokin’; I was sitting next to a person here. I said, “I bet we look like meerkats if you could see us.” Because we both looked up to see [the] cause [of] what happened and you couldn’t tell. We thought a sound thing had blown up. And then we both looked around this way and then saw the man. And then hit the ground, but it was just that sort of figuring out moment. So we hit the ground and, um, he was about 15 feet away, and I’ve just never seen such hostility on a face before…it felt like, um, sort of a supernatural force of destruction. It really did.

And also one thing I noticed was that my color vision went totally out once I realized what was going on. Everything turned back and white…there just felt like a curtain of gray going on. And the thought that I had was no, not like this. Like I did not want to be killed. And so we hit the ground and at that point I couldn’t tell anything else that was going on, you know. And so we just waited and we were just waiting…if he’s gonna come up and shoot us. And this is funny and not funny, but…afterwards…[the woman] who was down on the floor with me…we were saying, “Yeah, I was covering my head, but then I didn’t want to get shot in the head.” And I said, “Yeah, and then I put my hands up there, but I didn’t want to get shot in the hands.” And then, “Yeah, but I didn’t want to get shot in the back.” Because we were trying to find a way to protect ourselves. And then she says, “I didn’t want to get shot anywhere.” I’m like, “I didn’t want to get shot anywhere either.” And then we just laughed because we couldn’t figure out what part to leave open. You’re just so damn vulnerable…the other thing that was kind of funny, but not funny was when I was down on the floor I was thinking, did I get the catastrophic violence insurance? As the administrator. And I thought they are going to kill me if I didn’t pay that bill or whatever it was, you know? It’s funny cause here I am worried about losing my life, but I’m also like I’m in so much trouble if that insurance isn’t paid up, you know? And so I had a lot of stress just about my role, you know, afterwards like what’s the administrator supposed to do now?...And I also realized…later that I’d been trying to cram my head into a space where it wouldn’t fit, just very animalistic, you know? And I went like, “What was I doing there? That’s not gonna fit.
Why didn’t I go this way?” Anyway, so – it’s just that kind of waiting and just thinking this is so wrong. And then when somebody figured out that we could get out, which was probably like three seconds later, I don’t know. Seeing the light from the curtain being open and then going, “Run, run, run, run, run.” So we’re all like scrambling like Marines on our bellies and stuff and getting’ scratched up. Later you’re like, “Gee, I really got scratched up.” And then later wondering if you hurt somebody or...“Did I crush you?”... And then we went out on the hillside there and – there was a lot of quiet. Seemed very quiet to me at that time. Everyone was just processing…. So then...I just went to the office and called [the minister] who...was on break and left him a scary message. And this was sort of in a daze. And in retrospect I think it’s odd that I didn’t...have the wherewithal to go see what was goin’ on. Like my first instinct was to get on my cell phone and call everybody and tell them I’m okay...mostly I just was in a daze really and not super functional.

**Setting the Context of the Knoxville, TN Church Shooting and Response**

Prior to the shock and tragedy of this day, and prior to the minister’s call for help to the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM), the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC) had long testified and witnessed to the prophetic power of their faith tradition. This history and context is important for understanding the shape of prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of the shooting. The UUTRM arrived on site and entered into a cultural world of strength, resiliency, risk-taking, and points of vulnerability already longstanding for this vibrant Southern suburban congregation.

The TVUUC has been “a beacon of liberal religious faith in Eastern Tennessee for more than 60 years,” as proclaimed proudly in their PowerPoint introduction for newcomers, a narrative put together during a time of church growth after the 2008 shooting and from which the below history is drawn. One TVUUC leader, who was the designated initial informant for this study by the minister and the TVUUC board, stated that the church has always had an “evangelical” bent, having spun off three additional UU congregations in the area. He also shared that he was “nominated for church president because I was president of a group I started
here called the Society of Unitarian Universalist Evangelists.” This particular TVUUC leader also would play a significant role in the creation of the PowerPoint narrative, an artifact that can be recognized as a form of theopoetics of material religion in shaping and prophetically expressing through images and narrative the religious identity of this particular congregation.

There had been failed attempts to start Unitarian churches in Knoxville, but finally on February 6, 1949, 122 members signed a charter and began renting space at a local school. They would advertise themselves in local newspapers and radio sermons as “The church with the open mind and optimistic program.” According to the church narrative, in 1950 a retired African American railroad worker named Jim Person (pictured in their newcomer PowerPoint) came to the church, pointed to their “Everyone is Welcome” sign, and asked “Does that mean me?” When the usher said yes, the church began a process of embracing integration as part of its prophetic mission. The church also suffered the consequence of this when the school system chose not to renew their rental agreement, beginning what the PowerPoint described as their “wandering in the wilderness phase,” meeting in different locations until a house was eventually purchased.

The PowerPoint narrative goes on to state that the TVUUC became a “leader in integrating Knoxville,” offering housing to traveling integrated groups, participating in lunch counter and other sit-ins, and running integrated summer day camps for children. Again, there were consequences, such as being accused of communism and, according to a former minister who spoke during their sanctuary rededication ceremony, also having to move their summer camps from place to place in an effort to avoid harassment by the local Klu Klux Klan, who had exploded or riddled with shotgun their mailboxes. In the 1970’s, when the church hosted the
area’s first openly gay congregation, the front windows of their home-based church were shot out at the end of that congregation’s service.¹

Eventually the TVUUC was able to purchase land for a formal church building. This new building was not designed for church growth, however, according to the power point narrative, since the architect did not believe there would ever be more than 200 Unitarians in the city of Knoxville. The church did continue to grow, however, and spin off congregations, including the Westside Unitarian Universalist Church. In the 1980’s, the church continued its social justice work and participated in the interfaith sanctuary movement by hosting a refugee family from Guatemala. Then, in 1989, a new church building was completed upon the same property, designed to follow the “natural contours of the land to integrate with the earth” and to emphasize “natural light.” This can be seen as another theopoetic testimony in material architectural form to their Unitarian Universalist earth-centered values (appendix A).

Also noteworthy as a theopoetics of material religion in the architecture of the new building was the prophetic inscription of 18 values² associated with Unitarian Universalist theology (as well as with the affirmation used by the TVUUC in their Sunday orders of service). These particularly included the values of “Love,” “Service,” and “Peace” (Fig. 11). The TVUUC affirmation spoken each Sunday morning is by the Unitarian minister and poet James Vila Blake, and this version (or a different but similar one by a Universalist author) can be found

¹The bulk of this extra anecdotal material was shared by a former minister the researcher observed when watching the videotaped rededication service. The persistence of making material recordings or collections of various activities or events in the aftermath of the church shooting, such as the rededication service as well as a sermon series by the minister and a broad scope of newspaper articles, etc., also demonstrated the theopoetic power of material religion in the aftermath of a traumatic event. This researcher was inundated with these artifacts and their theopoetic testimony to the church’s survival and prophetic hopes.

in many UU congregations around the country: “Love is the spirit of this church, and service is its law. To dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in love, and to help one another, this is our great covenant.”

In 1993, the TVUUC was recognized formally as a “Welcoming Congregation” within the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), a designation meaning that they had completed a formal educational process to welcome gays and lesbians. Though the congregation completed the formal welcoming and educational process at that time, there were ongoing disputes within the congregation about making a visible sign of this commitment on the church’s main entrance. A former board president would write: “…there was sentiment that if we put a symbol up for one group, we could be led into a tacky décor characterized by an array of symbols for every disenfranchised group.” Finally, early in July 2008 and just prior to the traumatic events of July 27th, a task force decided on a temporary solution that would become a theopoetic material testimony to their prophetic history and values:

We made up a simple 8-1/2 x 11” sign that read “Everyone Welcome” and had the rainbow flag underneath it. The text on the back of the sign explained that this sign

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3See the Commission on Appraisal, Engaging Our Theological Diversity (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 2005), 102-104, for more information on these covenants.

4Later UUA educational programs would include information on welcoming bisexual and transgender persons as well. More information on the current process for becoming an officially designated “Welcoming Congregation” within the Unitarian Universalist Association can be found at this link: http://www.uua.org/lgbtq/welcoming/program/57699.shtml (accessed on February 11, 2013).

5See Ted Jones, Straightening Up: The Recovery of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church From an Attack (Unpublished manuscript, 2010), 9. There are parallels in the church’s struggle in this area to other challenges articulated in becoming a “Welcoming Congregation,” including comments such as “We are already welcoming, why should we single out a particular group?,” as found in another practical theological study I conducted during my master of divinity program. See Michelle Walsh, “Theological Analysis Project: The Welcoming Congregation Program as a Successful Model for Engaging Unitarian Universalists on Behalf of Social Justice” (Unpublished manuscript, 2004) available at http://people.bu.edu/wwildman/courses/theo1/projects/2004_walsh_michelle_1.pdf (accessed on February 11, 2013).
Fig. 11. TVUUC Panels and Plaques. Top, pictured two sample panels of 18 from the exterior of the church testifying to UU values in material religion architectural form. Bottom, the permanent Welcoming Congregation panel installed after the church shooting that participants remarked had been a particular focus of Greg McKendry to see accomplished.
harkened back to the church’s history when a simple “Everyone Welcome” sign in 1950 had welcomed a black man named Jim Person to our doors. The new laminated paper sign was minimalist in design but drew on our church history of welcoming all persons while being able to incorporate the rainbow flag and be specifically welcoming to the GLBT community… (Jones, 9)

There are multiple news accounts available through the internet, as well as the Unitarian Universalist Association’s website, as to the traumatic events of July 27, 2008 and into the following year, thus I will only briefly outline some of these events with no intent of capturing the vividness of emotions and responses that would be conveyed by those interviewed. For their summer service that day, the children of some of the local UU congregations, including Westside, were performing the musical “Annie” at TVUUC. Around 10:15AM, a gunman entered the church carrying a shotgun in a guitar case and opened fire in the crowded sanctuary. He killed an usher in his path, Greg McKendry age 60, a very active member of TVUUC, as well as Linda Lee Kraeger, age 61, a member of the Westside congregation, and physically injured several others (all were adults, no children were physically injured, all children having successfully fled out a rear door, with some taking shelter at the Presbyterian church further up the hill). Ultimately, the gunman was subdued by members of the congregation. It was learned

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7The Unitarian Universalist Association’s website also has a large collection of articles and other resource material: http://www.uua.org/search.shtml?q=knoxville (accessed February 21, 2013). For an insider’s view of the overall experience of TVUUC, please also see Jones, Straightening Up.
later, through a letter he wrote as well as through his conversations with police, that the
gunman had deliberately targeted the church for its liberal teachings.\footnote{The shooter’s former 
wife had also been a member of the church several years ago and was apparently also
a victim, still living, of domestic violence from him, though this was not known during the 
time of her membership according to the TVUUC minister.}

A Bill Moyers Journal episode\footnote{See “Shock Jock,” Bill Moyers Journal, available at
on the police news conference that described the white gunman, age 58, as an “unemployed 
truck driver” who was motivated by his “lack of employment” and “frustration” and “stated 
hatred for the liberal movement.” The police reported that the gunman said: “…that all 
liberals should be killed because they were…ruining the country, and that he felt that the 
Democrats had tied his country’s hands in the war on terror and ruined every institution in 
America.” He specifically targeted the Unitarian Universalist church because of “its liberal 
teachings” and “…because he could not get to the leaders of the liberal movement…he would 
target those that had voted them into office.”

In the direct aftermath of the shooting, the TVUCC minister requested that a colleague 
contact the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM), who arrived on site 
and began to provide assistance immediately and remained connected over the next year(s). 
Despite this traumatic and violent incident, the church continued to grow in membership 
throughout the next year and experienced many renewing moments according to TVUUC 
leader reports, including their annual Christmas pageant and the celebration of their 60\textsuperscript{th} 
anniversary with the installation of permanent memorial plaques in the church. They also 
underwent stresses and strains, particularly around governance as well as renewed 
publicity with the trial of the shooter, hitting a crisis point about 9 months after the initial 
traumatic event. Stresses and strains
took the form of: multiple congregant health issues emerging; further personal tragedies; exhaustion for staff and church leaders with leadership departures; tense budget negotiations; and an eruption on their email list serve when a transgender woman experienced herself as excluded from a nonofficial church event.10 The combination of these events, particularly some occurring on the minister’s sabbatical again, required the congregational leadership to request the intervention of the District Executive, who recommended a closer examination of church governance and organizational weak points as well as some behavioral changes by the membership. These stresses and strains on the church leadership became significant for the prophetic pastoral care recommendations offered by the TVUUC leaders back to the UUTRM leaders in the course of this case study. I turn now to examining the larger context of formation of a trauma response team in a denominational setting and the UUTRM’s particular involvement in the aftermath of the TVUUC shooting.

**History and Organization of the UU Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM)**

**History of Formation**

Personal experiences with providing chaplaincy services at Ground Zero after 9/11 was the starting place for all UUTRM leader stories of recognizing the need for creating an institutionally based trauma response ministry within the Unitarian Universalist Association. One UUTRM leader was formally dispatched to Ground Zero as a member and founder of her state’s Corps of Fire Chaplains, and another persistently and creatively battled her way into access to Ground Zero when she lacked formal recognition for her chaplaincy role. While working at Ground Zero, these eventual UUTRM leaders came to the conclusion that a Unitarian

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10Ibid., 54-57.
Universalist liberal religious voice and interfaith perspective was needed to bring “a sense of hope” rather than a message of “punishment” or “God’s wrath” to survivors of traumatic situations, including large scale social disasters, as one UUTRM leader would argue,

I think when Unitarian Universalists are there…we bring a spiritual perspective that’s not tied to any particular creed…we knew that we wanted to be available for all people at all times and we wanted to have that sense of hope that Unitarian Universalism brings, that, in the midst of chaos, hope does arise, and that it’s not about punishment or not about God’s wrath, it’s about walking with people through whatever the circumstances…

The UUTRM leader who had to find creative linkages to get into and stay at Ground Zero would share, in sharp terms, specific concerns of conversations or behaviors she witnessed of other chaplains that were antithetical to Unitarian Universalist values:

I encountered all kinds of evangelical people who were talking about how either this was God’s will, or they were witnessing to people and basically proselytizing. And I met one guy [and all] I remember is that he said he had really felt like he had had a good day because he witnessed to someone and believed he had relieved them of their lesbianism…I was just enraged. And I kept thinking to myself, “There’s gotta be a liberal religious response to this, other than, ‘This was God’s will,’ or, ‘This is God’s punishment’”…And so I started thinking about it and looking around online and I realized almost every other denomination had a disaster response team. You know, the Baptist men have just taken over the Earth in terms of cleaning stuff and getting people back into their houses. The Mennonites do kids. The Episcopalians do food. Almost everybody does something, here we sit, you know, twiddling our thumbs. So I started calling all the people that I knew who had been like police chaplains or fire chaplains and just kinda bitchin’ and moanin’, talking to people about it….

Within a year, this would lead to a gathering of various Unitarian Universalists with backgrounds in trauma response and interest in, as well as a passionate commitment to, forming a UU trauma response ministry, supported also by an initial grant from a UU congregation of $15,000.

Mission

The mission of the UUTRM, as founded in 2002, focuses upon the provision of “multifaith, culturally sensitive spiritual care to survivors of mass disasters and other significant
trauma” and includes a focus on education, provision of resources, deploying response teams, and networking with other trauma organizations. In the establishment of their mission, however, there were occasional differences among UUTRM leaders as to the hoped for prophetic pastoral care scope of their vision. The clear majority of those interviewed, including their UUA institutional supporters, viewed the UUTRM’s role to be intra-associational in focus, due both to their limited capacity as well as to a perceived unique value in having such a focus. One UUTRM leader would argue: “where we had the most potential to impact…was to train and educate, and inform and work with district entities, and work with individual congregational teams and ministers to prepare congregations to respond to these kinds of things effectively.” Another UUTRM leader would express strong opinions on the need to limit the prophetic pastoral care scope of the mission and any possibility of “mission creep” – “I have no desire to organize…for the rest of the world ’cause there are other organizations that are doing it well and better.”

However, the African American UUTRM leader interviewed would passionately express a much more expansive vision of the UUTRM mission, citing her experiences in growing up with a “black church ethos” as a rationale and the value placed on responding to the needs expressed regardless of official certification or perceived limitations:

[M]y whole thing is that if we’re gonna do this work for Unitarian Universalists, then we need to do whatever they need us to do. It’s not about whether or not it’s in our purview. Disaster’s not in anybody’s purview, really. And I think a lot of that comes from, even though I didn’t grow up in the black church, I kinda grew up with the black church ethos, undergirding cultural life. And ministry in that context is whatever you need to do by whatever means necessary. So if your people can’t get loans, you start a bank. If your folks can’t read, you start a literacy program. It’s not like, “Okay. Well, I’m not certified as a community minister or I’m not a banker, so I can’t do this.” So?
Worth noting is the emphasis and debate in much of the above on the need for effectiveness of scope, training, and authority *versus*, at least in small part, a “make do” philosophy and willingness to take some risks in operating beyond perceived boundaries or limitations under certain extreme circumstances. There was a heavy emphasis among all UUTRM leaders interviewed, as well as their UUA institutional supporters, on the need for trauma specific training and clear lines of authority with mission focus regarding their limited capacity. There was also a passionate wish expressed by at least one UUTRM leader for a greater vision of their capacity and a willingness to push against aspects of those perceived constraints at times when needs were presented in the provision of prophetic pastoral care.\(^1\)

An understanding of the overall UUTRM mission was significantly more limited, however, for TVUUC leaders interviewed. In most cases, the UUTRM mission was seen as primarily to support and advise the senior minister in his recovery and in his ministry to the congregation (though the minister himself had a larger awareness of the overall work of the UUTRM from exposure to a UUTRM-led workshop at the UUA national General Assembly). Most TVUUC leaders interviewed had no awareness of the existence of the UUTRM prior to their encounter with their services in the aftermath of the shooting. This lack of perceived clarity as to the UUTRM mission, and its role and authority in relationship to the larger congregational leadership, was seen as a particular challenge by some TVUUC leaders in this case study.

\(^1\)UUTRM leaders generally expressed empathy for the larger vision but more often felt constrained by resources and capacity. The particular UUTRM leader who expressed these opinions on mission and vision also did agree with the need for hierarchy and authority during crises, however, as well as an overall need for trauma specific training.
Philosophical Influences

Within the UUTRM mission statement, one can see the emphasis on and philosophical influence of a particular type of training, Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) modalities,\(^\text{12}\) though other training modalities also have been added as the UUTRM has grown with experience over time. These include the National Organization of Victims Assistance (NOVA) training,\(^\text{13}\) deemed more suitable for working with crime victims and homicide traumas by UUTRM leaders interviewed. UUTRM leaders frequently stressed that the specific kind of training needed for trauma response was significantly different from the forms of pastoral care training clergy might receive through Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) and these particular trainings gave them these added skills.\(^\text{14}\)

One UUTRM leader spoke in strong terms to the failure of CPE training to prepare ministers fully in the specific skill sets needed as trauma responders:

I’m doing a CPE residency now, and I’m more and more convinced CPE…doesn’t train you to do crisis and trauma work….it’s a cult…I mean, CPE can be helpful if you’ve done your own work on it…that’s certainly gonna be an asset. But the idea that hospital chaplaincy trains you with the skill sets you need to do trauma work is a complete

\(^{12}\)More information can be found on Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) trainings, approaches, and definitions through the International Critical Incident Stress Foundation at [http://www.icisf.org](http://www.icisf.org) (accessed February 11, 2013) as well as [http://www.icisf.org/who-we-are/what-is-cism](http://www.icisf.org/who-we-are/what-is-cism) (accessed February 11, 2013). It is beyond the scope of this particular dissertation to cover all aspects of these modalities. Instead, this dissertation will seek to explore the UUTRM and TVUUC leaders’ and UUA institutional supporters’ perception of the use of these modalities in this particular case study. Also mentioned in the course of this research was that every state participates in the National VOAD – the National Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster, and more information regarding this organization can be found at [http://www.nvoad.org](http://www.nvoad.org) (accessed February 11, 2013).


\(^{14}\)In responding to 9/11, however, some level of at least CPE training was a form of legitimizing one’s credentials as a chaplain, this according to the UUTRM leader for whom that became a crucial point of credibility in gaining access to Ground Zero (many other denominational chaplains on the ground apparently had not had CPE or any other formal training by her report).
falsehood and just propaganda that they say that they do. So that’s my opinion, on the record.

The institutional supporter who was the former UUA president at the time of the UUTRM’s formation also said that the response to trauma requires an additional level of training and skills beyond providing merely a pastoral presence:

Trauma, particularly large-scale societal trauma, in my experience and in my judgment, actually has some dynamics that need to be understood if you're gonna be helpful and...the simple act of presence is good but it's not all that's necessary, and that's why I was delighted that [the UUTRM] had searched out some additional education for themselves...so that they could show up in situations of trauma, not merely with...a pastoral presence, but with a pastoral presence that understood some of the dynamics of trauma over time and could interact with the people who were going through those various stages of response...with some information and knowledge about what resources are appropriate at the various stages. So they show up doing a better job of ministry is the short version.

Regarding the need for trauma specific training combined with clear lines of authority and accountability, all UUTRM leaders were agreed that this was a profound human need due to the chaotic nature of traumatic impact. The at times frequent militaristic language and hierarchical protocol in their descriptions (such as “deploy,” “chain of command,” “command structures,” “proper channels”) was often striking given their Unitarian Universalist ministerial and pastoral context. This can be seen when one UUTRM leader stressed the need for accountability to minimize chaos, particularly in the aftermath of traumatic disasters:15

I think the worst possible thing that can happen in disaster scenarios, where chaos reigns supreme and people are trying to put structures in place, is to have groups of people that arrive without any particular authority or direction, and so we're very clear that...we do not deploy unless we are invited to do so by the proper channels...And that's really about

15My sense became that this might be the way military chaplains are trained and that there are parallels perhaps between large scale disaster training responses and military training responses. I found myself struck by the difference in tone, language, and response between the two case studies in this sense, given their different contexts of operation often too. A question in my mind became: When does a traumatic incident reach a scale requiring a more hierarchical or military-style response? One perhaps might see this need in situations of mass shootings as well as natural disasters, but what about the more gradual, chronic, and accumulated traumas of violent loss for particular communities that reflect multiple rather than single incidents?
being accountable and making certain we don't simply add to chaos in an already chaotic situation…I think people don't understand that it's not just about showing up. It's about being able to show up and function to bring the necessary resources to bear in a particular situation…

Another UUTRM leader also spoke to the importance of this hierarchical form of pastoral prophetic care response in the aftermath of trauma, and of the challenge this posed to a UU movement culturally wedded to democratic governance:

Because it’s order in the middle of chaos. Everything’s nuts. Somebody has to be in charge…I think one of the biggest problems we have with trauma response in our movement is that it is hierarchical in a way that is not familiar…to us unless we have people who have served in the Army. You don’t get to just do whatever you feel like doing. Somebody has to be in charge…you still have to follow a chain of command. That’s antithetical to the open democratic process.

UUA institutional supporters also agreed that authorization, training, accountability, and legitimacy are acute needs in prophetic pastoral care for traumatic crises, that having these enabled a deeper layer of trust and effectiveness to be brought to bear, as one would state,

…a strong motive for organizing the UUTRM came as a result of the need to kind of legitimate our ministers who would so serve, so that not every cat and dog could come in and make a mess of things, but to make sure that there was membership, that there were qualifications, and so on. That was an administrative but it was also a quality control issue.

In a situation of large-scale group or social trauma, the re-establishment of order amidst chaos, and a sense of control and safety, conveyed by UUTRM leaders and UUA institutional supporters, dovetails with much of the existing literature on human needs in trauma recovery. As Judith Herman writes: “Traumatic events call into question basic human relationships…Traumatic events destroy the victim’s fundamental assumptions about the safety of the world, the positive value of the self, and the meaningful order of creation….”\(^\text{16}\) This

\(^{16}\)Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 51-51.
leads to the question of specific prophetic pastoral care strategies for reestablishing order amidst the chaos, particularly in large-scale versus smaller-scale traumatic situations – or as Carolyn Yoder writes: “What degree of safety? What kind of safety?”

Is it also possible that the reestablishment of safety can come at some other prophetic pastoral cost to survivors?

For example, clearly UUTRM leaders and UUA institutional supporters interviewed placed a heavy emphasis on trauma specific training and certification of legitimacy, as well as on clear lines of authority and accountability within a clearly defined and limited scope of action. This entailed comfort with structured, hierarchical approaches consistent with those of government and military agencies during large-scale socially traumatic events. What happens when such approaches clash with established cultures or ‘ways of relational being?’ for smaller scale contexts and events? Can such clashes in and of themselves actually create more anxiety and less safety in certain contexts, or, at a minimum, a failure of expectations that then can deepen a loss of trust on certain levels? How are groups, congregations, and society educated on or prepared for this potential clash of cultures in large-scale trauma responses as well?

There is a significant prophetic pastoral care difference between cultural expectations of ‘doing whatever is necessary’ to meet emergent needs based on whoever might volunteer to step forward in a moment to offer a skill versus following very specific ‘chains of command’ to discriminate which needs should be met and which not based on perceived limited capacity and resources in a major social emergency. Such differences in cultural expectations do have implications for the ecclesial context when congregations that might be accustomed to more ‘democratic’ and time consuming ways of functioning encounter a traumatic situation and need

to make rapid and multiple decisions. Their normal democratic processes and roles may not be available or possible. There are even greater implications for impact if an organization external to the normal ecclesial context is added to this mix in the provision of prophetic pastoral care. If the experience of trauma is *cognitively* as well as emotionally destabilizing, as Ronnie Janoff-Bulman has argued, then such a clash of cultures or worldviews in the clinical or pastoral response, as well as in the guiding relational images or narratives expected or offered, may certainly compound the experience of the trauma and lack of control. Indeed, some of these tension points emerged in this particular case study of the UUTRM and the TVUUC.

**Outline of Programs and Infrastructure**

It is important to know that the UUTRM is not an official institutional arm of the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), which is organized as a voluntary association of congregations through a congregational polity form of governance (appendix F). This lack of a formal institutional affiliation for the UUTRM is inclusive of a lack of formal institutionalized affiliation with the UUA’s district or regional offices and the financing of those offices by the UUA and district congregations. Within this governance structure, the UUTRM is a voluntary and separate non-profit organization that seeks to maintain a Memorandum of Understanding with the UUA for the services that it provides to its member congregations. At the time of these interviews, this memorandum had no formal automatic mechanism for review or renewal with each new UUA administration. Hence the UUTRM was heavily reliant on general fundraising and volunteer efforts and coordination for its operations, as well as on internal accountability mechanisms and a high level of trust with UUA staff members.\(^\text{18}\) This form of organization

\(^{18}\)An example of such trust is that one UUA institutional supporter provided a UUTRM member with his personal credit card number late one weekend night so that she could get an immediate flight to “respond quickly
posed a certain level of structural challenges and limitations; however, it also offered the possibility of greater operational freedom for the UUTRM, both dimensions of which will be discussed later in this chapter. UUTRM leaders stated that there was an ongoing discussion as to the best form of infrastructure to support their mission and ultimate vision.

Corresponding to their mission statement, the UUTRM seeks to provide education on trauma and preparedness training and also to provide resources in the event of a traumatic situation impacting on the life of a UU congregation, including the deployment of a UUTRM team as requested. The provision of resources may occur as simply as through a telephone call, including ongoing coaching and consultation by phone, or more fully in the deployment of UUTRM volunteer team members within 24 hours via a response coordinator who assesses and coordinates the meeting of needs. There is an 800 number carried by an on-call Management Team representative that is often the first mechanism of contact with the UUTRM. Additional resources might include assistance with pulpit supply for ministers who need to leave their congregations to help with a trauma event, as well as the provision of assistance in locating respite care for trauma victims.

Developing educational programs and being able to respond with such resources listed above appeared to be the primary capacity of the existing infrastructure of the UUTRM, per its current leadership and institutional supporters at the time of these interviews. Affiliating with other trauma organizations (apart from participating in trainings), or deploying teams beyond local disaster situations involving UU congregations, were not as frequently mentioned in

and easily without a lot of bureaucracy or silliness.” He said this does not happen a lot but has happened more than once when there was a need to respond with informality and speed in certain situations. This required a high level of personal trust and “credibility,” as this institutional supporter would say, in their relationship.
interviews, though it is clear that the UUTRM does coordinate with other organizations, such as the Red Cross, when possible and needed, including in this particular case study.

The UUTRM also provides trainings and workshops to UU clergy and laity in the context of the UUA national General Assembly, at minister convocations and district assemblies, in one-on-one settings, and through website information. UUTRM leaders report that they continue to expand their capacity and accomplishments in these areas. Some of the types of workshops they have provided, per one UUTRM leader, include: “introduction to trauma ministry; workshops on the lifecycle of a disaster in faith-based communities; emergency preparedness for congregations, faith-based institutions; the pastoral crisis intervention for professional religious leaders;” etc. Traumatic situations to which they have responded include not only the more well known ones such as the TVUUC shooting and Hurricane Katrina, but also church-related traumas inclusive of fires, floods or tornados, auto accidents, suicide, criminal acts impacting on congregants, sexual misconduct, etc. Each volunteer team member is required to participate in a minimum of 40 hours of crisis response team training, including a variety of other requirements as documented in a formal application, and to comply with a UUTRM Code of Ethics. A quarterly newsletter was reported to be a means of maintaining regular contact with UUTRM volunteer team members across the country.

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20 More information can be found in a UUTRM internal document, their “Standard Operating Procedures” manual, a copy of which was provided to this researcher.
Prophetic Pastoral Care Practices
Immediate and Ongoing Supportive Responses

The immediacy of concrete support and denominational presence by the UUTRM and the
larger Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA), increasing the TVUUC’s overall capacity for a
prophetic religious response in the aftermath, was significant as a prophetic pastoral care
practice. The overall speed of response and presence of UUTRM and UUA leaders was
frequently cited by participants as helpful in organizing the many levels of response – from
initial contact with the media to coordinating debriefing groups to developing a service the next
night. The ongoing supportive presence of a UUTRM consultant throughout the first year and
beyond, and the recognition of the congregation’s proud survival on a national UUA level, also
were cited as helpful, though more long-term and concrete support was viewed as needed in
specific crucial areas.21

Beginning first with the traumatic day, the TVUUC minister was in the last week of his
sabbatical and was notified fairly immediately by a voicemail left by the church administrator. It
is apparently his direction to a fellow minister that prompted the initial call to the UU Trauma
Response Ministry for assistance. The TVUUC minister made his way rapidly back to the
crunch, and the Red Cross also was fairly quickly on the scene later that Sunday and remained
involved through the following week at least.22 Two UUTRM leaders arrived by Sunday

21 Many of these findings on the importance of immediate and logistical response support the case study
anecdotal general findings in Hudson, Congregational Trauma.

22 Hudson, Congregational Trauma, notes that the American Red Cross is often the first line of defense in
situations of trauma, whether congregational or disaster-based, and many denominations join with the Red Cross
either through a partnership with the Church World Service (see http://www.cwsglobal.org/what-we-
do/emergencies/us-emergency-response/, accessed October 29, 2013) or through some other designated agency (57).
However, it should be noted that the American Red Cross is geared toward large scale disasters and only works in
partnership with the U.S. Department of Justice Office for Victims of Crime when acts of terrorism or mass murder
evening and others came in and out throughout the following week, one remaining involved as an ongoing consultant throughout subsequent years and returning also for the one-year anniversary service. A meeting to organize trauma responses was held early Monday morning at the church, and this meeting included church leaders, some interfaith clergy, the UUA District Executive, and Red Cross and UUTRM representatives. UUA staff people, including the president of the association, arrived later on Monday and were involved with media conversations as well as with what would be called the “interfaith” service Monday night at the Presbyterian church that had sheltered the children when they ran from the shooting.

The “interfaith” service Monday night might be more correctly termed a community gathering service since there was no effort to bring together interfaith clergy for its leadership apart from a representative from the Presbyterian church, per the TVUUC minister. It initially was intended to be a service for TVUUC members but was unexpectedly attended, despite pouring rain and thunder, by an estimated 1,000 people from the TVUUC and the local community, hence representing many different faith traditions in the audience. The then president of the UUA was a major speaker at this gathering, and the TVUUC minister led the

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23 The church had been closed as a “crime scene” Sunday while evidence was gathered and initial professional clean up was handled.
congregation in a modified version of the prayer of St. Francis, “Make me an instrument of your peace.”

Prior to the service and throughout the day and coming week, small group debriefings were held for those exposed to and impacted at different levels by the trauma, jointly organized between the Red Cross, UUTRM leaders, and experienced clinicians within the TVUUC. The children also were gathered together that night and submitted a request to be part of the ‘interfaith’ service and to have an opportunity to finishing singing the song “Tomorrow” from Annie, a prophetic marker of hope for these children. This request was granted by the TVUUC minister and ultimately became an extraordinarily moving and renewing moment by all participant interviewee reports, including in the reception of this news of their song within the larger national UU community. News was shared that the composer of the song had donated rights in perpetuity to the UUA for its use.

UUTRM leaders remained on the ground with the TVUUC throughout the coming week and one continued to consult regularly by phone over the first year, playing a particularly

24 The recited prayer as modified was: “God, Spirit of life whose presence is felt in the deepest of sorrows, now more than ever, make us instruments of your peace. Where there is hatred, may we so love. Where there is hurt, may we bring healing. Where there is despair, may we bring hope. Where there is fear, may we have courage. Where there is chaos, may we build community. Where there is ill will, may we bring understanding and compassion. Where there is darkness, may we bring light. Where there is only light, may we bring all the colors of a rainbow, all the colors of the full spectrum of life. Spirit of life, be with us this day. Amen.” The use of this particular prayer at this time signified a prophetic pastoral care practice in the aftermath of a violent trauma.

25 For example, while all TVUUC members would be survivors in some sense, those in the sanctuary and at risk of being shot would not be put in the same group for debriefing as those who had not been in the sanctuary as their exposures to the trauma were at different levels. This was the rationale for the separate group for the children who had been involved in the play that morning. This categorizing of survivor experiences into separate debriefing groups is consistent with the trauma-specific trainings and modalities mentioned earlier, particularly the CISM.

26 The most memorable line frequently cited from “Tomorrow” by interview participants as deeply moving was: “The sun’ll come out tomorrow,” though the full lyrics may be found at http://www.allmusicals.com/lyrics/annie/tomorrow.htm (accessed February 11, 2013).

27 Jones, Straightening Up.
supportive role with the TVUUC minister in thinking through worship and rituals in the aftermath, including the following Sunday’s rededication and reclaiming of the church sanctuary, as well as some of the 10-part series of sermons the TVUUC minister gave in the first few months. At the one-year anniversary of the trauma, a Sunday service was held, as well as what was called the “Instruments of Peace” thank you concert for the broader interfaith community on Monday night. The concert would become another symbol of healing, per TVUUC leaders, as well as a theopoetic affirmation of life in material form, for its use of guitars and spread of empty guitar cases in the sanctuary, reclaiming their normal context and associations from the violent use made of them by the gunman.

The UUTRM designated consultant, who remained available to the minister and board president in particular over that past year, was present for and participated in the Sunday service, as well as the District Executive who had continued to play a prominent prophetic pastoral care role. The District Executive shared during this anniversary service that the TVUUC and the Westside congregation received recognition at the 2009 UUA national General Assembly and that the congregation’s response to the traumatic event inspired the creation of the national prophetic pastoral Standing on the Side of Love campaign. The minister also linked the Standing on the Side of Love campaign specifically to the Universalist faith heritage that “God is love” in his homily.28

However, despite many of these effective prophetic pastoral care practices in the first year, the need for ongoing support and the importance of ministering to lay leaders, who were overtaxed in the aftermath of the traumatic event, was repeatedly stressed by TVUUC leaders.

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28At the time of these interviews, the church was 3 three years post-traumatic event and primarily marking the event formally through an annual recognition that shaped differently with each year.
More often, given their long-range needs, this concrete ministry came through their UUA District Executive than the UUTRM. TVUUC leaders reiterated that it was important not to underestimate the sheer number of logistical issues in need of guidance in the aftermath of such a communal and ecclesial trauma – logistics that ranged from the need to clean the sanctuary professionally; to the hiring of part-time contractors; to the inpouring of cards and money that needed management and response; to the turnover of church leadership from stress, health needs, and physical exhaustion; to the infusion of visitors and prospective new members; etc.

The strain of roles, and expectations attached to those roles, was a poignant point of sharing by TVUUC leaders. Examples included the church administrator, who had been in the direct line of fire that morning, finding herself worrying as to whether or not she had paid the church’s catastrophic insurance policy – and the incoming board president, who had shotgun pellets pass within five feet of him that morning, saying his bigger trauma “was the self-perceived responsibility to help people get through it, for the church and the congregation…worrying about 500 people…that was a daily impact on me for two years…I started healing mostly when I quit bein’ president.”

Impressions varied, however, as to whether the UUTRM was there mainly to support the minister as the primary congregational leader or whether the UUTRM was at the TVUUC with a larger eye on supporting all of the church leadership and congregants in that initial week and beyond, and this role confusion led to mixed expectations and reception at points. Of the TVUUC leaders interviewed, only the minister had any prior awareness of the UUTRM and, of the 5 TVUUC leaders interviewed, only the TVUUC minister would have the most unqualified
enthusiastic response to all of the UUTRM prophetic pastoral care services provided, paralleling the enthusiastic responses of the UUA institutional supporters interviewed as well.

Of the remaining four TVUUC leaders, all would praise many aspects of the UUTRM services, though there would also be specific critiques and recommendations they wanted to offer as well. Two in particular were stressed: (1) while the TVUUC leader who was board president at the time placed great value on the ongoing phone consultation services of the UUTRM, he also expressed frustration that they needed specific and ongoing long-term assistance in particular areas and had lacked guidance and warning about these needs from the UUTRM, requiring them to turn belatedly to their UUA District Executive for the majority of these emerging logistical pastoral care needs; and (2) while all TVUUC leaders interviewed placed great value on the national UU response in supporting the TVUUC, including by the UUTRM, several also argued that there were nuances of culture, governance, relationships, and needs that could not be met by members of a national trauma team flying in and out over the course of a week, that communication breakdowns naturally occurred in the transitions of leadership, and that speed of response at points overwhelmed time and space to build adequate relationships and understand different needs, history, and cultures. These included differing needs for personal recognition as well as for personal spiritual care. In other words, the designation of being considered the UUA’s official trauma response ministry, even though the UUTRM had no such formal linkage and was volunteer in base, set relational expectations very high and rather naturally led to some level of disappointment or role confusion.

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29 This particular TVUUC leader would say that sheer physical exhaustion proved to be more of point of contention months later than any differing versions of the actual narrative of the shooting (which the UUTRM consultant had advised might be a stressor). He also would state that their long term support needs were great and varied and completely underestimated by both UUTRM representatives and TVUUC leaders.
A “Ministry of Presence”: Stories and Meaning-Making

The need for stories to be heard into being on a personal level, as well as an ecclesial level, in the aftermath of violent trauma was stressed again and again as an important prophetic pastoral care practice for “healing.” This also was considered by many to be an example of the type of ministry that TVUUC congregants did for each other and that the UUTRM leaders did for the congregation, “a ministry of presence.” The former UUA president interviewed spoke of meeting with the widow of Greg McKendry and her son in the church sanctuary and how she and her son had not yet had an opportunity to tell each other their respective stories of that day. He would say: “…they needed to tell each other the stories…ministry can make a space for those stories [to] be told so that they don't go underground in a person and that's a part of healing – of being able to come to terms with your own story and share it so that it's not held in a secret, walled-off place in your spirit.” This “ministry of presence,” particularly the importance of the UUTRM’s presence as fellow Unitarian Universalists, was mentioned by more than one TVUUC leader: “You need someone to receive your pain…if there’s no one in that role, then it just stays locked up inside you.” The TVUUC minister would use a bodily metaphor of being a “pastoral ear,” citing the Sufi mystic Rumi: “You are not God’s mouthpiece. Try to be an ear.”

For one UUTRM leader, ministry in the aftermath of trauma entailed holding the entire context of their ministry with human beings as connected in and through community, including in how “we understand God”: “…it's really about grounding us in a presence [emphasis placed by UUTRM leader], that we as a team are a manifestation of. We're a manifestation of the

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30 This specific language was used by UUTRM leaders and institutional supporters separately in the interview process, and Hudson, Congregational Trauma, also cites a bomb site volunteer who uses this language in reference to clergy at trauma sites as well (47) and appears traceable to pastoral care works by Henri Nouwen, who also developed the pastoral care image of “the wounded healer.” See Dykstra, Images of Pastoral Care.
history. We're a manifestation of God as we understand God. We're a manifestation of a movement. We're a manifestation of the values that we hold in common. We're a manifestation of beliefs that can make for fuller, healthier, deeper living.” For another UUTRM leader, this ministry of presence and meaning-making represented a capacity to hold forth hope in the aftermath of violent trauma and in the face of evil: “…by our very presence…we hope our words and actions hold out the hope…that the evil thing, the horrible thing, the traumatic thing is not the last word. That’s our ministry…to make sure goodness has the last word, that hope has the last word, that solidarity and community have the last word.”

Threaded throughout the UUTRM and TVUUC leader interviews was a focus on relationships and narrative – both for personal pastoral healing as well as for prophetic witness and challenge. Narratives or stories of pain needing to be shared and received in relation and community, rather than staying “locked up” or “walled off” in the spirit, were spoken of, with a stress that all stories needed to be shared, even the “alternative stories”\(^{31}\) of painful disconnection as these yielded insight into the hope for a renewal of relationship. Such sharings would be the first step toward relational reconnection. Through such prophetic pastoral care “listening” – the “pastoral ear” – would be found a “ministry of presence” and meaning-making and connection to a larger community of prophetic hope, both as Unitarian Universalists and on an ecumenical and interfaith basis.

Some would state that this ministry of presence also could be found through the humble comradeship of a peer, not necessarily and only through a trained professional.\(^{32}\) For example,

\(^{31}\)Madigan, \textit{Narrative Therapy}, 163.

\(^{32}\)It is worth noting that relational-cultural theorists also have pointed to the power of self-help peer-led groups, such as Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), on occasion as well. See Christina Robb, \textit{This Changes Everything}:
another UUTRM leader focused on the ministerial role being broadly conceived as encompassing both laity and clergy, drawing on a theological frame first offered by the Unitarian ethicist James Luther Adams. She used his words of “the prophethood and priesthood of all believers” to express her role as a “placeholder” in fostering a larger “connection to hope,” one where the work alone “is sacred no matter what the tasks are”:

[T]ruthfully, as UUs with the prophethood and priesthood of all believers, we all have our ministries to do ordained or not…personally, it doesn’t matter if I’m handing out a bottle of water or cleaning up a bathroom or sitting with someone as they’re telling me their story…I’m a placeholder at that point. I’m a connection, because I hold my connection to my higher power, to the God of my understanding, and my place as that connection to hope and something bigger than wherever we are. That’s what makes it a ministry…what we do is sacred, no matter what the tasks are.

This particular UUTRM leader also had been a leader in New York chaplaincy disaster relief and had worked at Ground Zero, though she had joined the UUTRM much later. She spoke to a certain kind of “credibility” coming more from life experiences, whether directly as a survivor or from being able to say that one had worked at Ground Zero as a first responder – credibility from some level of shared story in experiences. If the helper was identified as a first responder or survivor, then they embodied credibility and hope and the capacity to normalize the trauma survivor’s ability to “make it through,” as in “We’re gonna be OK…New York’s here.” This UUTRM leader also found that the small spontaneously created and peer-led groups in the TVUUC’s fellowship hall worked best as debriefings in the aftermath of the shooting. Peers were able to “normalize” their experiences through shared credibility, with a UUTRM leader interacting only to highlight and reaffirm their sharings at crucial points.


All UUA institutional supporters saw the fundamental prophetic pastoral role of trauma ministry to lie in assisting with meaning-making and supporting survivors to find “their own sources of resilience,” as well as in helping them to “connect to something larger than themselves, something that can guide their life and provide some solace to them in a different way.” At least one UUA institutional supporter also stressed the additional importance of training, however, to provide *credibility* as professional ministers and prophetic pastoral care providers. While assisting in the task of meaning-making was one significant component, an equally important component was viewed to be UUTRM leaders’ grounding in UU theology and specific professional training, that this was important for enabling them to do a different professional care task than social workers, medical professionals, or other professional laity.

For some TVUUC leaders, however, a sense of disconnection, confusion, disappointment, and disruption of *credibility* also arose when the conception, expectation, and experiences of a prophetic pastoral “ministry of presence” did not conform to needs or pre-existing ideas. For example, a TVUUC leader spoke of his disappointment in overhearing a UUTRM representative speak of being “ghostbusters” more than once in a boastful manner. He developed a perception that this representative was arrogant, which tended to generalize to the UUTRM as a whole for him and was at odds with his perception of a prophetic pastoral ministry of presence that entailed humility and a pastoral image of “servanthood” rather than separateness:

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34I use “representative” here because it was not clear that this particular person was identifiable with any of the known UUTRM leaders on site who were interviewed for this particular case study. More UUTRM representatives came in and out throughout that week than those interviewed, and UUTRM leaders were among the first to state that there was always a need for ongoing training among those who served on the UUTRM as volunteers, particularly in their early years of formation and operation.
They were way too self-aware and not enough of what my old Bible professor would have called the sufferings, or not enough servanthood there, not enough humility there…. I do know that I shied away because that woman said that more than once. And it was sort of said in a joking haha manner, “We’re the Ghostbusters.” And one doesn’t like to think of one’s self as the phenomenon even though one is. It’s a servant, which I would see them as. Their role is not to lead us through, but to service as we go through. And a servant doesn’t call attention to his separateness from what’s going on.

Such sharings demonstrated the potential for different expectations and relational images of prophetic pastoral care roles to exist in an ecclesial context in the aftermath of trauma. Different expectations and images then can result in “acute disconnection” in that moment with the prophetic pastoral care provider. However, these painful moments did not necessarily result in chronic or traumatic disconnection since relational resilience and movement also were demonstrated in the very drive to share these alternative stories with the researcher when given the opportunity. Rather than repressing such stories in the interview process, or choosing to separate from the TVUUC in the immediate aftermath of the trauma, these church leaders continued to hope for reconciliation and renewal of their ecclesial connections through the act of sharing these painful stories and using this researcher and this case study as a “pastoral ear”. Relational “authenticity” in sharing stories and creating ecclesial meaning was valued more highly, and this can be a significant learning and point of awareness for prophetic pastoral care providers, a learning about the power of meaning-making through story that was stressed also by the UUTRM leader and ongoing consultant in the aftermath of the TVUUC shooting.

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36 Ibid., 5-7, 36, 107 and Madigan, *Narrative Therapy*, 163. RCT integrates several theoretical frames, including literature on trauma as well as resiliency. Narrative therapy also attends to the possibilities inherent in reframing stories.

Building and Space: Desecration and Re-Sacralization

Providing immediate assistance in reclaiming the sacredness of the TVUUC building and the sanctuary was another significant prophetic pastoral care practice. These practices also illustrated the importance of relationships and material religion through embodied and material theopoetic meaning-making in the aftermath of trauma. For example, the rededication service one week after the shooting included many elements: a ministry of presence by several former ministers as well as the UUA District Executive; the inclusion of a favored UU hymn that took on new embodied meaning that morning by participant reports, “May Nothing Evil Cross This Door”; the giving of material courage awards to the children; the recognition also of the courage of many members in helping to keep the church safe that day, followed by a promise from all gathered to continue to help to do so in the future, with all being called to stand physically as able; and a benediction that entailed the minister standing on the spot where Greg McKendry had been shot and died to reclaim and re-sanctify that space as well. The words of the benediction the minister had always used, and continued to use, also would take on new embodied meaning that morning by participant reports: “Prophetic church, the world awaits your liberating ministry. Go forward in the power of love. Proclaim the truth that makes us free.” At the end, the children once again reprised the song “Tomorrow” from the musical “Annie” while standing at the front of the sanctuary and the very stage that had been targeted.

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39The TVUUC minister reported that these words are drawn from another classic UU hymn “As Tranquil Streams,” ibid., 145. Though the text of this particular hymn was written in 1933, it was also used for the service honoring the consolidation of the Universalist and Unitarian denominations into their current association in 1961. Complete text for hymns referenced may be found in the current edition of Singing the Living Tradition and more historical information about the hymns may be found in Jacqui James, editor, Between the Lines: Source for Singing the Living Tradition (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1995/1998, second edition).
UUTRM leaders, particularly the long-term consultant, were viewed as providing a significant role in feedback and consultation regarding the sermon, rituals, and creating a sense of physical safety and renewal in the church space – in fact, security was a role that the consultant played in this initial rededication service and assisted with evaluating at the church’s one year anniversary as well. To create a sense of safety in the sanctuary itself required some reorientation of and physical changes to the space. As the UUTRM leader would explain, to re-sacralize the space not only did the damaged and blood-soaked pews need to be removed, but also certain pews were shifted by 15 degrees in their material orientation, as well as the pulpit. These recommendations were made based on the UUTRM leader’s understanding of the neurobiology of trauma triggers:

[W]e didn't want anyone to go back into that space and sit down and be oriented exactly the way it happened. That by simply shifting what a focal point would be would diminish the potential for intrusive memory in that environment, if they happen to be sitting down here...you can also shift the pulpit from the middle over a little bit, so that when you're sitting here, you're also oriented differently up here. And the notion is that part of what we understand about the neurology of trauma is that environment has a lot to do with the way in which that particular neural map gets triggered and if we can alter the environment just a smidgen, we don't tend to continue to re-traumatize over time.

The UUTRM leader and consultant suggested that the TVUUC might want to save some of its damaged materials and artifacts to create memorials, and this material memorialization also would be important for theopoetic meaning-making in the aftermath. The congregation did in fact choose to rededicate two areas of the building as the Greg McKendry Fellowship Hall and Linda Kraeger Library. The current pastoral care office also was designated for a space near the sanctuary stage, next to the still bullet-ridden door that had been the pathway to escape and safety for many children and adults, now preserved carefully and marked with a plaque (Fig. 12). This placement of her office struck the TVUUC leader interviewed who was the former church
Fig. 12. *TVUUC Bullet-Marked and Memorialized Door*. In the aftermath of the shooting, the congregation chose to memorialize the door that had both been riddled with pellets and was also the door to freedom and safety for many, including the children on the stage. In so marking, they also expressed gratitude to the embrace of a larger community of care in the aftermath.
administrator, and now pastoral care minister, as “funny,” as in ironic. Yet there was a sense of theopoetic testimony to life and prophetic hope in such an architectural and material placement of the heart of the TVUUC pastoral care ministry in this location as well.

This same former church administrator also intuitively understood the importance of saving damaged materials and artifacts from that day for their artistic potential, despite those who challenged her in doing so. This TVUUC leader reported that some people thought she was “re-traumatizing” herself by wanting to keep the bullet-torn curtain that had covered the entryway to what would become the bullet-ridden door, yet there was clearly great comfort for her in keeping this curtain as a potential symbol of the hoped for eventual transformation of this violent event. This same church administrator who had “see[n] the light from the curtain being open” and ran towards it for safety, lifted the original bullet-torn curtain up to the light to show this researcher, stressing its theopoetic symbolic transformative potential as a material artifact:

For instance, I protected this curtain. No one else seemed to care about the curtain. I thought...we should keep [it] ’cause I thought somebody could make a piece of artwork out of it at some point and that they would want to, so I’ve had it in the top drawer in the office ever since...See how the light comes through though?...See, that to me seems very symbolic of the transformation from – I mean I just thought there was a lot of good symbolism in this...It’s like star shine.

Material memorialization was deemed important by UUTRM and TVUUC leaders alike, and memorialization in a way that would not re-traumatize but rather would give theopoetic testimony to the embodied power of the lives lived and lost or injured, even though there might

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40 This also reminded me of reports by some young adult survivors of family homicide in my pilot studies of the importance to them of keeping the bullet-torn clothing, or even samples of blood, of their murdered loved one from the crime scene. There was a deeper embodied connection through such preservation that also represented hope and a longing for continued bonds, albeit with a different theopoetic significance than that given by the former TVUUC church administrator.
be disagreements on how best to witness to those theopoetic values. The reported deepest sense of re-sacralization of space, however, came from the fact that the majority of people did not abandon the church after the shooting – they kept returning and they kept bringing their children, including that immediately following Sunday, and the church did indeed grow in membership in the aftermath. The TVUUC minister said: “…one of the most healing things to happen was tackling that guy as quick as they could,” which in turn created a sense of efficacy and capacity for the congregation to keep their church safe. The rededication service would affirm this shared commitment to continuing the spiritual and material form of the church as sacred space, both through the formal call to stand as physically able in affirmation as well as through the many spontaneous standing ovations that happened throughout that morning. The material pews, floors, walls, and space were re-sanctified through very bodies of congregants enlivened by joy and hope that day.

A poignant story of this “continuity” of the church in sacred space also was shared by the TVUUC minister regarding the rededication service and involved the head usher who had directed Greg McKendry to stand on the spot where he had ushered and was later killed:

[T]his is part of what makes that a sacred space almost as much as anything really. [The head usher] had terrible survivor’s guilt that first week. And he came in and talked to me. English isn’t his first language…he’s a refugee from a war country. So he’s got layers of violence. But…really the moment that makes that space sacred is when I came in…and there was [the head usher] with the bulletin. He was the usher and he’s standing where Greg stood, and…to me that just was a powerful, powerful moment of continuity.

For the benediction that rededication Sunday, the TVUUC minister went to stand on that spot with the head usher, surrounded also by the UUTRM leader and consultant as well as the UUA District Executive. This was an embodied standing of ground that had marked death and now marked renewal of life again. As a ritual action, it gave theopoetic testimony and witness to re-
sacralization of the material space. The TVUUC minister continued to go to that spot for many future Sundays as well to give his traditional benediction: “Prophetic church, the world awaits your liberating ministry. Go forward in the power of love; proclaim the truth that makes us free.”

Such material memorialization processes also continue to be interesting examples of the need for “continuing bonds” with the dead and, in the case of the TVUUC, the powerful role a theopoetics of material religion can play in constructing or reinforcing a religious narrative in the aftermath of traumatic violent loss through re-sacralization of building and space. The church building itself already materially embodied a historical and religious message through the various values inscribed on its exterior walls, as well as through its ecological architectural design, giving testimony to a larger Unitarian Universalist theological narrative that could be witnessed communally by others. The newcomer PowerPoint also became a material artifact and gave theopoetic testimony though its use of the story and image of Jim Person being welcomed into church membership as the first African American, witnessed now across the generations by those who viewed the power point. The same is true of the inclusion of Jim Person’s story and name in the welcoming congregation plaque eventually placed on the building itself. The decision to leave bullet holes in some walls and also to mark these with a material plaque became yet another ongoing bond to the larger religious story of risk and ‘being a prophetic church.’ These were all choices to turn toward the trauma, rather than away, as a sign of prophetic hope, resilience, resistance, and overcoming in theopoetic material testimony and witness through the re-sacralization of the building.
Meaning-Making Through Material Artifacts and Rituals

As an additional prophetic pastoral care practice, the memorialization of the TVUUC’s minister’s 10-part series of sermons on a CD for all congregants also proved to be a powerful theopoetic material artifact. This collection of sermons also testified to the spiritual continuity of the congregation in the aftermath of violent trauma. The TVUUC minister self-describes his homiletic style as a “journey from irreverence to reverence,” and indeed, his sermons are peppered with much responsive laughter, including as observed within the first minute of the rededication sermon only one week after the traumatic event. In his 10\(^{th}\) and final sermon on the CD, the TVUUC minister used All Soul’s Day to highlight the intent to create memorials to the slain within the church, and also link this intent to stories of the long line of Unitarian Universalist martyrs in history, particularly to the first formally recognized Unitarian martyr Michael Servetus.\(^\text{41}\) This narrative act placed the two dead souls in a larger community of guiding UU saints, as materially marked in memory now on the church’s interior. Such saints then could be pointed to and drawn from in an ongoing communal narration that was both religious and material in nature (Fig. 13).

All 10 sermons, including the rededication sermon, were collected on this CD as a permanent material artifact for members of the congregation and were made available to this researcher. Throughout the sermon series, there is a striking use of self by the minister, 

\(^{41}\)Michael Servetus was an anti-trinitarian, claimed in the heritage of European Unitarianism, who lived in the 16\(^{th}\) century and wrote several texts opposing the doctrine of the Trinity. He was ultimately burned at the stake by the decree of John Calvin for refusing to recant his views. In critiquing this decision by Calvin, Sebastian Castellio would famously write: “To kill a man is not to defend a doctrine. It is simply to kill a man,” found in Charles A. Howe, For Faith and Freedom: A Short History of Unitarianism in Europe (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1997), 41.
Fig. 13. *Linda Lee Kraeger Library Memorial*. A TVUUC tribute to the Westside Unitarian Universalist congregant who lost her life that morning. It celebrates her love for learning and scholarly writing in religious history and witnesses to the power and “lasting reminder” of a life lived in the “pursuit of academic excellence.”
particularly through the pastoral care image of “the wounded healer”\footnote{See Dykstra, \textit{Images of Pastoral Care}, for an outline of the various images of pastoral care that have often been drawn upon as guiding relational imagery by pastoral care providers. The image of “the wounded healer” is particularly associated with the theologian Henri Nouwen, and his pastoral theology that the minister is not apart from the shared conditions of humanity, that the minister also is capable of being wounded, but the minister then uses these wounds to relate to humanity more empathically and compassionately in the healing process.} to create a “relational pulpit”\footnote{See Scott W. Alexander, \textit{The Relational Pulpit: Closing the Gap Between Preacher and Pew} (Boston: Skinner House, 1993), as well as John S. McClure, \textit{The Roundtable Pulpit: Where Leadership and Preaching Meet} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1995), on relational and collaborative preaching styles and also see Jacqueline J. Lewis, \textit{The Power of Stories: A Guide for Leading Multi-Racial and Multi-Cultural Congregations} (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2008) on the power of prophetic preaching to ‘story a vision.’} and to ‘story a vision’ in the aftermath of this traumatic event. He links pastoral care of self and communal prophetic challenge as well as unity through the public disclosure of his own emotional processes of grief, rage, and anxiety. Two examples are seen in his third sermon, “Healing Waters,” and in his fifth sermon, “A New Beginning in the New Normal,” in which he openly shares about his own emotional and bodily struggles in the aftermath of trauma, including the “molting of his hands” and role modeling the need to seek out all forms of healing and therapy, while also drawing upon communal support to find spiritual healing. The permanent recording of these sermon stories then became a material artifact of theopoetic testimony to resilience and resistance in the aftermath of violent trauma, witnessed by ongoing and new members who received copies of the CD.

Charles V. Gerkin’s stress on the power of a religious narrative and Larry Kent Graham’s stress on systemic dimensions of social power, in creating the foundation for prophetic pastoral care, come together in the arc and material preservation of these 10 sermons. These sermons identify the need for care of self linked to care of the world by reinforcing a Universalist theological narrative of “God is Love,” a mystical unifying love repeatedly seen to undergird all major religions. This experience of God, as preached by the TVUUC minister, calls each to care
for self and neighbor, but also to honor human limitations and vulnerability in providing such care – including the experience of anger and limitations on forgiveness. This was seen as particularly important by the minister when challenging, in Graham’s language, the “demonic hegemony” of powerful social forces acting to dehumanize entire groups of people, including liberals, through “hate speech.”

Sermon themes also preached to the “vulnerable, peace-loving, nonviolent liberal,” who “it does not take much courage to attack and wound.” Paradoxically, in the TVUUC minister’s experience, this religious liberal finds power in responding to the call of love through prophetic self-defense as well as public resistance through “self definition” rather than “other definition.” This overall combination of homiletic images and narrative with a theopoetics of material remembrance amount to what Edward Rynearson and Alison Salloum identify as a “restorative retelling” in the aftermath of violent traumatic death – a restorative retelling process in which intrusive violent imagery and narratives are gradually moderated by more “hopeful and purposive” imagery and narratives in the context of historical relationships. A “liberal” is not weak and vulnerable; a liberal is prophetic and powerful.

UUTRM leaders gave additional examples material rituals designed to meet prophetic pastoral care needs in the aftermath of trauma, including those drawn from other traumatic events to which they had ministered. For example, and as continued to be expressed by case study participants, there is always a complexity to the range of human feelings possible, but

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44 Graham, “Prophetic Pastoral Caretaking,” 138.

45 Rynearson and Salloum, “Restorative Retelling,” 177.

46 Ibid., 187.
especially in the aftermath of trauma. Holding survivors and their first responders or helpers with compassion through such moments of recognizing the full and complex range of such feelings often requires the skillful application of, what one UUTRM leader would call, “holy humor”\(^{47}\) in prophetic pastoral care practices and rituals. She shared a story from serving at Ground Zero as an illustration of how extraordinary and complex emotional tensions may be held and released with humor, affirming how an action that might be experienced as offensive to some actually becomes a release of righteous anger and theopoetic witness to a different vision of God through the recognition and practice of “holy humor”:

I’m thinking of a story of Ground Zero and I’m thinking of these born-again Christian missionaries who showed up when it was a little more open and…one of my jobs was to…be at the morgue and bless body parts and the bodies as they came in – and these born-again Christians were bound and determined that anyone who died was gonna have the blessings, so that they could go straight to heaven. And two firefighters that I know of went and got socks that had been donated, and after sitting outside for a few days the socks were kinda grungy, and they put ‘em in a black plastic bag, and they brought ‘em up to these two that had been blessing everybody, you know, “Go straight to heaven”…and they said to those two guys, “You gotta come because we think we’ve found a body part,” and it was really that the firefighters had taken a black plastic bag, gotten dirty socks, put that in there and done it. So you might think that’s that a really bizarre situation, and it is, but it is a way of dealing with, kind of, that bizarre humor, that holy humor that helps...because...these firefighters were overwhelmed with having been given the responsibility for the safety of, what they said to me quote unquote, “these two idiots” who were bound and determined that they were gonna get a body part and that they were gonna make sure that this body went straight to heaven. And I said to the firefighters, “Whadda you think about that?” and they said, “We are so busy taking care of everyone and ourselves and we know and trust that ultimately, as horrible as this thing is, God is a God of Love and nobody needs to be blessed. No one would ever not have eternal rest after this experience but we’re charged with taking care of these two idiots, so we just conjured up this scheme.”…Not a lot of people would appreciate that story...

This particular UUTRM leader also shared her experiences with theopoetic material rituals used in the aftermath of other traumas as well. For example, after a shooting at a Virginia

\(^{47}\)Another UUTRM leader would say that one of the ways UUTRM leaders provide pastoral care support to each other was by recognizing that “we have a tremendously morbid sense of humor” in sharing and discharging the buildup of the complex range of emotional tensions they hold.
university that impacted in part on a UU congregation in the area, she worked with the minister to develop a ritual where congregants lit candles to express their concerns, and then placed stones down and washed them with “healing water” to symbolize the laying down of their “burdens.” In Florida, after a hurricane, she worked with a different minister to develop a ritual that symbolized the end of the hurricane season and allowed congregants to “ritually dispose” in a controlled manner what they had not been able to control losing during the hurricane, utilizing wood and paper and pictures or pieces of items that had been lost.

Finally, this UUTRM leader shared yet another story from her own parish community of the power of theopoetic material ritual and the creation of a permanent memorial and site of ongoing ritual during times of loss or trauma. In the aftermath of 9/11, she suggested the use of granite from the church where she ministers to create a permanent handprint on the town’s Common as a literal “touchstone” of acknowledgment in the aftermath. This was followed by a multigenerational service in which she said:

    So this stone that we have here has a handprint in it, and it’s the touchstone now and whenever you’re feeling like you’ve lost your bearings or whenever the world feels really scary to you…or whenever you feel disconnected, whenever you don’t feel like you’re part of the community, I want you to remember that this stone is here with a handprint in it, and I want you to come and touch that handprint and then you’ll know that you’re never too far away from anybody else because we have this place and this time to come together and this is your touchstone to be healed and feel part of it.

She elaborated that this was a significant communal healing ritual in the aftermath of trauma because “the healing community is being connected back to common roots, common integrity…coming back to that place where there is a common purpose of hope, love, respect, worth and value of being together and that relationship that we all have.” She reported that town
members, beyond members of her own congregation, would return to this touchstone when there were communal losses after 9/11 as well.

The constructive practical theological implications of the use of “holy humor” in material ritual will be explored further in chapters four and five, however, the embodied and material emphasis in rituals developed by the UUTRM beyond those demonstrated at TVUUC also reinforce the power of a theopoetics of material religion in the aftermath of trauma as a prophetic pastoral care practice. Embodied metaphors conjoined to material expression is at the heart of many of the rituals described – the holding and placing down of stones that carry a physical weight metaphorically testify to the letting go of “burdens.” The pouring of water witnesses to and symbolizes the possibility of purification and healing, a symbolic gesture that easily can be associated to various biblical ritual traditions involving water. The creation of a handprint from the granite of a historic church also becomes a permanent metaphoric and material site of embodied connection in the physical touch of hands across generations during times of disconnection and loss – a place of continuing bonds that is ecclesial in nature, giving material testimony and witness to a larger spiritual hope and bond across eschatological time.

**Significant Emerging Themes**

Theme: Encountering Evil

Trauma disrupts all sense of normalcy, and for victims of violence, it does so in a way that can be experienced as morally intrusive and deliberate when at the hands of another human being. One TVUUC leader, present in the sanctuary that morning, said when asked about the process, practices, and meaning of “healing” for her,
I guess healing means coming to a place where I can accept what happened in the sense that this person willfully chose our congregation because of who we are and what we strive to do…. It’s hard to accept that there are evil people in the world…. I didn’t wanna accept that, because I wanted to accept that, you know, life is good. It’s what you make of it, you know, dah, dah, dah, dah. And it’s hard to accept that somebody has so much hate in them that they want to harm you.

Reconciling prior more optimistic or liberal conceptions of human nature with the experience of being attacked and then failing to see remorse in the perpetrator, seeing that he experienced himself as a “proud offender” instead, left some TVUUC leaders struggling with accepting concepts of “evil” in their new frames of reference for their experience of the world. As previously indicated by participant reports, a favorite hymn “May Nothing Evil Cross This Door,” took on new theopoetic meaning in the aftermath of this violent intrusion.

Another TVUUC leader and direct survivor from that morning said: “…I’ve just never seen such hostility on a face before…it felt like, um, sort of a supernatural force of destruction. It really did.” Jones also would write that congregants had their first direct exposure to the assailant’s lack of remorse at his preliminary hearing: “For many this situation challenged their long-held UU beliefs of dignity and worth for every human being. Thoughts about what to do with a murderer who showed no remorse, as well as occasional desires for revenge or atonement, gave rise to complicated emotions and some community debate.”

Though the UUA historically had taken a prophetic public stand against the death penalty, both the consulting UUTRM leader and the UUA president recommended, and the TVUUC ultimately decided, not to take a public stand as a church. To take a stand as either for or against the death penalty was regarded as placing an additional strain on individual congregants and the congregation as a whole in the midst of already turbulent emotions. A UUTRM leader said of their emphasis on the pastoral

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48Jones, Straightening Up, 46-47.
over the prophetic at that time: “The issue is to get everyone to come together, feel safe, support one another and be together, not polarizing over something like [the] death penalty, which can be so divisive,” particularly since this act of violence impacted on an entire “social milieu.”

Relational-cultural theory (RCT) emphasizes the role of connection and mutual empathy in human life as the basis of growth and authenticity and that disconnection creates feelings of hopelessness and isolation instead. UUTRM leaders sought to avoid further feelings of disconnection within the congregation amidst their encounter with violent trauma. For survivors of the TVUUC shooting, the attacker’s hatred and failure to exhibit any capacity for remorse, as an expected basis for their own connection to and empathy with his humanity, already left them with a severe sense of visceral disconnection and no language other than “evil” or “supernatural force of destruction,” in the sense of experiencing the attacker as alien or ‘other’. This was a cognitively and emotionally disruptive experience for those interviewed given their historical and sociocultural commitment to a theological anthropology that often affirmed the innate goodness and capacity of human beings to love and care for one another and progressively improve over time. This then contributed to ethical and spiritual struggles regarding their proper response to the attacker as Unitarian Universalists committed to the worth and dignity of each person, which in turn overwhelmed their capacity at that time to affirm as a congregation the larger association’s prophetic commitment against the death penalty.

As pointed out in chapter one as well, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson view “imaginative empathic projection”49 – or what might be called imaginative empathic imaging in

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RCT language – as the basis of all embodied spiritual experiences. A failure to experience such empathy can disrupt personal and group spiritual experiences for survivors in the aftermath of violent trauma, particularly if such experiences of empathy are normalized within a group’s culture or worldview. A prophetic pastoral care provider might readily see how such a disruption of an expected embodied felt connection to a fellow human being then could feel alien or abnormal, to the point of being categorized as “evil” or a “supernatural force of destruction,” and result in ‘othering’ and a confused, paralyzed, or divisive response depending on the theological and sociocultural historical context of those impacted. This also includes how such an encounter might stir uncomfortable feelings of hatred, fear, repulsion, and the desire for revenge – this despite even explicit spiritual beliefs opposing action on such feelings. The pastoral focus chosen by the UUTRM leaders at the time directed attention to re-establishing communal connections and empathy on this feeling level for TVUUC congregants, rather than debate about beliefs and course of action, a longer-range project.

One UUTRM leader affirmed that Unitarian Universalists struggle with “human evil” and have a need for a richer range of spiritual rituals or practices to help them “mend the potential of one's understanding of the universe”:

I think that UUs don't have a particularly good handle on…human evil; on the capacity for human beings to do destructive things…although I think this is less the case now than it was 30 years ago – the dearth of religious language or religious understanding for some people does not give them tools with which to do this work from a spiritual standpoint. It is psychologized but there's very little meaning making that occurs, you know? So I find the people who are most adept at doing this work are able to express themselves in a way that mends their relationship to the ultimate, when that relationship has been severed, by whatever name they call the ultimate…the trust in the universe – the universe is a good place…or the church itself is a safe place – and then having to grapple with the fact that it's also a human place and it's susceptible to things that human beings are susceptible to.
Yet another UUTRM leader expressed a passionate yearning for a richer capacity to theologize about and create rituals for recognizing trauma and evil within the Unitarian Universalist tradition, a way to “embody” the inherent “brokenness” in our humanity more deeply and create accountability, rather than elide the starkness of the encounter with an event that challenges an otherwise positive or optimistic view of human being:

[S]ome of my strong criticisms of Unitarian Universalism, as a birthright UU, is that we do not have a theodicy. We don’t talk about evil. We don’t talk about that. We have had this trajectory, since at least the ’30s, of onward and upward forever. We will become human perfection. We can do that. And so, that sense does not allow for a way to talk about our brokenness…We have no understanding of what does it mean to screw up and no rite of reconciliation, as in the Catholic Church where we can say, “I’ve screwed up. Here’s how I want to come back…” – the fallibility of humankind…has never been seriously dealt with since we turned away from the Calvinists. And we need to develop a more robust theodicy…I’d long for something like the Rite of Reconciliation of the Catholic Church where we can say, “You know, I really screwed up.” And rather than saying, “Oh no, no, no,” someone will take me seriously and say, “Yeah, you did. And how are you gonna change your life now?” That kind of deep accounting, we too often don’t do. We have not done very much collectively…So although we’ve thrown out original sin, we’ve thrown out, also, the possibility for people to be human…And so, collectively, we need more theology that deals with what does it mean to be human? How do we deal with evil? What is evil, how does it exist? How do we embody that, in order to be able to even begin to delve into then what is grief, death, loss about because…especially with traumatic death, if we don’t have an understanding of how we get there, we have no way to know how to come back.

The development of vibrant spiritual practices may also hinge on the Unitarian Universalist tradition being able then to rethink aspects of its tendency to normalize a positive theological anthropology. Correlations to neuroaffective and attachment studies may help with such a project. As discussed in the literature review from chapter one, Thomas Lewis, Fari Amini, and Richard Lannon have argued that we are physiologically interdependent and permeable through our limbic systems as mammals, that through “limbic resonance” emotions are actually contagious and can become communal:
Because limbic states can leap between minds, feelings are contagious, while notions are not. If one person germinates an ingenious idea, it’s no surprise that those in the vicinity fail to develop the same concept. But the limbic activity of those around us draws our emotions into almost immediate congruence…The same limbic evocation sends waves of emotion rolling through a throng, making scattered individuals into a unitary, panic-stricken herd or hate-filled lynch mob. (64)

Emotions can be contagious – whether these are emotions of hate or fear, such as might be “caught” from an experience with a mass shooter, or, on a more positive note, whether these are emotions experienced through shared wonder, awe, laughter, tears, reassurance, or beauty, such as might be felt during congregational worship, including those experiences shared by TVUUC leaders in reference to the ‘interfaith’ and rededication services.

In other words, a correlation with social science of neurophysiology teaches us that there is no inherent biological disposition toward love and empathy, only emotional capacities and needs, which include attachment and fear, that are socialized and responded to in interaction with a larger environment over time. As Lewis et al. also write: “Because mammals need relatedness for their neurophysiology to coalesce correctly, most of what makes us a socially functional human comes from connection…Children who get minimal care can grow up to menace a negligent society…America produces remorseless killers in bulk.”

Human beings are capable both of great acts of love and great acts of evil, and of an entire range in between, and spiritual rituals and practices are needed to ground us religiously in this reality.

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Theme: Meanings of “Healing”

The impact from this violent trauma also left TVUUC leaders struggling with definitive content for their own ideas of personal healing in the aftermath. Hesitant language of “I guess” or “kinda” often popped up in survivor descriptions of personal healing as their thoughts roamed over different dimensions of experiences and practices the word “healing” might call forth for them. These included getting back to some sense of normalcy, such as bodily normalcy or normalcy in the expectation of safety, as a TVUUC leader present that morning would say of the success of various contemplative and body practices in which she had engaged,

Well, for a long time I, like everyone else, had a lot of jumpiness. And I literally thought I would never be able to sit in that sanctuary again without watching the door constantly. And I find it amazing now that that’s totally gone cause it seemed so strong at the time. Like I thought I was gonna jump out of my skin if anybody opened that door. And so there was that kinda healing just in terms of not being so hyper vigilant all the time.

Sometimes ‘normalcy’ entailed not only a ‘getting back to’ but also an incorporation of the traumatic event into a new and more positive sense of self, a form of post-traumatic growth. One TVUUC leader spoke of being troubled by the fact that she froze under fire instead of immediately fleeing for her life. She later processed this with a chaplain soldier at a VA hospital where she was also serving as a chaplain, a career shift after the shooting. She took relief in understanding that soldiers also initially freeze but are trained repeatedly to get up and move despite gunfire. Ultimately she spoke of the shooting event as “a blessing” that increased her capacities for empathy, relating her growth also to the pastoral care image of the “wounded healer”: “I later considered it a great gift…that I’ve had this experience…assimilating that into your reality base of possibilities…for ministry the more knowledge of things that can happen, the

51In contrast to the prior case study, no participant interviewed for this case study overtly challenged the use of the term “healing” in my questions seeking to discover practices they had experienced as helpful.
better able you are to help others, the wounded healer thing…So I felt blessed by the event in an odd way…Not that I would want it to happen again, could have done without it [ironic laughter].” For her, expanded knowledge yielded greater capacity for future control and efficacy.

“Healing” as associated with practices that allowed for an affirmation of skills or having something to contribute also came from having a leadership role to play in the aftermath, which each of the TVUUC leaders interviewed did have. Such a role in turn could lessen some of the impact of the trauma by allowing control and influence to be exerted through embodied action – again, a form of achieving efficacy. For example, though others also spoke to the importance of having a role to play, the TVUUC leader who became heavily involved in media representation as a volunteer felt affirmed in being able to offer his skills in helping in the aftermath: “…that was such a profound affirmation of who I was that I never expected. I mean the work I did was a profound affirmation for me…So in that sense of the word, healing wasn’t an issue because I had been reached down and touched with the ability to help in ways that I could never have envisioned.” However, for some it also was true that laying down the burden of a leadership carried for a long period had a stronger association with the possibility of “healing” and, again, returning to normalcy, as it did for one of the TVUUC board president leaders interviewed: “Getting’ back to normal…like, not being intruded upon….not being pulled into other responsibilities, and not having that role anymore, basically, would be healing for me.”

UUTRM leaders, in contrast to the TVUUC leaders interviewed, often had more elaborated conceptions of the meaning of personal healing in the aftermath of trauma as a guide for their pastoral care practices in particular. One said that personal healing was “the ability to
retain or to attain some sense of closure, strength, self-sufficiency, and regaining personal power.” Another would say: “healing is figuring out a way…of putting this event in context with your life…so that you can go on without being disabled by it…”. It also was seen as a return to “functionality,” or as one UUA institutional supporter gruffly put it, “[helping people to] kinda regain their sea legs and find their strengths.” This focus on effective pastoral care as specifically restoring embodied personal functionality and efficacy was a common theme among the UUA institutional supporters interviewed in their understanding of “healing” in the aftermath of trauma. UUTRM leaders shared a similar focus on prioritizing personal pastoral healing in their practices by providing restoration to a sense of efficacy and control for survivors. However, this pastoral emphasis was not disconnected from UUTRM leaders’ sense of connection to their larger prophetic mission of providing a sense of ‘hope amidst the chaos’ as a liberal religious presence.

This return to strength and functionality, as well as the possibility of post-traumatic growth, also was recognized to be a nuanced and complicated process of integration in prophetic pastoral care, per a UUTRM leader,

I am not one who believes that one gets over something. I'm one that believes that we all learn how to integrate difficult experiences into our lives so that over time, they don't require as much energy and attention that we might give to them in their most acute phases. And so healing, for me, is learning how to integrate difficult experiences into one's life in a way that does not impede their health and growth but may, in fact, assist in their health and growth.

Another UUTRM leader reflected that functionality could entail a sense of wholeness that was different but still possible in the aftermath of trauma. “I don’t think people are the same after trauma. But I think that they can be whole. I think that they can incorporate and weave into their lives the loss, that it becomes part of the fabric of who they are. So by then the very
nature of that, they’re no longer the same. But that doesn’t mean that they’re so fractured that they can’t function.” She noted that human nature is fundamentally resilient: “…healing is absolutely possible, because we’re resilient. We were created miraculously…And most people bounce back…really without much of our help…and I think that’s actually good news…that most people do not need acute spiritual or mental health care, and they will find whatever healing they get to.”

This same UUTRM leader, who was the African American member interviewed and who had worked on many of the UUTRM responses to homicide, spoke more cautiously of “healing” in the aftermath of the murder of a family member, however:

It’s harder and harder to make that argument, the closer the circle gets, by the time you’re the mother or the daughter or the son of someone who’s been murdered, you know that the fabric of their lives is forever changed….there’s always gonna be a hole. But what you try to help people believe is that they’ll be able to live, and that their life will mean something, and they’ll even be happy again someday. It just won’t be the same way.

Nonetheless, she continued to argue that personal healing was: “Regaining…after traumatic loss, a new sense of wholeness. And sometimes I think it can be wholeness with pieces missing, that there’s still wholeness with pieces missing, and that’s what healing has to mean after traumatic loss.” Having a hole or pieces missing in the aftermath of trauma was not necessarily a permanent barrier to cultivating a sense of resiliency, hope, and wholeness in her experience of healing and prophetic pastoral care practices.

Additionally, it also was clear that the UUA institutional supporters and UUTRM leaders interviewed were very aware of the potential for burnout by clergy and of the need for clergy to

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52 Research into resiliency and trauma supports this statement by the UUTRM leader. See in particular George A. Bonanno, “Loss, Trauma and Human Resilience: Have We Underestimated the Human Capacity to Thrive After Extremely Aversive Events?” *American Psychologist* (January 2004), 20-28.
have long-term support and strategies of spiritual self-care for healing. Fewer spontaneous comments arose expressing an understanding of the long-term impact and need for support and healing for church staff and volunteer leaders, except by two UUTRM leaders and the two District Executives interviewed, the District Executives more often being involved in the provision of such long-term assistance. The District Executive for the TVUUC, given longer-term familiarity, also was more likely to understand the internal leadership stress dynamics and governance struggles of the TVUUC. Considering the impact of stress and burnout on several of the TVUUC leaders interviewed also yielded insight into this researcher’s unexpected experience of having the prophetic pastoral care dimensions of her ethnographic presence drawn out at times, her own capacity to provide a “pastoral ear.” These particular TVUUC leaders both needed additional pastoral care in the opportunity to share their stories and experiences and sought to use the interview process prophetically as a means of providing recorded and material testimony and learning to others as well, including the UUTRM.

Theme: The “Sacred Ambiguity” of Being Church

The most definitive statement on practices of healing in the aftermath of trauma came from the TVUUC minister, who spoke of healing as “being a church.” Indeed, the clearest emotional expressions of inspiration and sustenance among the TVUUC leaders came in describing, often with tears, profound moments of connection to a sense of a larger ecclesial community, whether this was their church, the Knoxville ecumenical and interfaith community,

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53 A text recommended by one UUTRM founder for clergy self-care during interviews was Kirk Bryon Jones, *Rest in the Storm: Self-Care Strategies for Clergy and Other Caregivers* (Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press, 2001). The TVUUC minister interviewed did clearly carry an enormous felt weight of responsibility, as initially expressed in his ride home to the church after first hearing the news and his worries that “there are more ways to get this wrong than right.” See also again Hudson, *Congregational Trauma*, in support of pastoral care concern for clergy and lay leaders.
or the Unitarian Universalist Association and a larger movement. A UUTRM leader said:

“…I think that one of the best ways to get over a traumatizing event is to start feeling like you’re part of the human race again, so…any ritual that can get people connected and mitigate, send that energy out, dissipate that energy, is a positive thing and, for me, that’s the biggest thing.”

It also was true that the most painful moments and, for some TVUUC leaders a feeling of being wounded again, came from moments of disconnection with representatives of the larger community, including the UUTRM. A central story touched upon by four of the TVUUC leaders interviewed entailed different perspectives on and experiences with a conflict over a local TV station being allowed to film in the church sanctuary. This was a few days after the church shooting but before the planned rededication ceremony. It was clear that the opportunity to tell this story was significant for those who fell on the ‘losing side’ of this conflict. At the time, this conflict revolved around the request and initial authorization by some TVUUC leaders of a camera crew to film a more ‘neutral,’ in their perception, part of the sanctuary, such as the empty pulpit, for a backdrop to a news story to be shown later that night. The TVUUC minister was not involved in this initial decision but a member of the UUTRM became aware and objected in very strong terms, had the camera crew leave, and informed the minister who also then strongly objected to the presence of the camera crew.

Relational, cultural, and narrative differences seemed to be at root in this conflict, as well as sources of authority in governance. For the UUTRM leader and the TVUUC minister, the camera crew was viewed as treating the sanctuary as a “crime scene,” and their perception was that this relational image and narrative would be re-traumatizing for congregants if shown on the

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54 One TVUUC leader wrote an appreciative email later to the researcher that the telling of this story allowed the TVUUC leader to “debrief” in a way that had not happened at that time.
news that night, particularly without warning or planning and before the sanctuary had had a chance to be re-sanctified through a rededication service. The TVUUC minister said: “I really thought it would be important for the first image to be sanctuary rededication and healing and recovery.” For the other TVUUC leaders involved in the initial authorization, however, there were personal relationships at stake, appropriate sensitivity was being demonstrated, and there were cultural differences in attitudes toward the media being expressed.\(^55\) One TVUUC leader explained that the cameraperson

was the son of our longtime congregants. He’s gay. His work doesn’t know he’s gay. He’s very sensitive to the whole thing. The press people are all our friends...We know ‘em...We can talk to them and say, ‘Hey, this is what we wanna do. We don’t wanna do this or that...So that whole dynamic of fighting with the press and...being suspicious of the press didn’t fit, which I think is part of a north/south, big city/small city kind of issue.

The perception by one TVUUC leader also was that the particular UUTRM representative involved “had a lot of affect” and “basically screamed at me a few times.” This was experienced as particularly painful for the TVUUC leader, who said he had to step away from his birthday celebration with his family that night to intervene with the TV station and convince them at the last minute not to show the film they had taken. He would say: “I ended up shakin’ like a tuning fork for, you know, months after that...”. Another TVUUC leader who was heavily involved with media relations throughout that week also concurred that a different experience with and attitude toward the press was brought with the UUTRM, and that, for at least a short period, this posed significant barriers to a cultural style in which he was more accustomed to operating. The TVUUC minister, in contrast, experienced the “image of chasing the camera people out” as a positive prophetic pastoral image akin to “Jesus chasing the money

\(^{55}\)Hudson, *Congregational Trauma*, found that working with the media in a situation of congregational trauma was highly sensitive and warranted the devotion of a substantial part of one chapter in terms of pastoral care tips, see chapter seven, “Surviving in the Public Eye.”
changers out of the Temple,” however, this was dissonant to and disconnecting for the experience of other TVUUC leaders whose pastoral image and expectation of UUTRM representatives was that they minimally be dispassionate or humble at all times. Additionally, this conflict highlighted points of tension that can occur in a congregational setting when the lines of authority and communication are dispersed or not clear in the aftermath of a trauma.\textsuperscript{56}

UUTRM leaders and UUA institutional supporters alike stressed the importance of narrative in the healing process – the telling of one’s own personal story and the weaving of a story large enough to hold the multiplicity of these varying stories and experiences in an ecclesial context, particularly in the aftermath of a significant violent trauma. The UUTRM leader who played an ongoing role consulting to TVUUC spoke about his focus on narrative in the healing process as helping survivors of trauma to hold the “sacred ambiguity” in these varying experiences. He regarded this as his particular contribution to the overall prophetic pastoral care practices of the UUTRM and would state,

\begin{quote}
[O]ne of the concepts that is sort of unique to \textit{my} work…is a concept that I refer to as the spiritual discipline of sacred ambiguity in relationship to trauma…the way in which institutions craft a macro narrative of a traumatic situation can have a huge impact on whether or not people feel included or excluded from the institution and its memory of what happened, and can either aid or inhibit in the healing process of individuals in that institution over time…Ministers worth their salt that are in these situations understand that the spiritual discipline is to affirm everyone's experience and to figure out a way to not have to align oneself with a particular aspect of it in order to legitimize that aspect and inadvertently delegitimize every other one.
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{56}In Jones, \textit{Straightening Up}, 22, the UUTRM representative involved in the media conflict would be reported as angrily saying at one point, “Who’s in charge here!!”, and this interaction would prompt a lot of reflection afterwards on the complicated realities of church governance for TVUUC in Jones’ analysis. Ironically, at the time of the writing of this dissertation, a new UUA Commission on Appraisal report was going to press that examined struggles with ministerial authority in the UU tradition. The title of this report was reported to be “Who’s In Charge Here?”
The TVUUC minister experienced this UUTRM consultant’s advice as invaluable in constructing sermons and rituals that encompassed a broad range of perspectives and possibilities into the ongoing TVUUC ecclesial narrative of the trauma. One other TVUUC leader did as well in understanding the need to bring newcomers relationally into the narrative of what had happened on July 27, 2008. His contribution would be the PowerPoint on the church’s history that allowed newcomers to situate this violent event in a larger story of ongoing prophetic resistance by the church. TVUUC leaders’ understanding that there can be different experiences and truth claims in the aftermath of trauma appeared to be the source of grace granted in maintaining their relationships overall, despite their differences in opinion regarding the media conflict. However, it still was important to each TVUUC leader that their particular version of the story be told, recorded, and honored in this case study as a material artifact that might give theopoetic testimony to the need for pastoral care providers to adhere to a larger vision of humility and servanthood.

“Being church” entailed not only holding stories of difference and supporting one another through stress and burnout. “Being church” also often meant being willing to open the doors to religious strangers, a fully embodied welcome that included those previously stereotyped as potentially hostile to Unitarian Universalists. One UUTRM leader observed a small conservative Christian home church coming in as volunteers to scrub the bathrooms for the TVUUC. She said, using now significant and familiar language of pieces and wholeness again,

*number one*, to see people who probably never heard of the UU before show up for this, unbelievable. *Unbelievable* in terms of making something whole with the pieces missing…there’s always a suspicion of, “Oh, the evangelicals hate us and the Christians think we’re this.” And…this little group that nobody knows, well, they know who you are now. And I think by showing up, appreciating, not keeping people out, but finding
ways to include, probably helped the healing – some self image healing…for UUs, as well as getting them into a bigger healing of a bigger community.

Another UUTRM leader said: “I was just floored. I’d never seen that much interfaith amenity. I mean people showed up who couldn’t be more antithetical to what UU’s believe.” The unexpected in such experiences was stressed again and again.

The language of “wholeness” and “pieces” emerged here through the experiences of a different UUTRM leader as an expansion beyond a personal pastoral image of healing also. This relational image now encompassed a larger ecclesial image of ecumenical and interfaith relationships and restoration, at least temporarily, for “wholeness.” The unexpectedness of the broken ecclesial faith “pieces” coming forward as a larger experiential and relational “whole” in the aftermath of the trauma surprised and overwhelmed all TVUUC leaders interviewed, and many of the UUTRM leaders on site as well, to the point of tears or awestruck tones of voice in the interviews. This relational movement toward greater embodied and transformative connection was repeatedly named and experienced as “love” by many TVUUC and UUTRM leaders alike, a love that was to be welcomed, honored, respected, and reaffirmed as the meaning of “being a church.”

A Vision of Prophetic Pastoral Care in the Aftermath of Trauma

Within the foundational experiences and mission of the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry is the prophetic vision and hope to bring a liberal religious and multifaith perspective and identity to prophetic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma – to hold forth the possibility of hope and human resilience in the midst of chaos, as well as social justice. For the participants in this case study, the experience of being attacked for their religion left all with a
deeper sense of bonding to each other and connection to the theological narrative and meaning of their Unitarian Universalist faith tradition. Some also gained a sense of confidence in claiming their religious identity and speaking out and testifying prophetically on behalf of their religion more publicly and coherently. For the TVUUC leaders in particular, there was a larger relational context experienced within this theological narrative – one that was historical, value-driven, and deeply intertwined with their sense of their identity as a unique Unitarian Universalist congregation surviving and thriving in a more conservative Southern context. Feelings of self-worth and being newly affirmed, energized, and empowered in their group identity were broadly reported.\(^{57}\)

However, it was the TVUUC minister, as well as the UUTRM leaders and some UUA institutional supporters, who held the clearest sense of connection between their pastoral and prophetic practices and the experience of healing in the aftermath of trauma, including in their understanding of their call to give prophetic testimony to be witnessed in the public square. Beyond the minister, TVUUC leaders interviewed waivered in their sense that the church had embraced a clear and consistent social justice call to the public square linked specifically to the traumatic event. For UUTRM leaders, the connection of their mission to challenging social oppression was woven into the very content of their mission statement, or as one UUTRM leader would state, their mission was “to work within the paradigms of social justice and action that we live as Unitarian Universalists as anti-oppression, antiracist” to prepare people in coping with

traumatic events. UUTRM leaders gave various examples of how they fulfilled this mission, from the awareness they raised through various national and district trainings to their interfaith commitments.

All interview participants also acknowledged that the TVUUC’s courageous public response to the shooting was significant as the point of inspiration for the UUA’s “Standing on the Side of Love” campaign on behalf of GBLTQ persons and immigrant families. Though the motto itself existed previously in relation to marriage equality initiatives by the UUA, the TVUUC shooting marked the formal launching point of a highly public national campaign around this motto, including the publication of a New York Times full-page ad. The TVUUC minister interviewed, as well as former TVUUC ministers observed on a DVD of the rededication ceremony, clearly held the overall context and history of prophetic social justice work engaged by the congregation. The TVUUC minister also preached on the links between the pastoral and the prophetic in his 10-part series of sermons and participated in other public media programs, such as the Bill Moyers Journal episode, to promote prophetic themes of love, peace, and justice in relation to the church and the larger Unitarian Universalist movement.

Other TVUUC leaders, however, appeared more conscious of the ‘not yet’ than the ‘already there’ aspects of prophetic leadership in the aftermath of their particular trauma. They were keenly aware of the struggles over logistics, church governance, maintaining social justice initiatives, or just being consistent in professed values, including ongoing outreach to the interfaith community or to the nearby neighborhoods segregated by race, class, and violence. A variety of initiatives arose locally in the aftermath of the shooting, including taking up the issue

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58 This sense of the founding mission of the UUTRM was consistent with a different UUTRM leader’s angry reaction to the possibility of conservative faith traditions oppressing GBLT persons in the 9/11 disaster.
of hate speech and gun control or bullying in schools, but without a sense of consistent
embrace by the church as a whole over time. This recognized, in many ways, TVUUC leaders’
need to continue to provide pastoral care to their own congregation first and foremost. Yet all
TVUUC leaders still shared a passionate sense of pride in their church and its social justice
history, including, for many, the larger Unitarian Universalist movement as embodied in the
“Standing on the Side of Love” campaign.\footnote{The “Standing on the Side of Love” campaign also takes on theopoetic material form in its striking use of bright yellow t-shirts and hats emblazoned with “Standing on the Side of Love,” so that a visual sea of “yellow shirts” gives testimony to the UU value of love and is witnessed by others at major social justice protests.}

When participants reflected generally on Unitarian Universalist struggles with a call to
consistent prophetic and embodied communal transformative action in the public square in the
aftermath of trauma, their thoughts turned in one of at least two directions: (1) the practical and
logistical barriers posed by congregational polity, and the operation of the UUTRM as a
volunteer-based community ministry; and (2) a perception of a lack of adequate Unitarian
Universalist cultural and theological preparedness for coping with trauma, particularly coping
with “evil” when the trauma was violent and human made. In regards to the former, the informal
relationship of the UUTRM to structures available within the Unitarian Universalist Association
(UUA), including the UUA’s congregational governance polity, often was viewed as a major
challenge for the development of adequate financial support for the UUTRM, as well as for its
ability to conduct the level of preparedness education and operational connection to
congregations they might otherwise desire.

These structural challenges were viewed as reinforced by a UUA institutional culture that
sought to respect the rights of each congregation to manage their own concerns. One UUA
institutional supporter said: “I think it’s part of the culture…of UUA staff to…not presume to dictate what ought to occur either in congregations or in districts.” The exceptions, he would go on to say, were “youth safety issues” due to legal liability as well as ethical concerns. Mandating the need for congregations to receive training related to emergency preparedness and trauma was viewed as potentially subject to “pushback” that would be “counterproductive.” An overall Unitarian Universalist culture of autonomy and independence also was seen as reinforced at times by the UUTRM leadership itself, creating an ambiguous dynamic of desiring greater institutionalization but also resisting perceived potential losses of creative flexibility, freedom, or control and authority through such institutionalization.

Several UUTRM leaders and UUA institutional supporters confirmed that an overarching need they saw for the UUTRM was to regionalize its capacity and institutionalize its connection to the UUA more formally, as well as to expand its membership so that greater diversity was reflected by race, gender, skill sets, and lay positions within a congregation, with more peers working with peers rather than primarily being led by clergy. As one UUTRM leader, who had a dual role as a UUA District Executive too, put it: “’Cause the only way it’s gonna work is if regional teams are created and sustained, that there is a clear sense of structure, and modality, and a clear understanding of it surviving beyond the lives and interests of this wonderful group of dedicated people who have done marvelous work in our congregations.” One UUA institutional supporter also saw the UUTRM’s struggles in this area as reflecting a broader problem of the relationship of congregational polity to what are termed “community ministries” within the UUA, ministries that are focused outside the walls of the parish, many of which are not even connected to parish ministries. He saw accountability issues in this as well as a potential to
strengthen the promise of community ministries through the positive example of the UUTRM and greater institutionalization throughout the UUA districts.

Beyond the practical and logistical challenges of congregational polity, the socioeconomic status and privileges of Unitarian Universalists often were cited as an experiential barrier to engaging issues of violence, and trauma generally, with a sustained spiritual and theological focal attention. Such concerns were raised especially by UUTRM leaders and UUA institutional supporters, often in strong and sometimes sharp terms. One UUA institutional supporter, the former UUA president, spoke to the spiritual paradox of privilege as being “both a blessing and a curse,” one that gave more resources for effective action, but one which created a danger of insularity also, rather than connection to a larger shared human experience:

The privilege of most of our members and most of our communities is both a blessing and a curse. And the blessing is that we are persons who, A, have resources both personal, financial, educational...so that we are able to actually be more effective than many. The curse is that...most of us personally, we're insulated from much of what is normal life for many people...a good colleague of mine describes it as ministry to the shallow affluent – and I say that not to denigrate that ministry, because...all people are important to receive ministry. But it means that there's a whole range of human experience that we don't often directly engage...it's no small thing to be able to understand that we are a part of one human family, and it's easy to say, "I'm glad we've got a Trauma Response Ministry," you know, "They're taking care of that piece of my response to being human for me. I don't have to do that" and there's a spiritual danger in that.

While not couched specifically as a “spiritual danger,” relational-cultural theorists have incorporated a relational power analysis of dominant and subordinate social groups into their concepts and also examine the impact of such power relations, both on narrowing one’s experience of one’s humanity as well as one’s visions of alternative ways of social being. For

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60. Once a group is defined as inferior, the superiors tend to label it as defective or substandard in various ways...In addition, the actions and words of the dominant group tend to be destructive of the subordinates...Dominant groups usually define one or more acceptable roles for the subordinate...A dominant
example, Judith Herman was among a group of women deeply influenced by RCT founder Jean Baker Miller’s work. She also was among the first to point out that the relational and analytic lens of trauma provides new insights into various replicating sociopolitical issues over time, including violence and war. All interview participants clearly were aware of and grasped the power of a larger Unitarian Universalist narrative to support prophetic anti-racism and anti-oppression work, as Charles V. Gerkin similarly saw the Christian narrative supporting and propelling the prophetic work of social justice beyond the provision of pastoral care as well.

However, many participants also reported a lack of perceived consistency in linking this Unitarian Universalist narrative to a power analysis of larger systemic issues that then motivated direct and continued institutional action on these issues, particularly as these bore on the deepest root causes of violent trauma. Larry Kent Graham argued that such an explicit analysis of institutionalized systemic forces is needed for effective prophetic pastoral care of persons and the world. Barbara J. McClure also argued that this can be a weakness in reliance on the ideals of a narrative alone, which includes Unitarian Universalist ideals divorced from an explicit power analysis of the linkages among institutions that historically support and allow the perpetuation of violent trauma.

One practical theological means of making such connections is through various spiritual practices and rituals. Repeatedly, both UUTRM leaders and UUA institutional supporters experienced Unitarian Universalists as struggling spiritually and theologically with the reality of

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*group, inevitably, has the greatest influence in determining a culture’s overall outlook – its philosophy, morality, social theory, and even its science. The dominant group, thus, legitimizes the unequal relationship and incorporates it into society’s guiding concepts. Inevitably, the dominant group is the model for ‘normal human relationships’.*


61Judith Herman would be supervised by Jean Baker Miller in the 1970’s through the Somerville Women’s Mental Health Collective per Christina Robb, *This Changes Everything.*
traumatic suffering and evil in light of both their privilege as well as their resistance to authority, optimistic view of human nature, and denial that anything truly hurtful might occur to them. For example, the institutional supporter who had spoken to the UUA’s mandate for education on youth safety issues said: “I think it’s core in our DNA. I think it’s part of what has led many of us to leave our traditional religious background, if we had a traditional religious background…a deep down engrained resistance to authority, a deep down engrained belief that we know what’s best for us and you can’t tell us what to do.”

One UUTRM leader also spoke to the rationalistic tendency of Unitarian Universalists in seeking to control chaos and the possibilities of anything bad ever happening to them, so much so that UU’s forget the “awe, mystery and wonder”: “I think there’s an arrogance [laughter] about us that we think we’ve got the universe all figured out…our tendency to be rational…and that once we’ve figured it out then nothing bad can happen…We forget awe. We forget awe, yeah, awe, mystery and wonder and that we’re not in control.”

There were significant lived truths of ironic humor as well as passionate frustration expressed in these participant experiences and analyses of limitations to a Unitarian Universalist capacity to fulfill a prophetic vision in responding to trauma. Yet there also was truth witnessed and hope experienced that something in the Unitarian Universalist tradition did exhibit relational resilience. Something in the tradition itself did yield the capacity to bring forth the UU Trauma Response Ministry as a practical theological response to trauma. The next chapter examines the emerging theological themes from each case study, beginning an intercultural theological dialogue, which then will lead into the final and fifth chapter where I point toward forging a constructive practical theology of trauma with strategic practical theological recommendations.
CHAPTER FOUR

AN INTERCULTURAL THEOLOGICAL DIALOGUE

Socioeconomic and racial demographics of participants in the two case studies differed enormously, thus exposing different cultural worldviews as shaped by historical circumstances and present lived realities.¹ Core cultural values are revealed often through examination of differences in ways of being² and communal practices. The cultural worldviews of most of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute (LDBPI) case study participants were shaped by their experiences of racialization by the United States’ dominant culture,³ particularly through media images, and by living in an impoverished urban environment with a greater exposure to daily violence and fewer opportunities for higher education and class mobility. Given that single violent events in a survivor’s life occur in the midst of multiple experiences of ongoing oppression, the Peace Institute chose to focus their prophetic pastoral care practices on transforming survivor pain and anger into power and action.

The cultural worldviews of the majority of Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM) case study participants, in contrast, were shaped by the dominant U.S.

¹Derald Wing Sue and David Sue define worldview as “how a person perceives his or her relationship to the world (nature, institutions, other people, etc.)…[N]ot only are worldviews composed of our attitudes, values, opinions, and concepts…[they also] affect how we think, define events, make decisions, and behave…[race and ethnicity], economic and social class, religion, sexual orientation, and gender are also interactional components of a worldview.” See Counseling the Culturally Diverse: Theory and Practice, 4th edition (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2003), 267-268.

²“Ways of being” is language that I have observed used in various activist communities, such as the recent Boston Occupy Movement, to express differences in cultural styles and forms of expression that can sometimes cause conflict between groups seeking to do collaborative organizing. These require explicit uncovering, discussion, and practice to create shared guidelines and agreements.

culture, which privileges whiteness, education, and class mobility and expects safety from violence as the norm. Prophetic pastoral care needs and practices focused heavily on meaning-making in the aftermath of the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church’s (TVUUC) experience with a violent event. Priority often was given to congregational pastoral care over congregational prophetic action in this meaning-making process. Participants carried religious differences as well between the two case studies, one centered on the centrality of the Christian story, especially its call to be peacemakers, and the other on a public ethical and ecclesial tradition shaped by worshiping and acting together given its openness to diverse beliefs and spiritual practices.

I have argued, utilizing the work of Larry Kent Graham, that attending to the historical, political, and cultural structures of oppression are crucial for determining effective prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of violent trauma. Unique theological perspectives and challenges, language, and practices emerged from participants in each case study, derived from different lived experiences and the cultural worldviews shaped by those differing experiences of oppression and privilege. Rebecca Chopp calls for theologians to become responsive witnesses to Spirit’s revelation in the community, “to the moral summons in testimonies” in order to “refigure and reimagine the social imaginary.”⁴ I have argued that such theopoetic testimony occurs in many forms through practices, not only oral and literary practices but also material practices. When theologians give normative priority to the voices, practices, and lived experiences of those impacted by violent trauma across different religious, spiritual, and sociodemographic contexts, how does attention to revelation in the testimonies disrupt operating

⁴Chopp, “Theology and the Poetics of Testimony,” 9-10. “Testimonies invoke a moral claim: it is from someone to someone about something. A decision is called for, a change in reality is required. This responsibility is…a social reality,” 7.
dominant theologies and practices, helping us witness to complexity and nuance? What do we learn?

The central experience of God’s sustaining presence and vision of peace was a core theological theme to emerge from survivors and ministerial leaders in the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute (LDBPI) case study. When the case study is reviewed as a whole, the nature of this experience of God is revealed and threaded throughout the expression of other themes and their prophetic pastoral care practices. These included the spiritual “aura” found in place and culture, the empowerment of survivors as experts and their transformation through power and action, experiences of “healing” versus “movement,” as well as the powerful role of a theopoetics of material religion throughout their practices. Within the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM) case study of their trauma response to the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC), an ethical and ecclesial tradition committed to love, hope, compassion, equality, and justice is revealed and threaded throughout their prophetic pastoral care responses, including their own performances of a theopoetics of material religion. In turn, the challenges posed by trauma to these core theological values highlighted participant struggles with encountering evil, finding meanings for “healing,” and practicing the “sacred ambiguity” of being church in the Unitarian Universalist tradition.

What is revealed by an examination of these two case studies, and how do their contrasting cultures result in contrasting practices? In asking this question, and stressing the importance of an intercultural dialogue, I affirm the magnitude and challenge of violent trauma in the American context and globally as a contemporary practical theological problem that needs cross-cultural attention. I also affirm my own religious tradition’s public ethical commitment to
the worth and dignity of every person and to the tradition’s recognition that we live in an interdependent web of existence, where that which affects the web affects us all (appendix A). I turn first now to examining the revelations of each case study in light of the testimony of the above core theological themes and values found in each study. I then follow this with a beginning intercultural dialogue between the two case studies.

**Witnessing Revelation in the Testimonies**

**Peace Warriors in the Aftermath of Violent Loss**

In the aftermath of the murder of one’s child, how is God’s presence felt, if it can be? What is movement like between suffering, resistance, hope, and transformation? Are there communal dimensions to this movement? Testimonies given by Peace Institute participants bear sources of revelation and witness to these core questions of faith. For example, all Peace Institute ministry leaders and survivors interviewed stressed one’s personal relationship with God above formal religious traditions or church communities, and “God” was the spontaneous language used rather than “Jesus” or “Christ” for most ministry leaders and survivors.5 Survivors spoke to a sense of God being a primary sustaining force in the aftermath of the murder of their child, helping them to “move” and “function”. They experienced this sustaining force through various signs, practices, or the beauty of God’s creation, with one survivor explicitly calling it “God’s spirit.” A survivor spoke of the coffee she needed as mysteriously appearing, while another survivor spoke of the movement of her son in the moment before he

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5“God” was also clearly a classically theistic God (as distinguished from panentheistic or pantheist) as well as a gendered God in the use of male pronouns by all survivors and ministry leaders. This study did not seek to explore personal christologies, though all ministry leaders and survivors interviewed referenced being raised in Christian traditions. One ministry leader did stress that she experienced herself as more “spiritual,” and the founding ministry leader said she historically had experienced a deeper relationship to “Mary” than to “Jesus” in her own faith journey.
died as a sign from God. Still another said there was a “healing force” in nature, and a survivor and a ministry leader both made spontaneous references to the process of sandplay as an almost physical spiritual guiding of their process by God, a “taking over” of their body.

Thus while most survivors interviewed spoke to their sense of faith being questioned or even shattered in the aftermath of trauma, there was still a sense of God being available as a loving and reassuring presence in their journey, even if in mysterious ways, to the degree that they were able to see the signs. For most of these particular survivors, there was no spontaneous direct association of God’s action with the cause of their suffering as a form of punishment, primarily questioning “why” in the aftermath. The founding ministry leader, in particular, spoke of God placing an allotted time frame for one’s presence on earth, drawing on Ecclesiastes for her understanding, though not prescribing the form of the end of that time frame. Peace Institute orders of funeral service would explicitly suggest that people refrain from telling survivors that the murder of their loved one “was God’s will.”

Uniformly, all Peace Institute ministry leaders spoke of their personal connection to God as the source of a “calling” or “mission” to engage in the work and ministry of the Peace Institute, and all survivors, as well as institutional supporters interviewed, minimally would view the Peace Institute’s work as “spiritual.” Thus for the Peace Institute ministry leaders, the shape of God’s communication was missional and ecclesial, to create a community of peacemakers and transform their larger world toward a vision of God’s peace. First and foremost, however, the ministry leaders experienced themselves as called to reflect God’s culture of peace in the space and place of the Peace Institute itself. This calling was affirmed and recognized by survivors and

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Though two (a survivor and a ministry leader who was also a survivor) did raise beliefs that there was a “purpose” or a “test” in their suffering, a larger perhaps mysterious reason that was associated for both participants with their scriptural learning.
institutional supporters alike when they found themselves drawn to the Peace Institute’s “spiritual aura.” An prophetic vision for the larger community and world cannot be realized, according to ministry leaders, if there is no peace within first, a peace that must be practiced by following the seven principles of Love, Unity, Faith, Hope, Courage, Justice, and Forgiveness – principles considered biblically based and widely applicable from both an interfaith as well as a secular perspective.

These seven principles of peace must be maintained actively as spiritual practices, preferably in and through community. Prophetic pastoral care practices engaged lifted up the importance of consistency of place and stability of culture through small communal units, such as the Holistic Healing Center, Tuesday Talk “Peace Warriors,” and the Leadership Academy. These small communal units of the Peace Institute, which crucially included ministerial leaders who ‘practiced what they preached’ as survivors themselves, were reported to hold survivors spiritually through their initial halting “movement” toward “healing” through a “kaleidoscope” of pastoral and prophetic practices. Ultimately these small communal units assisted some in “transforming pain and anger into power and action” and recognition of themselves as “experts” – into their capacity if or when ready to become prophetic peacemakers in their larger communities, Peace Warriors.

Enduring peace in the larger communities was intertwined with achieving a sense of internal spiritual peace for traumatized individuals and of individuals “being ready” to partake in prophetical pastoral care practices to receive the spiritual love and peace awaiting them. Transformation and empowerment as “experts” was not a solitary endeavor. It happened in and through spiritual discernment in these small communal units, among their peers, including
ministry leaders, who understood survivor needs from personal experiences. Such peers could “check each other with love” as a family might and there was not a need to repeat one’s stories.

Not every survivor was successful in “moving” through the structured healing processes created by these small communal spaces for “healing.” Many never claimed a “Peace Warrior” identity and continued to exhibit broken and tenuous connections. Ministry leaders respected that each person might have an unknown timetable and personal responsibility for recognizing and choosing the path of peace God is “preparing.” Formally and explicitly the Peace Institute embraced the overall ‘brokenness’ or limitations of humanity with compassion. Programmatically, ministry leaders also rejected any intent by God as having a purpose in causing suffering in survivors or as designating some of those murdered as “good” and some as “bad.” All are loved and worthy of being saved, and there is accountability for choices but not “punishment,” in most of these ministry leader and survivor images of God.

For the founding ministry leader in particular, as well as other ministry leaders who spoke in terms contrasting “spirit” and “flesh,” suffering was seen as an inevitable aspect of the finitude of the human condition (“there is a season”) as well as the God-given capacity of human free will. For this reason, community was needed to help each other achieve God’s intended peace. Ministry leaders and survivors often strongly conveyed expectations that the church and its ministers should participate prophetically in creating God’s peace as role models. They should seek humbly to learn from survivors as experts and prioritize supporting them both pastorally and prophetically. Unfortunately, this expectation often was disappointed, frequently bitterly so in survivor experiences reported. Those interviewed witnessed instead to the church and many of its ministers emulating the competitive and status seeking behaviors of the larger
culture. If the church itself could not be an emblem of peace, then alternative communal space was needed and found through the Peace Institute.

Given their experiences with the institutional church and larger society, personal wholeness was seen as complicated by an inevitable ‘brokenness’ and limitation that is part of the human condition, only compounded in the face of violence and trauma. One institutional supporter, as well as some survivors, struggled with or overtly rejected the language of “healing” – that personal wholeness could ever be associated with a closure to, and hence a felt experience of permanently moving on from, their relationship with their murdered loved one. Continuing bonds took many forms and expressions, from emotional to material and through private home altars displays to public testimony levels. The “unsayability” of trauma and the excess of desire for continued connection, viscerally experienced, would drive these material practices and their metaphoric theopoetic expressions, as well as a hope for transformation in how the heaviness of the bond might be carried.

Survivors generally struggled with the word “healing.” One told of having a permanent “open wound” and rejected the word “healing” as holding any possibility for her personally. She spoke of feeling ambiguous and rejecting toward the work of the Peace Institute, while also valuing and using their services, because she viewed its existence as normalizing the ongoing need to respond to violence and injustice – it was a perpetual reminder of the lack of wholeness in a violent and unjust world. All others found the presence of the Peace Institute to be a reminder of the wholeness and hope that might be and is possible, despite the ambivalence of the place and space of the Peace Institute holding paradoxical reminders both of the pain of violent traumatic loss along with supportive care and possibilities for growth.
Thus while even the place of the Peace Institute and its ministries, such as the Leadership Academy and “Peace Warriors,” helped to “transform pain and anger into power and action” – they became prophetic emblems of the “already here” of God’s intended peace – they also were ambiguous signs of the “not yet” of God’s peace as well. In the face of this, experientially, survivors could only experience “healing” as continuing to “move” and striving “to function” on a daily basis. The “crap” needed to be waded through to get to “healing,” according to the founding ministry leader, may well signify the need for a willingness to embrace more fully the pain and a spiritual practice of mourning along the way. Indeed, other ministry leaders as well as survivors confirmed the ambiguity and power that resided in various prophetic pastoral care practices, particularly the embodied or artistic practices. One needed to be ready in some way to reach for a different form of wholeness through these prophetic pastoral care practices, a wholeness transformed from purely personal to communal.

Specifically for the ministry leaders in their own survivor journeys, there could be no personal wholeness without social and communal wholeness. A larger social context that permits violence and injustice inevitably constrains personal wholeness and peace. Survivors implicitly confirmed this experience by speaking of being re-triggered with traumatic flashbacks each time there was a new murder and of having “1,000,001 wounded pieces” that could come loose at any moment when hit from an unexpected direction. Prophetic pastoral care practices linking the Holistic Healing Center to the Leadership Academy to the “Peace Warriors” also enabled at least some survivors to reach for new dimensions of personal and communal wholeness by working toward this larger vision of God’s peace. In the transformational journey toward this larger end, some survivors found new strength and power through their “PhD’s in
suffering,” abilities and desires they never knew they had, as well as determination to carry their continuing bond with their murdered loved one into the various embodied and material forms of expert testimony and resistance they gave in the public square, year after year.

Being Church in the Aftermath of Violent Intrusion

When communal religious space is marred by sudden violence, how is safety and sacredness reestablished? When this intrusion challenges a religious worldview, how is ambiguity in the aftermath held and negotiated? Where is religious transcendence in this process, particularly when theological diversity is present? Revelation and witness to these additional yet different questions of faith are found in the testimonies given by participants in this second case study of traumatic impact in a congregational context. For example, as might be expected in any Unitarian Universalist context, there was a wide diversity of personal theological beliefs among the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church (TVUUC) leaders interviewed, as well as Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM) leaders, ranging from explicitly theistic to panentheistic to mystical to nature-based or humanistic and all varieties possible in-between. The shared common denominator among most participants was a public commitment to their Unitarian Universalist ethical and ecclesial tradition as a way of sustaining relationships through difference and working toward a more just world, a particularly heightened commitment in the aftermath of the trauma for most survivors.

Referring often to their experiences of receiving “love” and affirmation, and to the TVUUC covenant “love is the spirit of this church, service is its law,” TVUUC leaders placed relationships and a sense of a larger unity at the center of their experience of the sacred or divine in the immediate aftermath of the trauma. This centering in spiritual love was explicitly
connected to a common mystical thread in all world religions by the TVUUC minister throughout his sermons, frequently drawing from the Sufi mystic Rumi for quotes as well as the minister’s oft-repeated definition of God: “Whenever two or more people gather together to love and support and encourage each other, there is a power greater than ourselves that can renew, restore and sustain us.”

Love is thus the source of renewal and hope, of sustenance, restoration, and service in community. UUTRM and TVUUC participant responses are consistent with understanding Unitarian Universalism as being and possessing a public theology in ethical and ecclesial practice, rather than being a theology of specific doctrines of the divine or sacred. However, despite this heritage of a common public theology focused on ethical relationships, many interview participants often shared deep frustrations with their faith tradition and its perceived limitations for prophetic pastoral care practices in the face of trauma. These frustrations and limitations centered on a sense of inadequacy in preparation for understanding and reconciling in public theology.

7There was a recognized mystical thread in the responses of some other TVUUC leaders as well as UUTRM leaders. This is not surprising and corresponds to the findings of the Commission on Appraisal report Engaging Our Theological Diversity, which found that “…58 percent of lay respondents said that they have had mystical experiences, compared to 81 percent of clergy. Most such experiences fall under the heading of natural mysticism” (79). Of the many different studies cited in this 2005 report, interview participant responses in the UUTRM case study are highly consistent in values and theological orientations with the 2005 report.

8Unitarian Universalist theology is essentially a shared anthropological and ecclesial theology, with a pneumatological underpinning in its emphasis on spiritual experiences. In other words, as a public theological practice, Unitarian Universalists recognize the limits of universal claims to know the divine and instead promise through a public affirmation of covenant to a set of ethical principles that they will journey in right relationship with each other in the search for experiences and knowledge of the divine (appendix A), experiences most often publicly named as a “Spirit of Life and Love.” A former UUA president would say the tradition “respects the mystery more” in terms of capacity to know the divine fully. William F. Schulz, “Our Faith,” in The Unitarian Universalist Pocket Guide, ed., William G. Sinkford, 4th ed. (Boston: Skinner House Books, 1993/1997/2004), 1-6. This essay on “Our Faith” survived at least three editions since 1993 (until the publication of the most recent pocket guide) as a written practice in explaining the Unitarian Universalist faith tradition to a newcomer. This covenantal promise includes obligations not only within congregations but also in the larger world or society, the latter encompassing the prophetic turn of their public theology. See also the Commission on Appraisal, Engaging Our Theological Diversity and their Interdependence: Renewing Congregational Polity (Boston: Unitarian Universalist Association, 1997) for further history and empirical data on contemporary Unitarian Universalism.
practice the negative capacities and limits of human nature with the faith tradition’s emphasis on more optimistic human possibilities for love, compassion, and progressive rational growth through justice and equality in ‘beloved community.’ This inadequacy was experienced as particularly stark when confronted with the reality of violent traumatic intrusion, loss, and human evil.

For TVUUC leaders interviewed, “evil” was experienced as a lack of human capacity for empathy or remorse that then made a person capable of a dehumanizing and hateful act. Facing an attempted mass murderer in the sacred space of their sanctuary left TVUUC congregants confused and struggling with how to respond in practice from a faith identity that affirms as a principle the worth and dignity of each person (appendix F). UUTRM leaders often were the strongest in voicing their frustration with the paucity of rituals for holding the depth and complexity of human feelings in the aftermath of trauma, when infinite human desires met the limiting realities of traumatic loss and violation and the need for healing was seen to be vast. UUTRM leaders also often were the first to creatively develop, recognize, and honor such rituals themselves, marking these at times with new theological language, such as “sacred ambiguity” and “holy humor,” as illustrated in chapter three.

Through the development of rituals and practices of sacred ambiguity or holy humor, UUTRM leaders also sought to be nuanced and sensitive in holding pastorally the paradoxes and contradictions of human experiences and emotions in the aftermath of trauma, creating healing space for the development of a sense of normality, functionality, efficacy, integration and transformation over time. For TVUUC leaders, having a leadership role to play at times assisted

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*Drawing most likely on the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s development of this term, ‘beloved community’ has become an often used phrase to describe a community striving toward justice and right relationship within Unitarian Universalism. See the Commission on Appraisal, Engaging Our Theological Diversity.*
their healing process by giving them focus and a greater sense of control in the aftermath of trauma. However, both the provision of care and the receipt of care could be marked by confusion, disorientation, fear, anger, frustration, hurt, disappointment, despair, burnout, etc. In my site visit, a TVUUC leader was observed to say in her Sunday morning pastoral prayer, that the human heart during normal times “is a mess in there.” Trauma compounds this “mess.” Rituals are needed to hold and transform both the “sacred ambiguity” of this process as well as “holy humor” when possible, releasing tension through laughter.

Such rituals included focusing on the narrative framing of the event to hold multiple stories and perspectives, as well as embodied performances marked by a theopoetics of material religion that testified to continuing communal and spiritual bonds. These practices can be seen in the TVUUC leaders’ use of this research to document materially and hold the “sacred ambiguity” of varied stories, still powerful three years afterward, as well as in one UUTRM leader’s assistance in creating a memorial in the public square in the aftermath of 9/11, a memorial that lent itself to physical touching by generations over time to hold further stories of traumatic events or anxieties in community connection. Additionally, while the intent of placing the TVUUC pastoral care office physically next to the site of the traumatic event may not have been explicit, the impact and irony of it was not lost on the pastoral care minister, with perhaps a touch of “holy humor” in the irony as well. This same pastoral care minister would see the transformative theopoetic potential and power in a bullet-ridden curtain to become “star shine” in the aftermath of the violent event.

Language of “pieces” and “wholeness” also resurfaced in this case study, not only in relationship to personal pastoral healing and wholeness but also in relationship to an expanded
sense of ecumenical and interfaith wholeness and spiritual connections. Though it might take time and be experienced in different forms, a sense of personal spiritual wholeness was seen, by at least one UUTRM leader, as always possible, even paradoxically with some pieces missing. She would hold this space of hope even for families of murdered children. Per another UUTRM leader, and in the lived experiences reported by TVUUC leaders, pieces also could come together in unexpected and surprising ways, breaking artificial barriers of “othering” in the experience of a connection across religious differences through an act of pastoral care. A broader historical and generational connection was offered also through the minister’s sermon by tying the martyrdom of the two slain to a larger narrative of Unitarian Universalist martyrs throughout time. Such martyrs served as relational images and continuing bonds of hope and inspiration on behalf of love, freedom, and justice for others in the tradition. This was reinforced through a theopoetics of material religion in a power point for newcomers that lifted up a historical Unitarian Universalist and TVUUC congregational narrative vision and in the placement of memorials and descriptive plaques within the church itself.

Ambiguity and tension points for the tradition’s core values of compassion and equality also were revealed in the weight placed on ministerial authority from the lived experience of being a “wounded healer” versus ministerial authority from the certification of professional training. One UUTRM leader referenced Unitarian ethicist James Luther Adams’ extension of Martin Luther’s concept of the “priesthood of all believers” to the radical laicism of the “prophethood of all believers” as a theological source point for reflection on the added credibility and authority that helpers with trauma history may have. Adams would say,

We have long held to the idea of the priesthood of all believers, the idea that all believers have direct access to the ultimate resources of the religious life and that every believer
has the responsibility of achieving an explicit faith for free persons. As an element of the radical laicism we need also a firm belief in the *prophethood* of all believers. The prophetic liberal church is not a church in which the prophetic function is assigned merely to the few…The prophetic liberal church is the church in which all members share the common responsibility to attempt to foresee the consequences of human behavior (both individual and institutional), with the intention of making history in place of merely being pushed around by it. (“The Prophethood of All Believers,” 112)

The source and function of ministerial authority, juxtaposed against such radical laicism and equality, is a recognized tension point within the contemporary Unitarian Universalist ethical and ecclesial tradition, including for the role of community ministry in relationship to parish ministry, a form of community ministry also represented by the UU Trauma Response Ministry. How is a commitment to compassion and equality maintained in a tradition that socioeconomically also is committed culturally to higher education and sanctification by degrees? One TVUUC leader, for example, expressed dismay that there was a lack of “humility” and insufficient “servanthood” in his experience of at least one UUTRM representative.

Reflecting some of these internal cultural tensions, an abundance of concern was expressed, particularly by several external supporters interviewed, of the need for specialized knowledge and training for ministering in the context of trauma, based both on some negative experiences with volunteers as well as on the wisdom of seeing the added value of trauma specific knowledge. Yet there also was recognition by some interviewed, including UUTRM leaders themselves, of several moderating variables operating in regards to that truth claim: (1)

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10A 2012 task force report “Task Force on Excellence in Community Ministry” by representatives from the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) and the Unitarian Universalist Society for Community Ministries (UUSCM), including this dissertation author, would affirm “the priesthood, prophethood, and pastorhood of all believers” (18) while also recognizing that there is much work to be done on institutional structures within Unitarian Universalism to more fully support community ministry in general, let alone lay community ministry. As an added note, this dissertation author began adding the term “pastorhood of all believers” to this James Luther Adams’ phrase several years ago in a Spring 2009 UUSCM newsletter entitled Crossroads. The full task force report from which the quote is drawn is available through: [http://www.uuscm.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1494278](http://www.uuscm.org/Default.aspx?pageId=1494278) (accessed February 25, 2013).
human beings are resilient and the majority will recover from trauma with no particular specialized interventions; (2) the most successful ministering and healing often occurs between peers, sometimes but not always with the assistance of a trained but humble facilitator; and (3) life experience in surviving or responding to a traumatic event, the “wounded healer” phenomenon, often can give a person ministerial authority, presence, and credibility through their foundation in compassionate shared experience, even without the formal title or credential.

The case study of the TVUUC shooting also illustrates the healing power that can be brought to bear for a congregational trauma through a response by the larger denomination – e.g. TVUUC leaders repeatedly spoke of the inspirational power of denominational leaders showing up on site, testifying and giving witness to the faith tradition. Additionally, it illustrates the tender challenges to healing when such a response collides with the cultural nuances of how a particular congregation chooses to govern itself – e.g. several TVUUC leaders experienced disappointment, anger, or confusion at points when their normal decision making modes were challenged and when they experienced a ‘failure to warn’ by their larger denomination of the severity of logistical barriers they would face. These all contributed to the “sacred ambiguity” of “being church” for many participants and to the need again for a larger visioinal narrative to hold the points of tension, hurt, and disappointment. Uniformly, participants turned to their larger legacy as Unitarian Universalists and found renewed and strengthened faith in their religious tradition, a sense of an ecclesial “we” rather than a solitary “I”.

However, TVUUC leaders, other than the minister, also experienced more limits than reality to living into a unified prophetic vision as it related to their traumatic encounter with violence. “Being church” was more easily recognized, reached for, and witnessed within the
confines of the TVUUC parish walls. This was found to be a necessary pastoral internal healing focus first, before they could live into being church as an embodied prophetic reality in the public square (or even in their backyard segregated by race and class and subject to violence, as one TVUUC leader noted). Instead, TVUUC leaders drew on their Unitarian Universalist religious narrative as a source of sustaining pastoral and congregational strength and took vicarious pride in the minister’s more visible public role as well as in the “Standing on the Side of Love” national campaign that sprang from their trauma. The larger vision of, and prophetic commitment to, a just and equal ‘beloved community’ was carried most visibly in practice by the TVUUC minister, UUTRM leaders, and the denominational leadership.

**Beginnings of an Intercultural Theological Dialogue**

In chapter one, I suggested traditional theological categories, when broadly defined, of theological anthropology, pneumatology, soteriology, and eschatology, as well as ecclesiology, might be useful for establishing an intercultural hermeneutic in partnership with a lived religion approach to trauma studies. In suggesting this, I am influenced particularly by the works of Paul Knitter, who sought to join theological studies and religious studies through examination of the “soteriocentric core”\(^\text{11}\) concerned with human well-being across religious traditions. This type of ethical focus in dialogue is consistent with my own Unitarian Universalist religious tradition’s embrace of ethical principles in covenant, including their affirmation of the worth and dignity of each person and promotion of justice. However, I also discovered in the course of listening to participants in this dissertation that an additional layer of ethical tension exists in any dialogue, particularly intercultural ones, which is the right of naming – the right of claiming the language.

\(^{11}\)Knitter, “Beyond a Mono-Religious Theological Education,” 153, 170.
that expresses one’s experiences, worth, and dignity. Valuing such a right also is not inconsistent with my own Unitarian Universalist tradition in their practice of right relationship through awareness of power relations and promotion of justice.

Thus I enter lightly and cautiously into my use of previously outlined and broadly defined categories of theology as a vehicle for translating correlations of similarity and difference between the two studies, attending to moments where something may be lost in translation. When participants are treated normatively as the primary theologians in voicing their experiences, choosing their language, and expressing themselves through their own (embodied and material) practices, then excess of metaphorical meaning in correlating similarities and differences, as well as outright troubling of theological categories in their classic metaphorical associations for such translations, may arise. Nonetheless, the extent of the contemporary practical theological problem of violence emits its own ethical call for action, interdisciplinary work, and the capacity to forge links between different communities of language and experiences. Thus I engage the risk entailed.

Sources and Language of Sustenance and Connection

While an explicit theism was central to the experience of God for LDBPI ministry leaders and survivors, and love was central to the experience of the divine or sacred for TVUUC leaders, as well as many other UUTRM participant interviews, the need for relational sustenance was an important common thread in both studies. Culturally this took the form of turning to a theistic God for support in getting out of the bed each morning, as well as to fellow survivors for solidarity and support, in the Peace Institute study. In the UUTRM study, this took the form of being inspired by the spontaneous human outpouring of communal, denominational, ecumenical,
and interfaith support. In chapter one, I broadly defined theological anthropology as ways in which finite human beings conceptualize their transcendent and immanent experience of relationship to God, or that which they call divine or sacred. I also examined social scientific literature that correlates language of physiological impact and continuing bonds for describing such embodied energetic experiences in situations of loss. For both case studies, violent traumatic loss highlighted human vulnerability and the need for others as a type of social theological anthropology, whether experienced and named pneumatologically as a sustaining relationship with God and Spirit or with the divine as mediated through human grace and love.

Additionally, the quality of this relational sustenance often was couched in immanent physical terms and embodied rituals, including ones expressing a theopoetics of material religion and an implicit pneumatology. For LDBPI survivors, God helped them physically to get out of bed, gave them signs, guided their sandplay creations, and was experienced through a “spiritual aura” at the place and space of the Peace Institute itself, as well as through survivors’ display of memorial buttons or home altars. From my initial pilot studies with young adult family members in Boston, I learned that loved ones lost through violent trauma also were felt as an ongoing visceral presence, most often when they wore memorial buttons or t-shirts with pictures of their loved one, and particularly when several of them wore them together for the same event.

Buttons were enlivened in a similar way that sandplay worlds were enlivened with the presence of their murdered loved one. When a survivor mother touches an eagle in the tray, she identifies the eagle as her son, and speaks to seeing eagles in the sky as reminding her of her son. This enlivening in turn is amplified in performative testimony with other survivors as well as with witnesses, buttons worn together with family or on the Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace
brought forth even more powerfully the still living presence of their murdered loved one. The focus on relational energy and connection conveyed through material objects, as well as the place and space of the Peace Institute, gave theopoetic witness both to God’s presence and to an implicit pneumatology of living and embodied spiritual energy as well as the usefulness of continuing bonds and relational-cultural theory in highlighting this lived religion phenomenon.

For UUTRM and TVUUC leaders, a variety of prophetic pastoral care practices expressed an expanded and embodied sense of spiritual connection and growth, physical testimonial, and material witness to the divine or sacred, named as love and grace. These included the use of metaphors by the TVUUC minister stressing physical parallels between post-traumatic growth and painful birth; innovating worship rituals such as standing on the place where a congregant was killed to distinguish it as sacred space; and additional theopoetics of material religion in marking the physical interior of the church for memorials and bullet holes as well as creating a newcomer welcoming power point that incorporated the trauma into a larger congregational and Unitarian Universalist narrative. Through these practices, the TVUUC gave theopoetic testimony to love, courage, life and hope in the aftermath of violent traumatic suffering, a testimony consciously situated in a larger narrative of being a prophetic church. Thus the experience of God or the divine often would take embodied and material form for participants in both studies, though their particular cultural religious language for that experience might differ significantly by virtue of being a Christian narrative or a Unitarian Universalist narrative in interpretation.

Both the need for relational sustenance and the shaping and marking of their physical world by participants in both case studies supported pneumatological movement as grace or
divine energy, whether culturally interpreted in source theistically or as a human movement of love. Such movement witnessed to a theological anthropology that normatively was experienced as vulnerable, social, embodied, and made creative use of material surroundings to amplify the experience of this movement, including through performance of public witness and testimony. Pneumatological movement was extended and amplified in performance not only through its human form but also through a theopoetics of material religion that blurred the lines of bodily ending and material beginning.

Troubling Healing and Wholeness in Prophetic Pastoral Care

In chapter one, my broadened definition conceptualized soteriology as concern for human well-being and flourishing, including human brokenness and wholeness. A metaphoric focus on the language of “pieces” and “wholeness” in relationship to soteriological concerns for health and healing emerged from at least some participants in each case study, but often in ways that troubled or expanded conceptions of healing and wholeness, including my own. In the LDBPI case study, there was a rejection by several participants of the language of “healing” and its soteriological association with meaning the experience of personal “wholeness.” Instead participants conveyed that the reality of what existed in the aftermath of violent trauma might be more accurately termed “pieces” and learning to “move” and “function” again. One UUTRM leader, on the other hand, used the language of “healing” and “wholeness” in an explicitly ecclesial sense rather simply for personal pastoral care.

For both studies, the turning toward others in the aftermath of traumatic shattering was consistent and heightened. Within the UUTRM case study, a UUTRM leader argued “wholeness” could be experienced on a personal level even with pieces missing due to the
resiliency of human nature. Other UUTRM and TVUUC participants experienced, at least temporarily in the immediate aftermath, a larger and unexpected ecclesial bond, love, and grace that cut across ecumenical and interfaith divides. Within the LDBPI study, recognition of and efforts to connect with the soteriological and missional potential of this larger ecclesial experience, including an interfaith experience, was perceived as necessary, propelled both by a Christian parable of “The Good Samaritan” as well as by the extent of violence in the contemporary American context and as it particularly impacted the LDBPI community.

It is interesting that both the LDBPI founding ministry leader and the TVUUC minister drew upon the parable of “The Good Samaritan,” though in different ways and from different cultural needs – one to propel outward prophetically and the other to justify a pastoral focus. The LDBPI founding ministry leader specifically conceptualized her sense of God’s call to “Christian neighbor-love” through the Good Samaritan narrative and challenged herself with the question: “Who is my neighbor?” This motivated her movement outward from purely a focus on her community of origin to work instead across lines of race and class as well as religion. The TVUUC minister drew differently upon the Good Samaritan narrative to legitimize and normalize the congregation’s need to care for its brokenness first. While he recognized that the one who had inflicted harm was also sick and in need of grace and care, he resisted various pressures “to forgive” and focus on the person who had engaged in harm, as much as this tested a faith claim to care for the worth and dignity of each person. The TVUUC minister distinguished between holding a perpetrator to “accountability” versus the granting of “cheap grace,” role modeling instead that “forgiveness has its own timetable” and the “best we can do is be open to forgiveness” while also giving priority to establishing safety and boundaries. These latter points
align with the Peace Institute ministry leaders’ formal stance that while all are worthy in God’s eyes, there is accountability in personal choices.

Both the Peace Institute founding ministry leader and the TVUUC minister would find areas of practical agreement that “forgiveness has its own timetable.” They would agree that adequate pastoral care first involves the rejection of forced forgiveness on a survivor. Instead, human finitude needs to be honored, while also holding tenderly the hope and possibility for a more embracing, inclusive love and letting go that accompanies a deeper internal peace. This included holding such hope at times through the complexity of “holy humor,” UUTRM language that also fits the experience of the Peace Institute founding ministry leader calling “forgiveness,” one of their seven principles of peace, “the ‘F’ word.” She often would laugh as she said this in various contexts, holding the fiercely defiant rage, “I am a very angry woman,” together with the soteriological possibility of a larger letting go in peace, “God’s peace”.

Ministry leaders in both case studies were particularly sensitive to the creation of pastoral care practices to hold this complex range of emotional experiences in the aftermath of trauma, to hold the tension between the reality of devastation, loss, and anger and the desire for hope and renewal, through a “kaleidoscope” of practices addressing the many “pieces”. However, for TVUUC leaders, the uniqueness of violent trauma occurring in a cultural context that typically experienced itself as sheltered and privileged led to a sense of confusion, as well as a sense of loss, for practices to grapple with human “evil.” Escalating anxiety and confusion in the aftermath meant the larger association’s prophetic commitment against the death penalty, based on an ethical commitment to promoting the worth and dignity of each person, had to be deferred for fundamental pastoral care needs first. Such an event was foreign and thoroughly disruptive
to the normal lived reality and expectations of Unitarian Universalists, as experienced by TVUUC leaders.¹²

A concern for “evil” did not tend to emerge in LDBPI survivor and ministry leader interviews, where there more often was an explicit rejection of soteriological binaries, binaries reflecting an understanding that some were innately bad and deserving of punishment while others were more worthy of life. Instead Peace Institute ministry leaders’ interpretations of their lay Christian culture, and survivor daily encounters with marginalization by race, class, and/or violence, led to more explicit and extensive connection of personal and social soteriology, particularly for survivors when educated to see these links through the Leadership Academy. For LDBPI ministry leaders, all were potentially vulnerable, though accountable to a loving God who prepared a path of grace for each, and there could be no fullness of personal salvation until all were saved in the realized eschatology of God’s peace.

While TVUUC leaders professed a Unitarian Universalist theological heritage of Universalism and universal salvation and love, in practice the need to engage others who might test such beliefs was not part of their cultural lived religious reality in quite the same way as it was for LDBPI survivors and ministry leaders. Peace Institute participants interviewed sometimes faced having a victim and perpetrator in the same family or needed to reconcile parents or siblings of both victims and survivors being the in the same survivor group with each other. A striking example is the founding ministry leader’s allowance of the mother of her son’s murderer to volunteer regularly at the Peace Institute. There were both greater opportunities and

need for ‘soteriological reckoning’ on a more personal, embodied, and ecclesial level in the cultural context of the Peace Institute than the TVUUC.

While participants in both studies demonstrated cultural awareness of the power of a theopoetics of material religion in prophetic pastoral care, the LDBPI had institutionalized this successfully in many forms through both their Holistic Healing Center’s focus on pastoral care and the arts, as well as their pastoral crisis management services provided in the immediate aftermath of the homicide, including their specific prophetic pastoral use of the funeral orders of service and memorial buttons. The institutionalization of a Holistic Healing Center also enabled LDBPI survivors to experience other embodied forms of pastoral care, such as yoga, massage, and acupuncture. Having a local ground of operation in the community enhanced the creative opportunities for a “kaleidoscope” of prophetic pastoral rituals for “healing” by LDBPI ministry leaders beyond the capacities of a nationally based organization with a limited number of ministry leaders attending to multiple sites of trauma, such as the UUTRM.

Localization also supported the LDBPI ministry leaders’ keener pastoral care awareness of the need for intense logistical support in the aftermath of trauma, including the creation of a hospital and burial guide and long-term advocacy for and education of survivors through the Leadership Academy. Nuances of cultural and practical needs in the aftermath of trauma were attended to with greater success by virtue of this localization. TVUUC leaders would critique the UUTRM for creating conflicts occasionally due to differing perceptions of cultural needs when responding to the aftermath of the trauma, as well as for a lack of warning of the need for logistical support in ongoing months. This long-term logistical support was met in part by an
ongoing UUTRM consultant but more so by the UUA’s local district staff who were more familiar with the culture and governing history of the TVUUC.

Both case studies reflected some cultural level of soteriological belief in the resiliency of human nature and its capacity to “heal” itself, including in the aftermath of trauma, but this belief was sharpest in the LDBPI study as a form of prophetic pastoral care protest that “survivors are experts” with “PhD’s in suffering” whose voices and experiences need to be heard at the highest levels of society in order to better shape policies and programs. Seeds of this belief also were explicitly present in the UUTRM study, including in relational images of the “wounded healer” and recognition of the added credibility such experiences might bring. These were heavily tempered, however, by cultural beliefs also in the value of ongoing specific professional training in trauma treatment and ministry, particularly by UUTRM external supporters who sought assurances of authority and ethical competence in UUTRM ministry leaders through such training.

This suggests that the needs of participants for “healing” in each case study might have been different by virtue of differing social experiences with marginalization or privilege. For LDBPI survivors and ministry leaders, asserting as a prophetic pastoral care practice the public identity of “survivors as experts,” including the capacity of survivors to educate themselves and others, provided a counter story to the controlling images of low-income people of color as “less than capable.” In contrast, the demand for competency and training in UUTRM leaders both reinforced the need for humility in those deemed more socially privileged while also paradoxically reinforcing that same privilege through social certification, certification that often required time and money to achieve and maintain. Paradoxically also, the hoped for result of
humility in “servanthood” by UUTRM leaders did not always play out in the pastoral experiences of some TVUUC leaders for this particular case study, though this certainly was not true of every interaction with UUTRM leaders for all TVUUC leaders, others of whom expressed very positive and overall appreciative interactions.

Finally, there were many areas of shared cultural pastoral care concerns and experiences between the two case studies. Participants in both studies stressed the importance of normalizing the full range of feelings and narratives possible in the aftermath of a traumatic event. For the LDBPI, this was accomplished by providing a range of artistic and embodied healing practices in their Holistic Healing Center. For the UUTRM, this was accomplished by honoring the arc of “sacred ambiguity,” as well as “holy humor” and paradoxes, in experiences, narratives, language, and creative practices offered in the aftermath of trauma. Ministry was experienced as providing a consistent, loving, listening presence for both case studies, and the need for self-care spiritual practices or “trauma stewardship” in sustaining leadership also was stressed and valued.

Community and Hope in Prophetic Pastoral Care

In chapter one, I had hypothesized that eschatology, broadly defined as focused on meaning-making and possibilities of hope in the aftermath of death, might be a significant theological category to examine in an intercultural dialogue on violent traumatic loss. However, ecclesiology, broadly defined as a gathering of people shaped by a faith tradition, proved more significant. Throughout both case studies, there was abundance of material relating to ecclesial cultural expectations and the experience of trauma, and ecclesial expectations often shaped expressions of realized social eschatologies. For those interviewed, there was not simply a linear progression of therapeutic care of self and body first, with movement then into community.
Instead, pastoral care of self and body happened most powerfully when intertwined with positive ecclesial experiences, particularly with a community of peers, and from there an even deeper level of communal prophetic engagement with experiences of renewal and hope seemed possible. The two case studies brought these realizations to the fore in different respects.

LDBPI survivors and ministry leaders spoke of finding more ‘therapy’ in the para-ecclesial space and place of the Peace Institute than in a traditional therapist’s office – they found more ‘healing’ (or “movement”) and empowerment through companionship with fellow survivors who shared their journey and struggles and with whom they did not have to repeat or even speak their stories. TVUUC leaders often found great solace in “being church,” in taking leadership roles connecting their story of survival to a much larger story of religious persecution and resistance for both their denomination and their specific church. Even when a greater experience of healing was found in eventually laying the burdens of leadership down, the powerful connection to a larger religious narrative and felt sense of a transcendent “we” remained for TVUUC leaders.

Of course, the probability of exposure to violence resulting in homicide was clearly a greater shared and ongoing lived reality for the racial and socioeconomic community served by the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute than for the communities generally served by the UU Trauma Response Ministry, or for the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church in particular. Ecclesial cultural expectations by LDBPI ministry leaders and survivors were created against a backdrop of living within a larger reality that constantly presented controlling media images of their oppressed status as racialized survivors and where they were also frequently served by
white middle class educated providers and subjected to a range of microaggressions\textsuperscript{13} from the very people tasked with their care. Hence a felt need for a permanent para-ecclesial institution to provide structural analysis of the root causes of such violence was also greater in the Peace Institute’s lived cultural context.

Consistently, yet only in responses by Peace Institute participants, there was an emphasis on the need for theoretical education regarding issues of systemic oppression and violence, particularly the intertwining of race, class, and gender and a public health approach to violence prevention. Only in Peace Institute participant responses was such education experienced as liberating and motivating toward dismantling structures of oppression and implementing instead an eschatological vision of a more peaceful and just community. Charles V. Gerkin’s focus on visional narrative found support in this visioning of God’s peace as well as in attention to metaphors and narratives that allowed for sources of spiritual resiliency and resistance in the prophetic pastoral care practices of the Peace Institute. Larry Kent Graham’s emphasis on the systemic analysis of structural power also was highlighted by the oppressed cultural status of the community being served by the LDBPI, a community where there is no “post” to exposure to violent trauma, let alone a “post” to trauma symptoms in the aftermath of homicide.\textsuperscript{14}

In contrast to the UUTRM case study, literature that spoke to resisting “cultural hegemony” and “controlling images” from the dominant social culture correlated more frequently with the prophetic pastoral care needs and practices expressed by Peace Institute

\textsuperscript{13}See Derald Wing Sue, \textit{Microaggressions in Everyday Life: Race, Gender, and Sexual Orientation} (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2010). Sue defines microaggressions as “brief, everyday exchanges that send denigrating messages to certain individuals because of their group membership” (xvi).

\textsuperscript{14}Drawing both on Canada, \textit{Fist, Stick, Knife, Gun} and Hertz, Prothrow-Stith, and Chery, “Homicide Survivors,” 289.
participants. There were hints of this in the UUTRM case study, primarily in the TVUUC minister’s resisting perceptions of the larger society’s controlling images of “liberals.” Nonetheless, participant responses in the TVUUC context did not draw out the fullest range of correlative possibilities to a specific anti-oppression social analysis, or metaphors reflecting a living consciousness of their existence within a dominant culture of power and privilege.\footnote{An exception being one TVUUC leader who did notice a gap between responses they received as a congregation in the aftermath of the homicides in comparison to impoverished areas of Knoxville that experienced such violence on a more ongoing basis. This observation was not more broadly engaged in analysis or action.}

However, their explicit cultural struggles with understanding an ecclesial response to “evil,” even the labeling of such as alien and “other,” supported an implicit social analysis appropriate to those living with more power and privilege and normally a wider variety of choices in protection from or response to violent traumatic intrusion.

There also was a shared cultural understanding by the TVUUC minister and LDBPI ministry leaders and survivors that personal peace and social peace are tied together. Both stressed the cultural value of teaching the young the skills of peace, but the two communities proceeded to do this task differently. Only with the LDBPI ministry did this emerge as a specific program of commitment, including their development of a peace curriculum for use in the Boston Public Schools. The UUTRM leaders did embrace a specific anti-oppression commitment to justice in their mission, and spoke of various contexts where that commitment came more explicitly to the fore.\footnote{This included trainings in which they sought to teach congregations to know the socioeconomic demographics of their communities and which populations might be most severely impacted by a natural disaster or other communal trauma. This also included references made to anti-oppression work engaged by a UUTRM leader at national conferences of trauma responders on their need for greater interfaith awareness and representation.} However, ecclesial trauma experienced by the TVUUC did not bring this intertwining of pastoral and prophetic care practices out in as dramatic a fashion as in the LDBPI study. TVUUC and UUTRM leaders primarily shared a concern for the prophetic...
pastoral care gap in their capacity to respond effectively to evil and suffering due to the paucity of UU theological resources and rituals for engagement of trauma.

While Larry Kent Graham’s illustration of the added cultural power of bringing an explicit social analysis of oppression into the provision of prophetic pastoral care is seen most clearly with the LDBPI ministry leaders and survivors, Charles V. Gerkin’s attention to the cultural power of a religious narrative to propel the same is seen clearly in both the LDBPI and the TVUUC and UUTRM case studies. Gerkin argues that a prophetic and communal social justice vision is embedded in the Christian narrative. The LDBPI ministry leaders as lay Christians culturally interpret this through a missional call to implement God’s reign of peace in both their para-ecclesial organization and in the larger community.

For TVUUC and UUTRM leaders, there was existing, or discovered, cultural power in the Unitarian Universalist public faith narrative of love and justice. The UUA associational covenant was successful in holding a diverse set of theologies in action on behalf of a more permanent interfaith and ecumenical campaign of public prophetic witness under the slogan “Standing on the Side of Love,” one inspired by the TVUUC’s response to ecclesial trauma. This narrative power also allowed the various forms of pastoral care offered to the TVUUC to be seen and interpreted as representing a larger ecclesial love. This included faith communities traditionally viewed as antithetical to Unitarian Universalist beliefs, a temporary experience of agapic love by the TVUUC and the UUTRM within the larger association and ecumenical and interfaith world.

Finally, in examining the cultural power of an explicit religious narrative, it is interesting also to note that the public embrace of a specific religious narrative in the context of the
UUTRM’s work with the TVUUC allowed the minister to consciously and deliberately place the two murdered victims into a larger Unitarian Universalist narrative of religious persecution and resistance over centuries. This occurred through his All Soul’s sermon, also recorded for posterity, as previously described. The murdered become not only remembered martyrs and saints for a larger eschatological dream of freedom and love, they also become dangerous memories of resistance that serve to embolden often mocked liberals and empower them to recognize their own capacity for resistance instead. This same theme of celebrating resistance and testifying to hope is illustrated through the former TVUUC minister recounting the history of TVUUC in the rededication ceremony as a church that has been attacked for its liberal beliefs and practices since its founding. That prophetic resistance also then is witnessed and embraced in a public national, ecumenical, and interfaith campaign of love, hope, and justice sponsored by the larger association.17

For the LDBPI, who seek to operate in secular and interfaith contexts and thus often are less public about their Christian cultural orientation, this similar theology of resistance and hope is more frequently muted and only *implicit* in their various prophetic pastoral care practices, such as the creation of their traveling wall of memorial buttons displayed at public events, including their annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace. The LDBPI is thus limited in some ways in expressing the fullest eschatological and cultural meanings that might be attached to their particular performative and commemorative practices, ones that also seek to create dangerous memories of testimony and witness to the eschatological vision of God’s peace. Ministry leaders claim the cultural power of their narrative as lay Christians internal to the organization, but also

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17It is with a certain sense of irony that this dissertation lifts up the power of disability theology metaphors while the metaphoric language of the “Standing on the Side of Love” campaign has been challenged by disability activists within the UUA precisely because of the physicality suggested by the metaphor of “standing.”
seek to build secular and interfaith coalitions through their principles of peace. However, the narrative for doing so remains thin and lacking in the full historical and multivalent metaphorical weight of a religious tradition, including the pneumatological resources for interfaith commitments within the Christian tradition.

Peace Institute ministry leader skill levels and public practices at the present time are still developing. They rely heavily on faith organizations to find them and make connections through their own traditions to shared cultural aspirations for peace, such as the Buddhist Fellowship for Peace for example. Use of principles of peace as an ethical practice by Peace Institute ministry leaders is not inconsistent with Paul Knitter’s attention to the “soteriocentric core…within all religious traditions,” as previously discussed. Such a soteriocentric core also can become the basis for shared social justice work between vastly different faith traditions. However, Peace Institute ministry leaders in dialogue with their board have yet to claim their interfaith practices more explicitly in their mission as these relate to their Christian backgrounds.

For the Peace Institute, while privately and pastorally families can include symbols of a Christian heritage in their artwork or sandplay, more explicit public connections to the peace principles as reflecting a “spiritual journey towards peace” are made primarily instead through the Peace Institute’s specialized funeral orders of service. In these, families can choose to attach Christian scriptures to specific peace principles if they so desire or reference God in their letters. While the public claiming of Christian identity for the Peace Institute itself remains concealed in these funeral orders of service, as a practice they continue to reflect the Peace Institute’s missional identity on behalf of a communal peace. The orders of service are ongoing prophetic


19See also Knitter, Introducing Theologies of Religions.
pastoral vehicles for communal education, including trauma education, and for connecting practices of personal peace with communal peace and justice, such as through their invitation to engage in personal spiritual practices, their call to action on behalf of Peace Zones, and their commitment to the Peace Prayer. The Peace Prayer explicitly connects world and communal peace with individual peace (Fig. 14).

The magnitude of violence as a contemporary problem facing the American context, and more broadly, cuts across cultural lines of race, class, and religion and does pose a prophetic challenge to all particular religious, cultural, and secular identities. How might the Peace Institute’s ministry and the problems they face pose the question: What does the fullness of God’s peace entail? Does it need to encompass a much larger vision of ecclesial and soteriological wholeness in order to address the roots of violence in the black community, as well as in other communities in the United States context? How might the work of the UUTRM push the outer dimensions of covenantal faith identity? Does covenant need to encompass a broader image of relationality to other faiths, oppressed peoples, and the world in order to address the roots of the contemporary issues of violence in the United States and beyond? What is ecclesial and soteriological wholeness for the largest possible context, while also respecting the particularity of culture and history? Are there covenantal avenues through existing religious narratives that can hold particularity and finitude as well as an expanded sense of connection, and which theological traditions point to possible constructive practical theological resources?

I, of course, ask these questions as a Unitarian Universalist in my own culturally situated ecclesial faith identity. I also am well aware of present and historical limitations in the practices of the dominant expressions of my Unitarian Universalist faith identity, particularly in bringing
The way of peace isn’t based on religion or morality. It doesn’t ask us to become saints overnight, or to renounce our feelings of anger or our thirst for revenge. What it asks for is something new: Conscious Evolution. The way of peace is love in action. Although humankind, explicitly or implicitly, seems to believe that violence is more powerful than love, this is the same as saying that death is more powerful than life. - Deepak Chopra

We are asking you to join us for any part of this spiritual journey towards peace with seven basic principles: Love, Unity, Faith, Hope, Courage, Justice & Forgiveness.

Make a commitment to focus and practice your chosen principle for one day, one week or one month. Do this with a partner, in your youth group/church group or at home, tie this purple ribbon on your car antenna & say this or any peace prayer daily.

Honor the victims, Support the survivors, Celebrate the living & Invest in the children. Let’s move from awareness to commitment to action and make every school and neighborhood a Peace Zone.

Peace Prayer

If there is to be peace in the world, There must be peace in the nations.
This I pray.

If there is to be peace in the nations, There must be peace in the cities.
This I pray.

If there is to be peace in the cities, There must be peace between neighbors.
This I pray.

If there is to be peace between neighbors, There must be peace in the home.
This I pray.

If there is to be peace in the home, There must be peace in the heart.
This I pray.

I am aware, I am committed, I will take action

Wednesday, November 21, 2007

Fig. 14. Peace Institute Funeral Order of Service, Peace Prayer. Note the call to commitment to peace with a signature, as well as a call to spiritual practices using the 7 Principles of Peace. (A picture of the lost loved one is generally included inside a purple ribbon, but this one has been covered as there is not a release from this particular child’s family.)
our ideals into grounded and rooted practice. I ask these questions also from the positions of being both a survivor of violent traumatic loss of youth of color and an ethnographic researcher observing the para-ecclesial practices of the Peace Institute in its pursuit of a more encompassing soteriological, ecclesial, and eschatological peace. A broader constructive practical theology of trauma would need to attend to such questions of universality and particularity, particularly when addressing the contemporary problem of violence and its aftermath.

What do constructive practical theologians, religious professionals and institutions, and human service providers and the larger society, learn overall through a critical, comparative, and intercultural dialogue between the results of these two case studies? What are the implications for theologies of trauma and for prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath of trauma, particularly violent trauma? What are the next steps needed in constructive practical theological research? I turn now to develop a constructive practical theology of trauma by examining current theologies of trauma, untapped theological resources, and strategic practical theological recommendations based on my two case studies of these trauma ministries.
CHAPTER FIVE

FORGING A CONSTRUCTIVE PRACTICAL THEOLOGY OF TRAUMA

In the aftermath of trauma, certain questions confront all theologies, including practical theology. Constructive theologians have engaged trauma studies, believing that it provides serious challenges to theology, with many speaking to systematic theology. James Poling’s contribution is distinctive in that he identifies his work as ‘constructive practical theology.’ How are constructive theologians, in turn, challenged by and held accountable to the empirical studies of practical theologians? I position my work here and have argued for the need to bring an intercultural analysis to our constructive practical theologies of trauma as well. More textured, complex, and nuanced experiences of trauma are highlighted by attention to culture and power. Such attention maintains a critical perspective in the ethical praxis of construction, deconstruction, and reconstruction of theologies and prophetic pastoral care practices.¹

In the previous chapters, I have called attention to the methodology of lived religion as uniquely suited for the study of trauma and have introduced resources for a constructive practical theology of prophetic pastoral responses to trauma, including the hermeneutical device I have termed a theopoetics of material religion. Beginning with the case studies in chapters two and three, I have shown that unique practices and themes arise for trauma ministries responding to violence in different communities. The intercultural dialogue in chapter four highlights that the constructive practical theological study of trauma always needs to be contextualized to the

¹In situating my work thus, I continue to operate within a Unitarian Universalist ethical and ecclesial public theological tradition that affirms the worth and dignity of each person as well as the interdependent web of existence, a tradition that has often valued lived religion approaches to research and stresses social justice concerns.
particular trauma, community, and audience being addressed. Such contextualization highlights commonalities and differences in human responses to trauma, including prophetic pastoral care responses in the aftermath of violent trauma. This chapter aims to make a contribution to a constructive practical theology of trauma, one that will require accompaniment from other constructive and practical theologians responding to prophetic pastoral care needs in the aftermath trauma.

Thus I begin this chapter with core constructive practical theological questions continued from my introduction and chapter one: How do these case studies hold current constructive theologies of trauma accountable to the experiences of those who have actually lived through violent trauma, as well as to the experiences of those who provide prophetic pastoral care to trauma survivors? How do the case studies illustrate prophetic pastoral care theology and practices that treat survivors, as well as trauma ministry leaders, as the primary theologians? How do the case studies contribute to understanding the lived context in which survivors face violent trauma by utilizing a lived religion methodology, one enhanced by trauma studies and a theopoetics of material religion? How can examination of these questions through the prior case studies begin to suggest untapped resources for constructive practical theological formulations, including prophetic pastoral care possibilities for particular communities?

This final chapter is divided into three major sections with a brief conclusion. First, I examine how the case study results challenge or support existing theologies of trauma, a critical comparison that continues to highlight the need for constructive theologians to consider a contextualized and broader range of human responses to trauma. Second, I consider untapped theological resources suggested by the significant themes of each case study, as developed
further from the intercultural dialogue in chapter four. Finally, I offer strategic practical theological recommendations for constructive practical theologians, pastoral care providers, and social and ecclesial structures. When constructive and practical theologians partner in their study of trauma, unique insights are brought to fruit for prophetically recasting our social imaginary in light of trauma, an ever pressing need as we face the future in our present realities.

**Implications for Current Constructive Theologies of Trauma**

Constructive practical theology, per Poling, asks us *to test* our theologies against the lived experiences of those about whom we theologize, or perhaps more accurately, in Anton Boisen’s pastoral theological language, to be accountable to “the living human document”\(^2\) as our primary source. Such testing and accountability includes examination for phenomenological fit or challenge of theologies given different human contexts and lived experiences. I turn here briefly to compare the case study testimonies to current constructive theological contributions that have been made in response to trauma.\(^3\) Both case studies of violent trauma, one communally based and the other congregationally based, heightened my awareness of the need for a richer range of constructive ecclesial and pneumatological theologies of trauma, ones that also could give

\(^2\)Dykstra, *Images of Pastoral Care*, chapters 1 and 2. See also Gerkin, *The Living Human Document*.

\(^3\)This dissertation will not seek to cover all possible constructive theologies that might be correlated with survivor experiences but only point to some possibly fruitful ones for theologians to continue to engage, particularly for those interested in developing constructive practical theologies of responses to trauma. Again, while I am drawing on traditional Christian theological categories in these reflections, I also hope that other religious or secular traditions may think broadly of these categories in terms of possible root linguistic and metaphoric meanings to find or create adequate translations for their own religious traditions (or even for cross-disciplinary secular work). Social scientific materials previously correlated in the case studies pointed to embodied experiences, inclusive of energetic connections and disconnections, as a metaphorical starting place for our experiences of a shared humanity in theological constructions seeking to respond to the impact of trauma.
guidance in the formation of a variety of concrete religious practices and rituals for pastoral care as well as prophetic pastoral care.⁴

The works of Shelly Rambo, Serene Jones, and Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Parker provide interesting seeds for linking spiritual sustenance and human flourishing with communal hope. When read in light of the two case studies, however, specific strengths and limits become evident.⁵ The less often referenced trauma works of Jennifer Beste and Cynthia Hess integrate soteriology and/or pneumatology with ecclesiology, though from different lens, in ways that both fit and are challenged by the lived experiences of case study participants. The works of each of these theologians could be fruitfully combined with additional untapped theological resources to deepen constructive practical theologies of trauma. Each of these theologians of trauma will provide a point of comparison to and be tested against the testimonials found in the two case studies. I engage these particular theologians as I find supportive resonances with the case studies and also for the purpose of building upon, contextualizing, and extending their work in comparison to the case studies.

Sustenance and Growth in the Aftermath of Trauma

Shelly Rambo’s Christian constructive theology of trauma speaks to the ongoing pneumatological movement of the Spirit in “witnessing” to that which remains unresolved and unresolvable in the aftermath of trauma, the middle space of Holy Saturday in the aftermath of Good Friday when the Spirit is a “sustaining power” rather than a triumphant power:

⁴As previously noted, Hudson, Congregational Trauma, provides an excellent beginning pastoral care guide to congregations in the aftermath of a variety of traumas, though her focus is not specifically on forms of prophetic pastoral care or ritual forms of a theopoetics of material religion, nor is she positioned to address constructive practical theological challenges, including intercultural contextual examples in depth.

⁵Beste, God and the Victim; Hess, Sites of Violence, Sites of Grace; Rambo, Spirit and Trauma; Jones, Trauma and Grace; and Brock and Parker, Proverbs of Ashes.
The challenge in addressing trauma is to continually resist the temptation to cover over – to elide – the suffering in an effort to witness it. The challenge is to attend to the ways in which violence continues to mark persons and communities long after the violent event. This work of resisting and attending is the work of the Spirit. The work of the Spirit is often cast in terms of a forward movement – as a drive to life, and as the re-creative and renewing force of God. But a theology of the Spirit, as I develop it here, is less clearly the life principle and more a sustaining power that continually witnesses the ruptures, moving between death and life…This is not new and victorious life. It is more uncertain, tentative, and murky. (13)

This “uncertain, tentative, and murky” movement of the Spirit fits with the pneumatological experiences of sustenance, as well as images of God, described by the Peace Institute survivors interviewed – God is experienced as a mysterious and sustaining force in their lives, one without whom they would not be able to get up and function in the aftermath of the murders of their sons, as tentative as that functioning still remained in simply “moving.” “To witness this sacred story is also to receive it for the truth that it tells: love remains, and we are love’s witnesses…an image of fragile remaining, of love’s persistence…”6 Peace Institute ministry leaders spoke of their work in terms of family and love, as a prophetic calling from God to a ministry of love and commitment and justice. Survivors testified to the capacity of Peace Institute ministry leaders to be with them through their many challenges and range of feelings, being available for drop-in’s and for phone calls where tears ran freely, and they were held with compassionate understanding. They did not need “to be” any particular way when they walked through the Peace Institute doors.

Peace Institute survivor practices, however, also testified to the persistence and continuing bond of their love through a theopoetics of material religion – through personal altars in their homes and memorial buttons and t-shirts worn continuously or for public testimonial

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events, such as witnessed by this researcher at the annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace as well as the Boston city council hearing. The personal and communal strength and empowerment that can come from a performative theopoetics of material religion and its amplification of the ability to testify in the public square, particularly when sustained by ecclesial support, is not witnessed or emphasized in Rambo’s work. In her important corrective to a Christian Easter-centered narrative of triumphalism in survival, Rambo instead sees more fragility in the sustaining power of the Spirit of Holy Saturday, a haunting remainder of love, and the lingering of fragments rather than resilience and post-traumatic growth.

Rambo’s pneumatological focus, and indeed her own prophetic contribution, speaks to a Christian audience privileged from a normalization of seeing and celebrating only redemptive triumph, Easter’s resurrection, in traumatic survival. Rambo rightfully challenges how that lens can blind us to the long hard process of Holy Saturday in the aftermath of Good Friday. This results in Rambo’s ability to witness certain important phenomena well, including the “1,000,001 wounded pieces” of individual survivors, yet also miss the depth of other phenomena in the experience of and responses to trauma. Building on Rambo’s work, the lingering and painful scars of death are witnessed and not elided in this case study, yet how do we account for the emergence of “Peace Warriors” as well? The pneumatology of a range of phenomenological responses to trauma are left “largely untheologized”

7 in Rambo’s work, including a performative theopoetics of material religion as seen in memorial buttons and t-shirts, orders of funeral services, and “Peaceville” that serve to amplify the testimony of survivors in the public square.

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7Ibid., 7, a play on Rambo’s own use of this language.
In the Unitarian Universalist tradition, the pneumatological language of “spirit,” as derived from the Jewish and Christian traditions, is retained but metaphorically separated from Trinitarian doctrine to focus instead on a “Spirit of Life” and a “Spirit of Love.” Both the tentative persistence of love remaining and the fierce resistance of love witnessing and testifying are illustrated and claimed as pastoral and prophetic care phenomena within the UUTRM case study and the Unitarian Universalist tradition. The TVUUC minister was well aware, through his own use of self in sermons, of the tentative steps of his own healing process and of his need for grace and pastoral support. Yet he also bore fierce witness through the theopoetic material testimony of his recorded sermons, writings, and participation in a Bill Moyers Journal episode to the power of grace as love pastorally and prophetically surmounting a violent attack on his congregation and religion. A constructive practical theology of trauma must account for the full range of soteriological responses, including sources of resilience and resistance born even amidst the devastation, destruction, and tentative signs of life still stirring amidst death.

This problematic narrowing of the lens for trauma phenomena also can be seen in the work of another major constructive theologian of trauma, Serene Jones. Her constructive Christian theology of trauma focuses more directly on the personal experience of soteriology and grace, struggling with her Reformed Calvinist rootedness in the grace and sin narrative and with her own barely acknowledged history as a trauma survivor of reproductive loss in her text.⁸

⁸There is a sense in Jones’ deeply personal reflections in this particular monograph of “theological poems” (vii) that she struggles with a need for grace to be larger than, and to always in some way surmount, the experience of trauma and death. If Jones was open to attending to and respecting survivors as primary theologians in a constructive practical theological methodology of lived religion, then Jones also would need to be fully open to and embracing of survivors who find no hope and no sense of grace in their traumatic loss – that would include within the Reformed tradition. In other words, the range of phenomenal experiences in the aftermath of trauma can include suicidal despair, rage, revenge, empty survival, resilience, and post-traumatic growth. Accounting for such a range of human possibilities is why a full constructive practical theology of trauma is a difficult project for any religious tradition, and why each tradition needs to be mined for a range of resources, including possible insights across
Jones’ theological focus thus becomes even more deeply individualized rather than ecclesial, though her integration of grace and mourning is applicable to some Peace Institute survivor and TVUUC leader experiences. Without the ability to fully mourn, Jones argues, the trauma victim remains shut down to and shut off from being present to life. The Peace Institute founding ministry leader would say, the survivor needs to wade through some “crap” to get to “healing.” Grace also was language that was brought by the TVUUC minister to naming the ecclesial experiences of being helped by others in the aftermath of the shooting, and he would encourage his congregants to be open and vulnerable to receiving such grace through his own role modeling. With an openness and vulnerability to mourning, the full range of feelings, including the capacity to wonder and thus to love and be loved, is restored.

This is the essence of being able to experience God’s grace again for Jones – who comes also not to a triumphantly restorative grace but one that is still “larger than the lives of those who never recovered” and that still remains available, “more scrappy and ambiguous” as well as “gentle and embracing,” though also a grace that is ‘radically other.’ It is the case that Peace Institute survivors interviewed did experience God as remaining available as a presence in their lives despite their traumatic losses. It is not clear that their experience was of a ‘radically other’ God – this God was so personal as to help them get out of the bed in the morning, facilitate a relative bringing coffee just when needed, and could be experienced as a sustaining power in the beauty of creation or worship. In Peace Institute survivor testimonies, this God was revealed to be much more immanently and pneumatologically available on a daily basis.

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9Jones, *Trauma and Grace*, 157.

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religious traditions. This dissertation can only begin to point to the limits of some of this range in current theological efforts.
Jones is noteworthy, however, for her turn to actual bodily practices, such as yoga and acupuncture – “liturgies of flesh”\textsuperscript{10} – at the end of her work. She points to the bodily woundedness of the trauma survivor as a barrier to the experience of grace and makes a significant contribution by arguing that survivors need to mourn, particularly through liturgical bodily practices, to be able to experience grace again. Both the turn toward the body and recognition of the need to mourn in order to experience God’s grace fit with some survivor experiences of the “kaleidoscopic” range of pastoral care practices at the Peace Institute’s Holistic Healing Center, including the introduction of massage, acupuncture, and yoga into their practices. A focus on the need to attend to bodily healing also was stressed by the TVUUC minister in his sermons, as well as by one other TVUUC leader interviewed who yearned for the UUTRM to have provided more time to engage such bodily practices.

Jones also came to recognize that the experience of grace needed to be felt as not intrusive for survivors of trauma, that they needed to have some control, since intrusive grace also “replicates the experience of being battered, violated, and made helpless in the grasp of a more powerful force.”\textsuperscript{11} This aspect of Jones’ work also correlates with the ambivalent feelings expressed by some survivors, both in using the power of these Peace Institute artistic and bodily practices to embrace their pain and loss more fully and also in choosing to moderate their engagement with these practices at times. A Peace Institute ministry leader would say: “even for those that have fully recognized their trauma, there is always something left” and embodied and

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{10}Ibid., 156.

\footnotesize\textsuperscript{11}Ibid.
artistic practices are needed but on a self-chosen basis because powerful “revelations take place in that activity.”

The implications of Jones’ pastoral conclusions, in turning toward bodily practices and emphasizing the need for choice and the need to mourn, are left largely undrawn for prophetic pastoral care and ecclesial practices, however. This includes implications for public rituals of the church or community, with the exception of Jones touching lightly on this area in her second chapter when speaking to the need for “collective imagination”\(^{12}\) by the church in providing opportunities for victims to tell their stories and be witnessed. What remains is a highly individualized pastoral focus upon the solitary trauma victim in Jones’ constructive theology of trauma by the end of her text, which does not correlate well to the passionate ecclesial desires expressed by Peace Institute survivors, nor to the sustenance and inspiration drawn by TVUUC leaders from their congregational and UU historical and visional narrative as well as from the embrace of the larger Unitarian Universalist, ecumenical, and interfaith communities.

Finally Rita Nakashima Brock and Rebecca Ann Parker’s early work in the field of trauma studies deserves further review.\(^{13}\) They too are survivors, speaking from their respective experiences of violent trauma, racism, and sexism, though now writing as feminist theologians, a move perhaps reflecting “post-traumatic growth” and deserving of respectful and careful attention through that lens. In some ways, Brock and Parker provide a link between the works of Jones and Rambo, hinting at but not fully developing the imperative for healing in community through a sustaining and witnessing Spirit that might also be called Grace but which they call “Presence”:

\(^{12}\)Ibid., 31.

\(^{13}\)Brock and Parker, Proverbs of Ashes.
Violence bleeds through a lifetime. Nothing will return life to a time when violence was absent...Presence burns fiercely, but Presence cannot override the decisions of perpetrators of violence...To know that the presence of God endures through violence is to know life holds more than its destruction. The power of life is strong. Salvation is sometimes possible. Salvation begins with the courage of witnesses whose gaze is steady...Violence is illuminated by insistent exposure. Steady witnesses end the hidden life of violence by bringing it to public attention...Salvation requires love...Salvation also requires mourning...Mourning deepens reverence for what is precious, what is already destroyed, what must be embraced with fierce determination, abiding faithfulness. Those who cannot grieve fail to recognize when life is at risk. (248-250)

In these words, and building on the works of Jones and Rambo as well as the voices and context of Peace Institute survivors first, I hear the hints of how the pastoral and the prophetic might be linked contextually in the aftermath of trauma if survivors are able to experience post-traumatic growth and a fuller experience of “God’s peace” through an ecclesial and personal reality. Brock and Parker, as I attend to their voices through the lens of “survivors as experts” and thus as primary theologians, testify to the reality of violence and death as well as to life and the need for public witnesses (note their plural frame). As survivors, they claim both love and mourning as necessary for salvation. The ministry leaders and survivors of the Peace Institute also make similar claims and engage in an explicit range of prophetic pastoral care practices reflecting the need to confront and mourn a specific loss, but also to witness and give testimony to the persistence and continuing bonds of love, to what remains, as Rambo argues. This is the pneumatological sustaining presence of God for Peace Institute survivors, even in the smallest of human details and material theopoetics, through the aftermath of violent death. This is not a triumphant love that wipes away the tears, as both Jones and Rambo acknowledge, but it can be a fierce love, dovetailing with the experiences of Brock and Parker, when survivors recognize more fully “what is already destroyed” and choose nonetheless to protest, resist, and fight for a different world.
A similar though different movement happens in the UUTRM case study when the “Standing on the Side of Love” national public campaign evolves from the traumatic experience of embracing the attack on the TVUUC as an attack on the religious tradition as a whole. A fierce resistance is claimed in the public square, at least by the national association and with vicarious pride taken by the TVUUC. I read and hear the possibility of such fierceness through Brock and Parker’s writing, as well as the Peace Warriors and the UU national ecclesial response – a fierceness I do not see captured in Rambo or Jones’ work as a phenomenological possibility. This capacity for resilience and resistance, particularly through ecclesial and prophetic pastoral care practices, is a highly muted phenomenal element in the works of Jones and Rambo.

Their larger project, in part and with varying degrees of explicitness, is to challenge Christian redemptive triumphalism, and they speak primarily to an audience who has benefited from, or seeks to benefit from, the attendant project of Christian empire. Yet this capacity for resilience and resistance does need constructive practical theological attention. These two case studies draw from two very different socioeconomic and demographic populations, with varied experiences in relationship to a narrative of Christian redemptive triumphalism being their core concern in the face of violent trauma. This is not to deny the significance of this narrative in any particular community, including within similar socioeconomic and demographic populations, but these case studies point to the limitations of focusing solely upon this narrative when providing prophetic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma.

14 Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, makes this connection to the Christian legacies of colonialism, power, and control more explicitly in her use of the works of Catherine Keller, *Face of the Deep: A Theology of Becoming* (New York: Routledge, 2003) and Sharon V. Betcher, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2007). Jones’ *Trauma and Grace* is a more implicit and undeveloped critique as she struggles with also muting her search for redemptive grace in the aftermath of trauma within her theological poems.
Intertwining Soteriology and Ecclesiology in the Aftermath of Trauma

As previously indicated, Beste and Hess are less referenced in the field of trauma and theology, but they have made specific and significant links in their respective projects to the Christian narrative, ethics, and ecclesiology for the theological engagement of trauma. They are interesting to reexamine in light of the centrality of communal bonds for both of these case studies. Drawing upon a revision to Rahnerian theology as her methodology in considering the experiences of incest survivors, Beste seeks to shift the locus of human freedom and mediated grace from the wounded victim to the caretakers – those who provide a relational context for the victim’s healing, “grace as mediated through supportive relationships.”\(^{15}\) She argues, in a move with implications for a social theological anthropology and ecclesiology, that trauma impairs the individual human capacity to experience and freely respond to God’s grace, hence the need for grace as mediated through caretakers. “Trauma survivors’ experiences strongly suggest that God may have ordered creation and redemption in such a way that God depends on the cooperation of other persons’ free choices to love their neighbors for mediating divine grace,”\(^{16}\) specifically arguing further that “the *quality* of the relationship matters [emphasis Beste’s].”\(^{17}\) This aspect of Beste’s argument is partially underdeveloped in her text, raising the question of *how* does the quality of the relationship make a difference? What types of quality makes a difference?

Beste then explores the prophetic ethical and ecclesial implications of her revised Rahnerian theology in fostering “new responsibilities for Christian neighbor-love”\(^{18}\) and “further

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\(^{15}\) Beste, *God and the Victim*, 101.

\(^{16}\) Ibid., 101.

\(^{17}\) Ibid., 103.

\(^{18}\) Ibid., 111.
responsibilities for Christian communities,”19 inclusive of the transformation of beliefs and practices to foster such grace. She outlines specific components for the creation of safe space and addressing past injustices in Christian communities. First is the transformation of beliefs promoted through the use of Christian texts that “justify and legitimate patriarchal beliefs and practices that implicitly or even explicitly sanction violence against women and children.”20 Second is the need for the church, through radical self-reflection and commitment, to develop practices that both prevent future abuse and address past abuse in the church, including a range of liturgical rituals as well as pastoral advocates to accompany and support incest survivors.21

Here is where more specific work is needed in partnership with practical theological research and a constructive practical theological method that attends to intercultural dynamics. Beste clearly outlines some crucial prophetic ethical steps needed in an ecclesial context to support and protect trauma survivors, attending particularly to incest survivors in her studies. The intercultural results of these two case studies of survivors of violent trauma, however, suggest that there may be additional contextual variables to consider, such as shared social location and, to a certain degree, shared life experiences. These variables bear on the quality of any particular prophetic pastoral care relationship and can enhance the ability to receive “grace” as mediated through that particular relationship, as affirmed by survivors in both case studies.

Building on Beste’s work, I argue that the sense of God’s spirit moving through the para-ecclesial space and place of the Peace Institute might be conceptualized as God’s grace mediated

19Ibid., 112.
20Ibid. 116.
21Beste draws upon Keshegegian’s Redeeming Memories, for some support in stressing the need for Christian communities to listen to and affirm victims of trauma through liturgical ritual. There is some parallel to Jones’ underdeveloped call here for the church to assist victims in sharing their stories.
through its ministry leaders, culture, and prophetic pastoral care practices, accounting for the reported experiences of a “spiritual aura” there. The quality of the mediation also was reported by Peace Institute survivors to be linked to the status of the ministry leaders as fellow survivors. This suggests an added level of nuance to Beste’s work. The connective quality of the mediation of grace may be enhanced in certain contexts by perceiving the caretaker’s status as a “wounded healer,” in Henri Nouwen’s language.\textsuperscript{22} The TVUUC minister also frequently acknowledged himself publicly as a recipient of divine and human grace in a communal context. He stated that he needed this grace to be able to heal in the aftermath, urging his congregants to “give in to” such grace when found or made available through the many who offered different healing services. He role modeled through his sermons his own status as a “wounded healer.” Specific or indirect language of “wounded healer” surfaced also in references by both one TVUUC church leader and one UUTRM leader. For the former, a wound could give one a deeper insight into and preparation for human limits and capacities, and for the latter, surviving a similar experience of trauma could give a caretaker added “credibility” and a greater capacity to normalize experiences in the aftermath.

Building further on Beste’s work, I argue God’s grace – or divine and human grace – is experienced as mediated through a theopoetics of material religion as well. Not only is grace mediated through human caretakers, particularly when in an ecclesial relationship, grace also is mediated through \textit{material} forms of testimony to continuing bonds and communal visions of hope, peace, love, freedom, and justice. In the Peace Institute case study in particular, these eschatological and communal visions of peace are expressed through their artistic prophetic pastoral care practices and find their way into the public square, especially as seen in the State

\textsuperscript{22}Dykstra, \textit{Images of Pastoral Care}, chapter 7.
House exhibit of “Peaceville” and their annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace with displays of buttons and banners. Beste calls for Christian communities to develop liturgical rituals and pastoral advocates for the support of survivors, and these case studies may assist her in her task by providing concrete examples of how a theopoetics of material religion and other prophetic pastoral care practices can assist in the empowerment and transformation of survivors.

Turning finally to Cynthia Hess, she draws upon and re-conceptualizes the work of John Howard Yoder by constructing an argument that the Christian narrative not only calls Christians to work on external peace and nonviolence, this narrative also calls upon Christians to engage peace and nonviolence internally through their hearts and the ecclesial spaces of their churches. She recognizes that Christians are also shaped by a larger culture of violence and that this has obvious implications for the various failures of the church to support victims of violent trauma adequately, even though churches sometimes do provide such support successfully. Hess draws upon three ecclesial aspects of Yoder’s emphasis in the Christian narrative as important resources for creating a healing community for survivors of violent trauma: (1) “the church as voluntary community”; (2) “the church as egalitarian community”; and (3) “the church as witnessing community.”

Similar to Beste, however, Hess’ constructive ecclesial theology of trauma could benefit a practical theological study that gives concrete examples illustrating para-ecclesial and ecclesial practices and lived experiences.

As the Christian narrative is formative and guiding for the ministry leaders of the Peace Institute, it is not surprising to find resonances from Hess’ work in their specific prophetic pastoral care practices. This includes their emphasis on outreach and choice rather than forced participation, their emphasis on egalitarian relations and recognition of survivors as experts, and

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their stress on the need to witness to a culture of peace, both internally through their own spiritual practices and externally through their various prophetic practices. These communal witnessing practices included their annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace as well as their advocacy with providers and the local government, and their various forms of theopoetic material witness and testimony, such as the specialized orders of funeral service and the memorial button wall. Clearly Hess’ work also has important resonances with the experiences of Peace Institute survivors for whom the institutional “church” often re-inscribed their experiences of loss and trauma. This drove survivors to find peace instead in the para-ecclesial space created by the Peace Institute, a space in which ministry leaders sought to practice and role model the spiritual peace they preached to the larger community.

Shifting to the UUTRM case study in comparison with Hess’ work, while the Unitarian Universalist tradition represents a consolidation of two Christian traditions, the Christian narrative is no longer central to the public shape of its theology. However, its Protestant form of congregational governance and theological stress on voluntary ecclesial covenant within congregations and among congregations nationally do continue to shape deeply and influence the tradition in practice. In the UUTRM case study, this can be seen in the various tension points over egalitarian relations, including ministerial vs. lay authority and between congregational control and conflicting perceptions of UUTRM authority. The role of the church as witness also is more strongly taken up on the national than the congregational level through the public witnessing campaign “Standing on the Side of Love.”

Thus Hess’ observations of these three aspects of the Christian narrative still may find an expanded metaphoric usefulness and integration with the Unitarian Universalist tradition when it
faces ecclesial trauma. General practical theological questions are raised, however, for faith traditions and their polity structures given the UUTRM case study results. How might attention to choice, equality, and witness be important to foreground in working with survivors, while also recognizing the challenges posed by an immediate crisis to reestablish control and safety first through hierarchy and authority? Are there ecclesial rituals that can honor and hold the sacred ambiguity of these tensions and needs? The second case study points to practical experiences, tension points, and potential guidelines in these areas, but further practical theological research for different contexts, including different religious traditions governed by congregational polity, or other forms of polity, appears needed to examine how visional narratives play out through particular institutional structures of power and practices.

Through the contributions of each of the above current constructive theologies of trauma – Rambo, Jones, Beste, and Hess – the multifaceted “pieces” and soteriological possibilities in the aftermath of trauma are both hinted at and experienced. More practical theological research also is needed into the various phenomenological and religious responses possible for different socioeconomic and demographic communities to contextualize and broaden our constructive theologies of trauma more richly and deeply, as the current case studies have demonstrated their limited yet particular contribution in intercultural dialogue. Not all traumas may be assumed to be the same. For example, examining the experiences of homicide survivors, incest survivors, and survivors of natural disasters, each of whom may experience the trauma in differing socioeconomic and demographic contexts, may yield a different range of prophetic pastoral care practices in the aftermath when studied. Without further empirical study, it is difficult to make generalizations. However, the current case studies suggest a range of untapped theological
resources that might be brought to bear for this constructive task in partnership with further practical theological research and lived religion case studies of particular communities. I turn to examine these now.

**Untapped Resources for a Constructive Practical Theology of Trauma**

As I point toward methods for forging a constructive practical theology of trauma, several untapped theological resources clearly are suggested by and correlated with both case studies, highlighting necessary dimensions as case study results intertwined the relationship between forms of sustenance, human well-being and flourishing, and communal hope in the aftermath of trauma. I begin with Sharon Welch’s “theology of resistance and hope”\(^{24}\) as the joining of her work to a theopoetics of material religion assists in this highlighting and intertwining. I first read Johann Baptist Metz’ term “dangerous memories”\(^{25}\) through the work of Sharon Welch. While Metz particularly drew on the Christian tradition in his use of this term, I agree with Welch that “dangerous memories” also has expanded metaphoric power generally for any communities of resistance. “Dangerous memories fund a community’s sense of dignity; they inspire and empower those who challenge oppression. Dangerous memories are a people’s history of resistance and struggle, of dignity and transcendence in the face of oppression.”\(^{26}\) They are the basis of theologies of hope and resistance as well as joy and celebration.

Through a variety of narrative forms and performative works of art in Peace Institute survivor and ministry leader practices, surviving families of homicide bear dangerous memories


\(^{26}\)Ibid., 154-155.
of their continuing bond with the dead. Their practices bear a theopoetics of testimony and witness in material expressions to the perseverance of their love and commitment and their call for communal justice and peace. Both memorial buttons and sandplay practices particularly demonstrated the pneumatological power of these practices in chapter two. Material culture became laden with and enlivened by experiencing and imparting an embodied spiritual energy of ongoing connection, one traced explicitly at times to God as well as to the felt presence of their lost loved one. For survivors, this was a material and viscerally felt extension outward representing the traumatic wound of their severed bond, yet testifying paradoxically to an ongoing felt immanence to the bond before witnesses and the community as well. This included, for those who were enabled to take this step, prophetic resistance through public testimony to the “demonic hegemony”\(^{27}\) of structural forces of oppression in their communities, demands for accountability and justice, and a moral summons to “God’s peace” and a new social imaginary. Examples, among many that have been discussed and depicted in chapter two, and developed further in chapter four, included wearing or carrying their pictured loved one in public City Council testimonies, in visiting with the governor’s office and financial foundations, through the traveling memorial wall of buttons, and on the streets during the annual Mothers’ Day Walk for Peace. This also was demonstrated through the public exhibition of their surviving children’s material creation of “Peaceville” for the Massachusetts State House.

While more muted in the UUTRM case study, “dangerous memories” of prophetic testimony and resistance also can be seen in material expression through TVUUC’s newcomer power point, CD of the TVUUC minister’s sermons, and memorials within the congregation, as well as the national “Standing on the Side of Love” campaign – all of which were connected

\(^{27}\) Graham, *Care of Persons, Care of World*, 138.
explicitly to a larger Unitarian Universalist religious narrative of historical resistance and martyrdom, also as discussed in chapter three and developed further in chapter four. Examining closely the plaque in memory of Greg McKendry in the TVUUC fellowship hall (Fig. 15), one reads for the last line: “Greg McKendry’s love of life and impulse for service inspire everyone who enters this place of fellowship.” Greg McKendry’s painting gives theopoetic witness to a fierce desire for his presence to be felt as an ongoing point of inspiration to love and service, core values in the narrative of the faith tradition. Similarly Linda Lee Kraeger’s painting and memorial plaque renaming the TVUUC library in her honor bears ongoing theopoetic witness to the faith tradition’s value of reason, learning, and the search for truth and meaning (appendix A). The implicit message is that lives which embody these values and this faith tradition will always remain and continue to testify to new generations.

Second, I call attention to Nancy Pineda-Madrid’s proposal of a “social-suffering hermeneutic.”28 In her study of the murders of countless women and girls in a border city of Mexico and her re-envisioning of theologies of atonement, Pineda-Madrid also supports that there is no personal salvation without social salvation, a social salvation born of communal resistance. A social-suffering hermeneutic recognizes the importance of “naming the experience of suffering;” “the presence of interests in naming our suffering;” “the interplay between societal problems and personal suffering;” and the ways in which “cultural representations and symbols mediate the construction of social and self-identity” and hence expressions of suffering.29


Fig. 15. *Greg McKendry Fellowship Hall Memorial.* The size of the painting and its relative dominance in the fellowship hall is interesting to note given the largeness of his spirit by TVUUC leader reports.
This hermeneutic is consistent with the relational-cultural and narrative therapy tools previously correlated to an expanded lived religion methodology, as well as with the theological experience of social suffering implicit in many of the Peace Institute survivor responses in particular and their turn to prophetic pastoral care and anti-oppression education provided through the Peace Institute’s Leadership Academy. Do survivors have the right to name their suffering, including rejecting language such as “healing,” and speak for themselves as experts? Or is their suffering only to be represented by social others with institutional power? Pineda-Madrid challenges theologians, who gets to speak for the survivor and for what purpose? Where does the theological authority lie?

Third, I call attention to Dale Andrews’ “covenant model of [black] ecclesiology.” Andrews’ studies of the perceived “chasm” between the Black Church and Black theology led him to identify two different streams of faith identity within the black ecclesial context – that of refuge and that of liberation. By offering a faith identity and paradigm of “covenant,” and drawing upon Charles V. Gerkin’s practical theological focus on narrative, Andrews hopes to “reorient this relationship between the pastoral and the prophetic” as a biblical “people of God” away from the individualism of a self-fulfillment ethic and personhood back toward a “historical

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30 The same ethical question is posed continually to myself by myself, hence again the priority I strive to give to the voices of survivors in this dissertation and further ethical accountability in giving a copy of the dissertation back to all interviewed as well.


32 Ibid., 90.

33 RCT language might term these ‘faith images’ in correlation with Andrew’s language.

34 Ibid., 89.

35 Ibid., 90.
communal narrative of shared suffering” and peoplehood.\textsuperscript{36} In this paradigm of faith identity, care of self would be intimately tied to care of others and the world, as Larry Kent Graham might argue, and covenant would require “a strong mutuality between existential liberation and spiritual liberation.”\textsuperscript{37}

Andrews’ work leads me to examine how this ecclesial reshaping and intertwining of the pastoral and the prophetic is actually accomplished through the practices of a para-ecclesial organization serving those who claim identities as “survivors” and/or “Peace Warriors” in the black community. Given that the practices of the Peace Institute also reflect an often disappointed ‘yearned for’ in the practices of the institutional Black Church by survivors and ministry leaders alike in their responses, I wonder if the empirical example of the Peace Institute’s work may assist Andrews in illustrating his project. For survivors of homicide, their covenantal expectations of adequate pastoral care (refuge) is deeply intertwined with the expectation of prophetic leadership within the church on behalf peace in the community beyond the church walls (liberation). The Peace Institute draws on a shared narrative of survivors as experts, with “PhD’s in suffering,” who have a prophetic role to play in their lay Christian narrative and tradition – one in which personal soteriological and ecclesial soteriological wholeness are deeply intertwined in an eschatological vision of “God’s peace.”

Fourth, I draw attention back to undeveloped components of the pneumatological works of Christian process theologian Catherine Keller. Such components hint of ways to re-envision a social theological anthropology and pneumatology with an expanded ecclesial theology of

\textsuperscript{36}Ibid., 97.

\textsuperscript{37}Graham, \textit{Care of Persons, Care of World}, 103.
trauma that are consistent again with participant experiences of the intertwining of sustenance, human flourishing and communal hope.\textsuperscript{38} Keller is known for the complexity and deconstructive challenges of her process theological thinking, re-constructing in ways that enable multiplicities and ambiguities to be held more deeply, and one might say sacrdly. A UUTRM leader spoke of the need for Unitarian Universalists to be able to experience and be with mystery and awe more easily, that this is an underdeveloped practice within the tradition, particularly in the face of traumatic impact and loss of control.\textsuperscript{39} This mystery is the very place that Keller sits most easily with in her works, which, in practice, are experienced as poetry as often as theology for their reader, hence theopoetically.

For example, in a contribution with ecclesial implications for intercultural and pneumatological constructive practical theologies of violent trauma in contexts of privilege versus oppression, Keller also turns to the metaphorical power and language of spirit and love as she considers issues of justice. She references the false dichotomy of eros and agape in the work of expanding our connections across relational barriers, which, I argue based on participant experiences across both case studies, would include barriers of race, class, and religion:\textsuperscript{40}

\begin{quote}
Without the persistent stretch of our relationality there is \textit{no sustainable motion from eros to justice}. It is not a matter of shifting from love into justice, like changing gears, but
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{38} Rambo, \textit{Spirit and Trauma}, has also called attention to the usefulness of Keller’s pneumatological work for theologies of trauma, particularly Keller’s attention to spirit as providing “oscillatory witness” (127) for the phenomena of trauma’s disruption of linear narrative and progress. I am stressing the usefulness of Keller’s theopoetic work also for expanding an ecclesial theology of trauma.

\textsuperscript{39} This struggle has deep roots in Unitarian Universalism as a liberal religious theological tradition, as has been argued by the 20\textsuperscript{th} century Unitarian ethicist and ecclesial theologian, James Luther Adams. See in particular “The Changing Reputation of Human Nature,” in \textit{The Essential James Luther Adams: Selected Essays and Addresses}, edited by George K. Beach (Boston: Beacon Press, 1998), 51-78 (1941).

\textsuperscript{40} James Luther Adams also argued for the importance of attention to the varieties of language for “God is Love” in an essay of the same title in \textit{An Examined Faith: Social Context and Religious Commitment}, edited by George K. Beach (Boston: Beacon Press, 1991), 213-219 (1947).
rather of *letting passion grow into the justice of com/passion*. For this reason, I keep the slash in the word – as soon as I take it out, the passion seems to drain away. For it is precisely not a matter of replacing our passions with a tepid concern for others, but of letting our passions grow. It is not a matter of diminishing eros but of enlarging its perspective. (*On The Mystery*, 115)

Participants in both case studies struggled with the crossing of barriers, inclusive of race, class, and religion. The Peace Institute founding ministry leader often faced a daily public reality of violence in her community. She needed to draw upon her Christian tradition and the compassion reflected in the narrative of “The Good Samaritan” to “stretch” her “relationality” across these boundaries on behalf of a larger “perspective” of justice. In contrast, the TVUUC minister drew upon the same parable to provide moral authorization for an inward focus rather than being morally expected to give to others out of their normally experienced social location of privilege. The experience of violent trauma, let alone other forms of social oppression and injustice, is recognized to be less of a daily reality among the members of Unitarian Universalist congregations than among communities oppressed by race and class.41 The African American UUTRM institutional supporter who was a former UUA president would say that Unitarian Universalists generally experienced “a blessing and a curse” in living with privilege and being “insulated from what is normal life for many people.”42

Returning momentarily to social ethicist, Sharon Welch, who is also a Unitarian Universalist, Keller’s words above parallel Welch’s advice to those with privilege to stretch their

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41Subdominant cultural communities within the Unitarian Universalist association of congregations are often organized into smaller national para-ecclesial communities as a strategy of resistance and transformation within the larger dominant culture of the UUA. An example is the UU people of color organization, Diverse Revolutionary Unitarian Universalist Multicultural Ministries (DRUUMM).

42It is important to recognize that not all individual Unitarian Universalists are white, nor are all middle or upper class in socioeconomic status. It is the case that the majority of those interviewed for the UUTRM case study fell into these categories, which does reflect the dominant culture of the UUA and its congregations.
relationality. Welch speaks to a liberal religious middle-class people striving to be in right relationship with oppressed communities, oppressed communities that sometimes find resiliency and a way through in the face of trauma: “Middle-class people can sustain work for justice when empowered by love for those who are oppressed. Such love is far more energizing than guilt, duty, or self-sacrifice…Solidarity does not require self-sacrifice but an enlargement of the self to include community with others.”

Keller would agree with Welch that learning and growing occurs through compassionate relationships. Yet for TVUUC leaders, this enlargement of self paradoxically was experienced through the unexpected sacrifice of others for the sake of their care. TVUUC’s sociocultural insulation created a deepened sense of shock and reported need to turn inward and focus on pastoral care in the aftermath of their violent trauma. However, participant reports were consistent that they were surprised by and drew spiritual sustenance and growth from being embraced and supported in their pastoral care by an expanded ecclesial community. This included not only care from their own denomination, but also, more surprisingly for participants, care across ecumenical and interfaith divides – from the bringing of food to the scrubbing of bathrooms. In the aftermath of trauma, the TVUUC was perceived as an oppressed community in need of solidarity across such divides, at least temporarily. This sustenance was named as love, grace, and pieces being made unexpectedly whole.

Yet the work of sustaining risk in crossing boundaries, in stretching relationality through the movement of spirit and love, is seen to be hard in both case studies – more often there is a yearning for control and stability, particularly in the face of trauma or cross-cultural interactions

43Welch, Feminist Ethic of Risk, 162.
that challenge fundamental cultural worldviews. Peace Institute ministry leaders needed to maintain rigorous attention to their 7 Principles of Peace to cultivate inward peace in the face of ongoing oppression. They also prioritized survivor needs for self-care first in their empowerment process, including the degree to which any ministry leader or survivor pushed themselves to engage in artistic and bodily “healing” practices. For TVUUC leaders, the ecumenical and interfaith amity appeared to fade, and, apart from the national Standing on the Side of Love campaign, their prophetic social justice work directly related to violent trauma was perceived as inconsistent. This included the perception that their experience with violent trauma did not result in any natural joining of solidarity with other neighboring communities oppressed by race, class, or violence. “Getting back to normal” marked their internal pastoral care focus.

These case study results support Keller’s observations that embodied desire in the form of eros is passionate, messy, complex, conflictual, as well as “sticky,” and normally requires social structures capable of flexibility and responsiveness. This includes the ecclesial structures of the church, “for even in our smallest communities, the many desires come into contradiction,” as was seen particularly in the TVUUC debate regarding the death penalty.

Finding a unified prophetic vision and voice can be challenging in any context. In the aftermath of trauma, this search also requires an agapic “wisdom” that is “caring” and “nonjudgmental,” that is culturally humble in essence, to work in pastoral partnership with eros on behalf of prophetic social justice and across boundaries of race, class, and religion through ecclesial or

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45 Ibid., 120.
46 Ibid., 129.
para-ecclesial structures. Through these observations in correlation to participant reports, Keller’s work yields additional untapped potential for linking pneumatology and ecclesiology in theologies of trauma with patient prophetic pastoral care processes.

Linking Trauma and Disability Theologies

Finally, I argue for the usefulness of examining the literature on disability and theology in greater depth as an untapped resource for constructive practical theologies of trauma. Participants generally spoke of ambivalent responses to, and sometimes rejected, the word “healing.” Peace Institute survivor and ministry leader spoke of “pieces” – of having “1,000,001 wounded pieces” and of needing a “kaleidoscope” of prophetic pastoral care practices to hold the myriad pieces. Homicide survivor expressions of physicality to their emotional wounds in the severing of their bonds with their murdered loved ones, and of the viscerally felt presence remaining as well through material expressions, including memorial buttons. Each of these first suggested that reconsideration of normalized soteriological language of “healing” and “wholeness” was an important theological task. This was further reinforced when the language of “wholeness” and “pieces” re-emerged in the UUTRM case study as well, not only in relationship to personal pastoral healing and wholeness but also in relationship to an expanded sense of ecclesial wholeness and spiritual connections. An ecclesial wholeness that had been experienced as irretrievably severed by core value differences was witnessed to come together in new and surprising ways through practices of giving and receiving pastoral care. Normative understandings of “wholeness” have been a central concern and challenge of disability theologies, and these have implications for a broader use in trauma theologies.47

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47 Again, the field of disability and theology is vast and growing rapidly. This dissertation can only begin to point to some veins of usefulness in this material.
Nancy Eiesland was the earliest Christian theologian to develop more fully a theology of the “disabled God” through the symbol of the wounds of Jesus Christ’s body, pointing to the performative power of this symbol and its “physicality” for purposes of theological contextualization as well as for challenging socially constructed ideas of wholeness and the ‘normal body.’ She argued instead that,

…embodiment is a social accomplishment, achieved through attentiveness to the needs, limits, and bounty of the body in relation to others. It recognizes that limits are real human facts and that heroism cannot eliminate some limits. It encompasses the recognition that disability does not mean incomplete and that difference is not dangerous… This notion differs significantly from those understandings of embodiment that relate to ideas about normality and naturalness. (47-48)

Eiesland also summarized the complexities entailed in the right to name one’s wound in the disability rights field: “…the act of naming someone or something grants the namer power over the named. Historically, rather than naming ourselves, the disabled have been named by medical and scientific professionals or by people who denied our full right of personhood.” There are parallels in this literature to experiences expressed by survivors in the first case study.

Responses of Peace Institute survivors of homicide suggest a physicality to their losses, a lost bonding that literally impacts on their physical ability to get up and function each day without the intervention of God’s grace and spirit by their reports. This felt physicality to their loss is similar to those reported in neuroaffective grief studies, including that of the “lost limb”

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49 Ibid., 102.

50 Ibid., 25.
phenomenon. Yet survivors often rejected “healing” as meaning an elimination of their pain and a restoration to wholeness and closure, as though their understanding of the classical meanings of “healing” and “wholeness” would entail accepting their traumatic loss. Such an implication was experienced as disruptive to their lives, lacked authenticity, and created resistance to a perceived permanent elimination of their bond with their child. As previously stated, in the aftermath of the murder of their child, there were no adequate soteriological words for them to express their experiences.

Sharon Betcher, in a work primarily of deconstruction, utilizes many postcolonial and poststructuralist writers to deconstruct the binary “hermeneutic of brokenness versus wholeness” throughout the Western theological and philosophical tradition. She attempts a limited theological reconstruction through her argument of Spirit “on the slant,” rather than Spirit as an agent of “Final Perfection.” Betcher writes: “…deconstructing the binary of wholeness/brokenness is an attempt to decolonize Spirit…to decolonize how Spirit has been conceptualized as agent of the final perfection, as salvific solvent erasing the material effects of cosmic devolution.”

For Betcher, it is crucial to free metaphorical conceptions of the Spirit in the Christian tradition from images of perfection, including bodily perfection, where such conceptions of

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51 These results also dovetailed with young adult reports in my pilot studies of experiencing a greater visceral presence of their loved ones when wearing memorial buttons and t-shirts.

52 Betcher, Spirit and the Politics of Disablement.

53 Ibid., vii.

54 Ibid., 3. Betcher never refers to the work of Eiesland in her own work, only making careful distinction that her’s would not be a “disability theology of liberation” (6).

55 Ibid., 37.
wholeness imply freedom from chaos, risk, impurity, limits, wounds, or suffering – a “freedom” that ultimately comes at political costs by normalizing empire and colonialism in history. Betcher’s critique, while focused primarily in implications for political theology, partially dovetails with the work of continuing bonds theorists who challenge the Western psychoanalytic tradition’s tendency to pathologize ongoing attachment in the face of loss, suffering, and the experience of a wound through severing. They argue instead that the anthropological norm across cultures is in fact for continuing bonds of attachment despite loss or death. The desire of homicide survivors to continue this bond through many different forms of practice, as well as through their claiming of their own language for their process, is viewed as normal not pathological through the lens of continuing bonds theorists. Homicide survivors’ fierce resistance to being pathologized represents a resilient “Spirit on the slant” in operation – an act of resistance to with institutional power who might categorize and classify them.

Listening for the emergence of such a “Spirit on the slant” becomes an important prophetic pastoral care practice.

Building on the work of Eiesland and his lived experience of having a child with disabilities, Thomas Reynolds also revisited the concept of wholeness and normality in relation to disability in the Christian tradition. His radical constructive move, however, was first to

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56 Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, also notes the usefulness of Sharon Betcher’s work (147) but does not develop this point in relationship to a larger body of work in the field of disability and theology, particularly the usefulness of these disability theologies for constructive theologies of trauma.

57 Reynolds, Thomas E. *Vulnerable Communion: A Theology of Disability and Hospitality* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2009). I am particularly grateful to a TVUUC leader who called my attention to this book via an email he sent to me after our interview. Reynolds theologizes as a Christian in his approach, yet his fundamental observations of the human condition have metaphoric potential across religious traditions. Note also that Betcher’s work, *Spirit and the Politics of Disablement*, is not referenced by Reynolds and they appear to be writing in similar time frames.
ground disability as the theological anthropological norm – the metaphorical norm of
“vulnerable personhood” that finds wholeness only in ecclesial community, community that is always subject to “vulnerable communion” through risking love and relationship:

Disability is not something less than normal, an inferior or broken nature. Disabled and non-disabled people do not count as two exclusive categories of human beings. All people are linked indissolubly, sharing a fundamental condition: vulnerable personhood. Precisely this kind of vision is obscured if we privilege individual autonomy and the productive imperative. For human being is primarily a “being with,” a coesse (together being). Our existence as persons emerges in the presence of others. We are inherently relational creatures who need each other to become ourselves. That is, we are unfinished and deficient unto ourselves…Seen in this light, disability is no fringe issue. Through it emerges a more holistic picture of what it means to be a person. (105)

The experience of violent traumatic loss heightens recognition of human vulnerability – both the emotional need for others in community (communion) as well as the interdependent nature of community (communion) in creating and fostering peace and resiliency. For example, Peace Institute ministry leaders and survivors expressed passionate eschatological hopes for the fullness of God’s peace in their community and the broader society. This personal soteriological hope was tied to an ecclesial hope for and realization of peace. It also was tied to the breaking of the binary of “good” people vs. “bad” people, that some were more “innocent” and thus more deserving of life than others. Examining the second case study, while there is “simplicity” to human needs spoken of by a UUTRM leader, there is also great complexity evident in human relational bonding. The experience of rupturing in the communion with others creates the possibility for traumatic pain and a felt physicality to this pain, as neurophysiological studies have indicated.58 Social pain and physical pain are located in the same area of the brain, which

58Relational-cultural studies draw specific attention to the integration of their focus on the pain of psychic disconnection and neurological studies of the brain: “Eisenberger and Lieberman (2003) noted that social pain, exclusion, and the anticipation of exclusion register in the same area of the brain as physical pain, the anterior cingulate (ACC). The ACC has the highest density of opioid receptors in the entire central nervous system; opioids
can result in physical manifestations for connectional stress and disruption. This includes when the TVUUC minister spoke of the “molting” of his hands under the traumatic stress of his leadership role in the aftermath and other TVUUC leaders spoke of experiencing various somatic symptoms as well.

While Reynolds does not specifically turn to pneumatology and a language of spirit until the very end of his text, he does devote significant material to the experiences of love and grace in communion, and this language correlates well with the pneumatological focus on God as a sustaining presence in the lives of Peace Institute survivors. Reynold’s language also dovetails in metaphorical expansion with both UUTRM and TVUUC participant responses. Indeed, the TVUUC minister emphasized love and grace in his sermons, while the “Standing on the Side of Love” campaign marked a prophetic public turn in witnessing to this need by the larger Unitarian Universalist Association. “Love up close is the path to human wholeness,” Reynolds would write, and hence a source of resiliency as well. Through these two case studies, personhood is demonstrated to be vulnerable and communion creates not only vulnerability to such pain, but also a bridge to paths of healing, resilience, and growth through communion as well, the development of a sense of “we” that transcends the isolation of “self,” whether this was the “we” of being “Peace Warriors” or the “we” of claiming more proudly and assuredly a heretical religious identity as Unitarian Universalists.

are released upon social contact, decreasing both physical and social pain. The body and its nervous system hold the truth: We need relationships…RCT posits that we need social connection throughout the life span, and the neurological research is supporting this claim,” Jordan, *Relational-Cultural Therapy*, 74. Lewis, et al., *A General Theory of Love*, posited the same as referenced in chapter one.

Finally, building on Thomas Reynolds’ work in disability theology, among several others, Deborah Beth Creamer proposes “an understanding of limits that more positively connotes a quality of being”\textsuperscript{60} in theological anthropology. In other words, to posit limits to human being is not to evaluate any particular limit as inherently positive or negative. Limits, including limits created from the experience of trauma, are morally neutral as a “quality of being” inherent in the risks of finite human being. Depending on the context and culture, any particular human being can experience a limit as either important in their life, possibly even as a benefit enabling different perspectives or new connective narratives to emerge, or as a negative and only to be survived and surmounted if at all possible.

Such a contextualized approach to reactions to the “limit” or wound posed by trauma is also consistent with the varied cross-cultural reactions to and associations for the use of the language of “healing” in both case studies. TVUUC leaders struggled hesitantly with meanings for “healing,” reaching for a sense of “normalcy” again and a sense of control gained from being in a leadership position where they could help others. Peace Institute survivors rejected any conception of “healing” that suggested closure to their loss – an “open wound” that maintained their connection to their lost loved one was preferable and necessary in their experience, rather than psychotropic medication and therapeutic efforts to eliminate their suffering. While Peace Institute ministry leaders were comfortable with using the word “healing,” including claiming it through their “Holistic Healing Center,” all recognized a need to distinguish a different cultural

\textsuperscript{60}Deborah Beth Creamer, \textit{Disability and Christian Theology: Embodied Limits and Constructive Possibilities} (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 93. Creamer also highlights the influence of Sharon Welch on her approach to contextualization and Welch’s cautions around giving innate epistemological privilege to any single category of experience, including disability, without a fuller conversation with multiple experiences and knowing that all experience is shaped socially. A perspective and language I add to this is that while any one individual’s experience may be oppressed in one category of experience, they also may carry experiences of privilege in other categories. Attending to such issues of intersectionality are important.
use for the term. There was a need not to associate “healing” with a permanent disconnect from their lost loved one. Instead language associated with “movement” emerged, movement that might eventually point to other possibilities for “transforming pain and anger into power and action.” Culturally, for TVUUC leaders, there was a hope for going back to a prior state of normalcy before the trauma and its aftermath, nonetheless the story of the trauma still needed to be preserved though transformed into a story of resistance and incorporated into a larger congregational and UU narrative of resistance and hope.

Culturally contextual reactions to trauma also are consistent with differing survivor experiences of the possibility of post-traumatic growth versus needing simply to overcome, accept, and live with the traumatic experience. As seen in both case studies, a range of reactions is possible in the aftermath trauma, and a fuller constructive practical theology of trauma needs to account for these phenomenological differences in interpretation through intercultural dialogue. Prophetic pastoral care practices also need to be fine tuned to recognize this range. These needs are driven not from the value of cross-cultural interactions alone but from the lived realities even within particular religious traditions and communal settings of cultural differences by race, class, gender, and ability. Peace Institute ministry leaders would term this as a need for a “kaleidoscope” of practices, and some TVUUC leaders would yearn for a deeper sensitivity to this need in UUTRM practices, particularly for embodied and contemplative practices reflecting different cultural styles in recovery.

For both case studies, despite their overt cultural differences, recognition of vulnerable personhood heightened awareness of the need for pastoral communion with a higher power as God’s Spirit or a Spirit of Life and Love as well as with a larger human community – relational
sustenance through vulnerable communion was needed in the face of trauma, and this sustenance could foster resiliency and growth. For some participants in both case studies, this awareness and connection also became vehicles for growth in political consciousness, connection to a larger religious and social narrative, and prophetic action. As highlighted by an intercultural dialogue, responses to the “limit” of exposure to violent trauma were different based on cultural and personal backgrounds, yet there was a commonality to the search for relational sustenance.

I argue that the concepts highlighted above from theologies of disability reflect experiences of participants in both case studies and become additional untapped and underdeveloped theological resources for constructive practical theologies of trauma, including for recasting a prophetic social imaginary. Human vulnerability in personhood and relationship is highlighted across various spectrums by the experience of trauma and also are seen to be the norm of an embodied and social human nature rather than a fall from some mythical wholeness or perfection. Metaphors drawn from disability studies, such as vulnerable personhood and vulnerable communion, thus become more appropriate starting places for theological dialogue about various experiences of trauma.

They become so by pointing to the breaking of binaries often institutionalized in religious and medical structures of power, including for trauma survivors, and by re-conceptualizing soteriological hope and wholeness. For Betcher, this hope lies in the prophetic disruptive relationship of Spirit to colonial and capitalistic cultural hegemony – performed and witnessed on the slant, including family survivors of homicide and social oppression marching for peace in the streets of Boston. For Reynolds, this hope lies in the reimagining of wholeness as an ecclesial community, as a vulnerable communion of vulnerable personhood – including a
prophetic national ecumenical and interfaith campaign, “Standing on the Side of Love,” growing in scope from its beginnings in a violent congregational tragedy. Such a community encompasses all as vulnerable as a theological norm, not merely in the face of trauma, and in need of love and wholeness “even with some pieces missing.” Autonomous and perfectible human beings, as well as the judgment of some as normal and belonging with others as abnormal and stigmatized, are witnessed to be social constructions and fantasies.

**Strategic Practical Theological Recommendations**

I offer this summary below as beginning “strategic practical theological recommendations” for constructive practical theologians, pastoral care providers, and social and ecclesial institutions. I sought overall to contribute to a lived religion methodology for case studies of ministerial responses in the aftermath of trauma. Such case studies begin to point toward core questions and issues for forging a constructive practical theology of trauma, one that seeks to engage a critical, comparative, and intercultural approach where those who have experienced trauma, or who serve survivors, are treated as the primary theologians. Through such an approach, I have sought to explore survivor reports of effective practices of prophetic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma. I also have sought to test various theologies of trauma for phenomenological fit or challenge with survivor experiences, holding these accountable to survivor experiences and language and also expanding theological resources for constructive practical theologies of trauma in light of these experiences. I highlight learnings and recommendations from the results of this dissertation below by way of summary, as well as suggestions and questions for future research. I conclude with further brief comments as we face the future in our present realities.
Recommendations to Constructive Practical Theologians

There is a need for further congregational and community case studies, inclusive of community-based para-ecclesial ministries, to study the cross-cultural range of possible trauma responses, not only to violent trauma but also to other forms of trauma. A lived religion approach for such case studies is fruitful, particularly when appropriate methodological tools for the study of trauma are engaged. This study has suggested the usefulness of a variety of social science and theological conceptual tools for correlation to the lived experiences of trauma survivors, including prophetic pastoral care, neuroaffective trauma studies (particularly continuing bonds literature), relational-cultural theory, narrative theory, and a theopoetics of material religion. Additional tools and methods are needed to attend more adequately to phenomena that arise in the face of cultural oppressions, inclusive of the need for intercultural dialogue across lines of difference by race, class, gender, ability, and religion among others.

This study drew from relational-cultural, narrative, and critical race theories to highlight some of these intercultural factors between the two case studies, with a particular focus on race, class, and religion.

Use of the above tools and methods can assist the constructive practical theologian to ground or hold accountable constructive theologies of trauma in and to the lived religious realities and practices of survivors of trauma, as well as the trauma ministries that serve them. Results of these two case studies suggest the added untapped usefulness of several constructive and practical theologies as a starting place not only for reframing conceptions of theological anthropology but also for attending to the soteriological and ecclesial dimensions of traumatic impact and prophetic pastoral care. These included Welch’s “theology of resistance and hope”
and use of Metz’ concept of “dangerous memories” in conjunction with a theopoetics of material religion; Pineda-Madrid’s “social-suffering hermeneutic;” Andrew’s reflections on ecclesiology and the black church; ecclesial implications in Keller’s theopoetic pneumatology; and various disability theologies in particular. Attention also to a performative theopoetics of material religion and pneumatology, linked to disability and ecclesial theologies, heightens awareness of how our material life can become a sacred extension and amplification of human being, particularly when performed prophetically in community. Case studies such as these remind us that we also are in vulnerable communion with our material world, dependent on it and strengthened by it for the shape and place of our cultural and spiritual lives. This includes the visceral energy we impart to the material in giving theopoetic testimony to the ongoing living presence of those lost to violence, as well as to the deepest desires, dreams, hopes, and visions of community.

**Recommendations to Pastoral Care Providers**

There are many practical dimensions to the provision of pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma that have been previously studied and also re-affirmed in the course of this dissertation. This dissertation has sought to highlight the possibilities of a *prophetic* dimension to pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma, one that holds the larger society accountable to a different communal vision through its practices, and of the need for pastoral care providers to understand the varieties of systemic levels of power analysis in alliance with and empowerment of survivors toward that vision. Prophetic pastoral care, as developed historically by Charles Gerkin and

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61See again Hudson, *Congregational Trauma*, where she lays out a range of practical tips from the need for specific information, agencies that help in particular contexts, Christian worship suggestions, and tips for working with the media among others. Many of these tips and strategies were employed in the provision of basic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma for both case studies.
Larry Kent Graham, can deepen attention to the powerful visioning role of narrative in a religious tradition, as well as to the contexts in which a specific anti-oppression analysis and spiritual practices emerge as crucial partners for implementing that narrative vision of prophetic pastoral care.

Attention to structural analyses of oppression has the potential also to yield insight into the different constructive practical theological questions and pastoral care needs raised in the aftermath of trauma for particular cultural groups. For example, an intercultural dialogue between the results of the case studies highlighted that the soteriological struggles, language, and practices may be different for those who normally experience power and privilege versus those who live daily with oppression when they are exposed to trauma. There is a need for further studies that illuminate spiritual practices, both personal and ecclesial, that assist in affirming and normalizing the lived experiences of survivors of trauma in different cultural contexts, inclusive of contexts of power and privilege versus oppression. Such studies would examine effective prophetic pastoral care practices that facilitate “movement” through the tentative and fierce terrain of survival in the aftermath of loss for these particular contexts, as well as practices that hold hope for the possibilities of post-traumatic growth.

These two particular case studies also highlighted the need for pastoral care providers to be sensitive to language and the experience of cultural oppression, particularly the use of the language of “healing” and “wholeness” and how different survivors might react to implicit dominant cultural associations for those terms. Pastoral care providers are urged to maintain a stance of humility and learning from survivors, accompaniment in solidarity rather than imposing expectations of particular theological resolutions – this request was heard from
survivors in both case studies. In particular, the Peace Institute case study of survivors living in a communal context of ongoing oppression calls prophetic pastoral care providers to respect the wisdom survivors as experts have to offer caretakers, including for social and religious programs and policies, and to become supportive allies to their empowerment.

Recommendations for Social and Ecclesial Structures

This dissertation also highlights the importance of localization of religious trauma response to assist in the development of time, energy, and resources for greater creative capacity and cultural sensitivity in diverse spiritual practices, as well as for consistency in meeting practical logistical needs and preventing leadership burnout for the long run. This recommendation was highlighted as much by the success of the Peace Institute’s para-ecclesial grounding through place and space in community as by the frustrations signaled by TVUUC leaders with the limitations of continuity of care by a national trauma response team. Both case studies demonstrated that organized local and secular trauma responses do exist through local mental health agencies and local deployment by the Red Cross. However, the Peace Institute case study highlighted the cultural preference of several survivors in their particular community for more peer led interventions than solely professional mental health interventions.

The UUTRM case study highlighted TVUUC leaders’ preference for their UUA local district office’s ongoing assistance and greater personal knowledge of the history and governing culture of their congregation. It is also the case, according to one UUTRM leader with experience on a federal disaster level of religious trauma response, that while many denominations have disaster response ministries for large-scale disasters, the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry was the only trauma response ministry of its kind that
focused solely on intra-denominational traumas of large or small scale. To have a dedicated team of religious professionals within a denomination does represent a significant step toward some level of localization, even with this dissertation’s recommendation to localize further social and religious structural responses to trauma. The lack of this in many denominations, along with the struggles of the UUTRM itself to contextualize their local trauma responses, suggests that there is an underdeveloped area for attention to governance and practical training for religious institutions generally, including for congregations and their various denominational affiliations. An expanded development and networking of survivor or trauma response ministries on the local level, including as attached to congregations or regions, would enhance overall capacities and general education, including a grounded local commitment to fundraising that might encompass traumatic disaster response beyond responses to violence alone.

However, responses needed to trauma often exceed the capacity of religious institutions solely. The larger vision of the Peace Institute encompassed a broad social vision to develop “Peace Zones” and institutional peace centers in every major city where “all stakeholders” can come together, victim and perpetrator as well as providers, to cultivate educational practices and models of peace. The scope of this vision was witnessed in the Boston City Council hearing through both the range of providers addressed as well as the specific recommendations made. The range of providers impacting the lives of homicide survivors included the police department, district attorney offices, hospitals, emergency medical services, public schools, government, grief and trauma services, and the media. A small sample of many concrete recommendations included increasing funding for grief counselors and the defraying of burial costs for those who cannot pay; allow families to ride in the ambulance or get to get police escort if they cannot;
improve hospital response and sensitivity to family members as well as follow-up with
services; have trauma response teams available in all schools; require trauma training for all
school staff; increase the number of bereavement days after loss of an immediate family
member; improve gun control laws; ensure the media notifies families before publishing
information and that they are accountable for the accuracy of information published; and develop
a pre-release victim/offender dialogue program with also increased support for young men with
criminal records.\textsuperscript{62} The contemporary practical theological problem of violent trauma demands
response and accountability beyond the resources of religious institutions alone. Social and
religious institutions must work in partnership at local levels.

**Facing the Future in Our Present Realities**

In forging a constructive practical theology of trauma by studying the prophetic pastoral
care practices of two trauma ministries, I use the term ‘forging’ to mean moving forward slowly
but consistently. The sheer diversity of human experiences may demand a constructive practical
theology of trauma, as explored through these case studies of violent trauma, which is never
finished and operates instead as a continually expanding “kaleidoscope.” Such a kaleidoscopic
constructive practical theology of trauma would demand more empirical studies of communities.
It also would seek intercultural dialogue between the studies, to witness to and link together the
myriad theological and phenomenological “pieces” and contribute to the theological task of
human and planetary flourishing. While particular religious traditions may have an internally
shared narrative vision, fulfillment of that vision is impacted by cultural oppressions, particularly
race and class. This has implications for contextualizing prophetic pastoral care.

\textsuperscript{62}See Report of the Committee on Women & Healthy Communities to Members of the Boston City Council, entire.
A broader and fuller constructive practical theological dialogue is needed between empirical studies of prophetic pastoral care for communal trauma, including violent trauma, and various existing theologies of trauma. Revelations witnessed through the testimonies of these case studies demonstrate three dimensions for further investigation. First, both case studies witness to a re-conception of the linkages between theological anthropology, soteriology, pneumatology, and ecclesiology, linkages that demonstrate the body and personhood to be not only vulnerable and energetically permeable, but also relational, resilient, and sustained through continuing neuroaffective and ecclesial bonds, this despite having wounded or missing pieces.

Second, the Peace Institute case study witnesses to the soteriological, pneumatological, and prophetic ecclesial role survivors can play when “Spirit on the slant” creates conditions for their often oppressed though resilient voices and lived experiences to be heard and amplified, such as in the Boston City Council hearing. Both case studies also witness to the same possibility through a performative theopoetics of material religion that manifests as living spiritual energy imparted to the material, amplifying and expressing continuing bonds between the living and dead.

Third, both case studies witness to the power of an intercultural dialogue to reveal similarities and differences in forms of spiritual sustenance, language, and ecclesial and eschatological practices and visions. Shared in their two visions, violent relations are addressed and all are loved and worthy of grace, with their own timetable to be respected in responding to trauma. Yet in their different lived experiences of trauma, oppression, and privilege, the Peace Institute’s practices consistently reflect awareness of the larger systems of power impacting the oppression of all, while the UUTRM and TVUCC practices reflect a more consistent concern
with the spiritual and pastoral rupture caused by traumatic suffering. The case studies revealed these cultural dimensions of similarity and difference for these two communities. Constructive practical theologians would benefit from using lived religion methods for trauma highlighted in this study, including a theopoetics of material religion, to forge studies of other communities and their forms of spiritual sustenance, experiences of human well-being and flourishing, and communal bonds.

Immersion with survivors of violent trauma, and the ministries who serve them, teaches me there is a crucial need for the impact of trauma to be taken seriously as a constructive and practical theological problem. While my particular concern has been with prophetic pastoral care responses in the aftermath of violent trauma, a UUTRM institutional supporter who also served as a UUA district executive stressed that congregations and communities also face increased vulnerability to trauma from natural disasters due to climate change. If “com/passion” does not lead us naturally to the “sticky” work of justice on behalf of those we “other” by virtue of race, class, or religion, as well as other oppressions, then possibly the shared traumatic impact of natural disasters and climate change may eventually do so. We will either walk willingly toward the development of a shared public prophetic religious voice in the face of violent trauma, or be forced to do so by ecological circumstances that confront both our vulnerable personhood as well as our vulnerable communion with each other in ways beyond violent trauma alone.
APPENDIX A

Unitarian Universalist Association Principles and Purposes

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote

- The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
- Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
- Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
- A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
- The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
- The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
- Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.

The living tradition which we share draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world’s religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God’s love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit.
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.

Grateful for the religious pluralism which enriches and ennobles our faith, we are inspired to deepen our understanding and expand our vision. As free congregations we enter into this covenant, promising to one another our mutual trust and support.
The Purposes of the Unitarian Universalist Association

The Unitarian Universalist Association shall devote its resources to and exercise its corporate powers for religious, educational and humanitarian purposes. The primary purpose of the Association is to serve the needs of its member congregations, organize new congregations, extend and strengthen Unitarian Universalist institutions and implement its principles.

The Association declares and affirms its special responsibility, and that of its member congregations and organizations, to promote the full participation of persons in all of its and their activities and in the full range of human endeavor without regard to race, ethnicity, gender, disability, affectional or sexual orientation, age, language, citizenship status, economic status, or national origin and without requiring adherence to any particular interpretation of religion or to any particular religious belief or creed.

Nothing herein shall be deemed to infringe upon the individual freedom of belief which is inherent in the Universalist and Unitarian heritages or to conflict with any statement of purpose, covenant, or bond of union used by any congregation unless such is used as a creedal test.
Interview Guides: The Louis D. Brown Peace Institute

Interview Guide for Founder/Staff/Leaders of the Peace Institute

Historical/Background Information
Tell me your understanding of how the Peace Institute came to be created and organized.

What is your understanding of the mission of the Peace Institute?

What role do you play (or have you played) in the Peace Institute and how did you come to work here? In what ways, if any, have you shaped the formation and services of the Peace Institute?

What are the different activities, services, or programs offered by the Peace Institute? Please describe the elements of each as specifically as you can.

Have these changed or evolved since the Peace Institute’s founding? If so, why in your understanding?

Healing/Spiritual/Religious/Faith Experiences and Practices
What does healing from traumatic loss through violence mean to you – what is involved or possible? Which activities, services, or programs of the Peace Institute have you found most valuable in contributing to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have you found any of these to be valuable for community or public healing as well? What about these contributes to healing, do you think?

Within Peace Institute services or programs, have there been specific spiritual, religious, or faith language or activities that have contributed to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have these contributed to community or public healing as well? How so in your experience? Do you think of the Peace Institute as a ministry? Why or why not?

Relationship to Other Religious or Social Institutions/Communities
Are there ways in which the church, or religious communities in general, provide support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? In what ways do you think the church, or religious communities in general, can better support survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Is the Peace Institute involved in educating the church, or religious communities, on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response?
Are there ways in which the broader community or society provide institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? In what ways do you think the broader community or society can provide better institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Is the Peace Institute involved in educating the broader community or society on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response?

**Concluding Questions**

What challenges, if any, has or does the Peace Institute face in fulfilling its mission? Have these changed over time? How does the staff of the Peace Institute create support for themselves in light of these challenges? What are the different activities in which you engage personally and/or together? How did you come to do these particular activities?

What is your larger hope or vision for the Peace Institute, if any?

Are there any other comments you would like to make or materials you would like to share to help others understand the needs of survivors of traumatic loss through violence?

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**Interview Guide for Survivors Utilizing Peace Institute Services**

**Historical/Background Information**

How did you come to know about the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and come to believe you should use their services?

Tell me about the loss of your loved one and your initial involvement with the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute.

What services or programs of the Peace Institute have you used and how have you experienced those services? Were any services or programs particularly helpful and meaningful? How so? Were any unhelpful or disturbing? How so?

**Healing/Spiritual/Religious/Faith Experiences and Practices**

What does healing from traumatic loss through violence mean to you – what is involved or possible? Which activities, services, or programs of the Peace Institute have you found most valuable in contributing to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have you found any of these to be valuable for community or public healing as well? What about these contributes to healing, do you think?
Within Peace Institute services or programs, have there been specific spiritual, religious, or faith language or activities that have contributed to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have these contributed to community or public healing as well? How so in your experience? Do you think of the Peace Institute as a ministry? Why or why not?

Do you experience yourself as a spiritual, religious, or faith-filled person? In what ways? How has the loss of your loved one impacted on you in this sense? Have your experiences changed over time?

**Relationship to Other Religious or Social Institutions/Communities**

Are there ways in which the church, or religious communities in general, provide support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence, including yourself? In what ways do you think the church, or religious communities in general, can better support survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Are you or the Peace Institute involved in educating the church, or religious communities, on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response?

Are there ways in which the broader community or society provide institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence, including yourself? In what ways do you think the broader community or society can provide better institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Are you or the Peace Institute involved in educating the broader community or society on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response? [This is an opportunity to explore other types of tangential activities or services engaged in or available, including rituals such as street or spontaneous memorials, public funding programs such as VOCA – Victims of Crime Act, etc.]

**Concluding Questions**

What is your understanding of the mission of the Peace Institute and the range of their services or programs?

What else would you like for me, as well as others, to know about the needs of survivors and/or the work of the Peace Institute? Are there other activities, services, or programs that are needed? What is your hope and vision?

Are they any other comments you would like to make or materials you would like to share to help others understand the needs of survivors of traumatic loss through violence?
Interview Guide for External Institutional Supporters of the Peace Institute

Historical/Background Information

How did you come to be involved with supporting the work of the Peace Institute? In what ways do you support their work?

What is your understanding of the mission of the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute and the range of their services or programs?

Healing/Spiritual/Religious/Faith Experiences and Practices

What do you think survivors of loss through traumatic violence need for healing? What does healing in this respect mean to you?

Do you regard the work of the Peace Institute as contributing to healing for survivors of traumatic loss through violence? How so? Through what type of programs or activities? Is this important? Why or why not?

Do you regard their work as ministry or as spiritual, or religious, or faith-filled in any sense? How so? Through what type of programs or activities? Is this important? Why or why not?

Relationship to Other Religious or Social Institutions/Communities

What role does the Peace Institute play in the community in general and with other religious and/or social institutions specifically? Is it an important role? Why or why not? What would happen if they ceased to exist as an organization?

How do existing social and/or religious institutions provide support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? How do they provide support to the Peace Institute? Are these existing ways adequate or does more need to be done? Are you or the Peace Institute involved in educating social and/or religious institutions or the broader community on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response?

Concluding Questions

Are there any additional challenges or possibilities you see for the Peace Institute in a larger sense? Do you have a hope or vision for the Peace Institute?

What else would you like for me, as well as others, to know about your assessment of the vision, potential or challenges of the Peace Institute?

Are there any other comments or materials you would like to share to help others understand the needs of survivors of traumatic loss through violence?
APPENDIX C

Interview Guides: The Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry

Interview Guide for Founders/Volunteer Staff/Leaders of the Trauma Response Ministry

Historical/Background Information

Tell me your understanding of how the UU Trauma Response Ministry came to be created and organized.

What is your understanding of the mission of the UU Trauma Response Ministry?

What role do you play (or have you played) in the Trauma Response Ministry and how did you come to work here? In what ways, if any, have you shaped the formation and services of the Trauma Response Ministry?

What are the different activities, services, or programs offered by the Trauma Response Ministry? Please describe the elements of each as specifically as you can.

Have these changed or evolved since the Trauma Response Ministry’s founding? If so, why in your understanding?

Healing/Spiritual/Religious/Faith Experiences and Practices

What does healing from traumatic loss through violence mean to you – what is involved or possible? Which activities, services, or programs of the Trauma Response Ministry have you found most valuable in contributing to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have you found any of these to be valuable for community or public healing as well? What about these contributes to healing, do you think?

Within Trauma Response Ministry services or programs, have there been specific spiritual, religious, or faith language or activities that have contributed to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have these contributed to community or public healing as well? How so in your experience? Do you think of the Trauma Response Ministry as a ministry? Why or why not?
Relationship to Other Religious or Social Institutions/Communities

Are there ways in which the church, or religious communities in general, provide support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? In what ways do you think the church, or religious communities in general, can better support survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Is the Trauma Response Ministry involved in educating the church, or religious communities, on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response?

Are there ways in which the broader community or society provide institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? In what ways do you think the broader community or society can provide better institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Is the Trauma Response Ministry involved in educating the broader community or society on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response?

Concluding Questions

What challenges, if any, has or does the Trauma Response Ministry face in fulfilling its mission? Have these changed over time? How does the staff of the Trauma Response Ministry create support for themselves in light of these challenges? What are the different activities in which you engage personally and/or together? How did you come to do these particular activities?

What is your larger hope or vision for the Trauma Response Ministry, if any?

Are there any other comments you would like to make or materials you would like to share to help others understand the needs of survivors of traumatic loss through violence?

Interview Guide for Survivors Utilizing UU Trauma Response Ministry Services

Historical/Background Information

How did you come to know about the UU Trauma Response Ministry and come to believe you should use their services?

Tell me about your exposure to loss from traumatic violence and your initial involvement with the UU Trauma Response Ministry.

What services or programs of the Trauma Response Ministry have you used and how have you experienced those services? Were any services or programs particularly helpful and meaningful? How so? Were any unhelpful or disturbing? How so?
Healing/Spiritual/Religious/Faith Experiences and Practices

What does healing from traumatic loss through violence mean to you – what is involved or possible? Which activities, services, or programs of the Trauma Response Ministry have you found most valuable in contributing to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have you found any of these to be valuable for community or public healing as well? What about these contributes to healing, do you think?

Within Trauma Response Ministry services or programs, have there been specific spiritual, religious, or faith language or activities that have contributed to personal healing from traumatic loss through violence for yourself or for survivors? Have these contributed to community or public healing as well? How so in your experience? Do you think of the Trauma Response Ministry as a ministry? Why or why not?

Do you experience yourself as a spiritual, religious, or faith-filled person? In what ways? How has exposure to loss from traumatic violence impacted on you in this sense? Have your experiences changed over time?

Relationship to Other Religious or Social Institutions/Communities

Are there ways in which the church, or religious communities in general, provide support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence, including yourself? In what ways do you think the church, or religious communities in general, can better support survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Are you or the Trauma Response Ministry involved in educating the church, or religious communities, on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response? [For the UU Trauma Response Ministry, which serves an association of congregations, explore intra-denominational structures of support if these do not come up spontaneously, such as on district levels.]

Are there ways in which the broader community or society provide institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence, including yourself? In what ways do you think the broader community or society can provide better institutional support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? Are you or the Trauma Response Ministry involved in educating the broader community or society on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response? [This is an opportunity to explore other types of tangential activities or services engaged in or available.]
Concluding Questions

What is your understanding of the mission of the Trauma Response Ministry and the range of their services or programs?

What else would you like for me, as well as others, to know about the needs of survivors and/or the work of the Trauma Response Ministry? Are there other activities, services, or programs that are needed? What is your hope and vision?

Are there any other comments you would like to make or materials you would like to share to help others understand the needs of survivors of traumatic loss through violence?

--Interview Guide for External Institutional Supporters of the UU Trauma Response Ministry--

Historical/Background Information

How did you come to be involved with supporting the work of the UU Trauma Response Ministry? In what ways do you support their work?

What is your understanding of the mission of the UU Trauma Response Ministry and the range of their services or programs?

Healing/Spiritual/Religious/Faith Experiences and Practices

What do you think survivors of loss through traumatic violence need for healing? What does healing in this respect mean to you?

Do you regard the work of the Trauma Response Ministry as contributing to healing for survivors of traumatic loss through violence? How so? Through what type of programs or activities? Is this important? Why or why not?

Do you regard their work as ministry or as spiritual, or religious, or faith-filled in any sense? How so? Through what type of programs or activities? Is this important? Why or why not?
**Relationship to Other Religious or Social Institutions/Communities**

What role does the Trauma Response Ministry play in the UU community in general or with other religious and/or social institutions specifically? Is it an important role? Why or why not? What would happen if they ceased to exist as an organization?

How do existing social and/or religious institutions, UU or otherwise, provide support to survivors of traumatic loss through violence? How do they provide support to the UU Trauma Response Ministry? Are these existing ways adequate or does more need to be done? Are you or the Trauma Response Ministry involved in educating social and/or religious institutions or the broader UU community on these issues? In what ways? What has been the response?

**Concluding Questions**

Are there any additional challenges or possibilities you see for the Trauma Response Ministry in a larger sense? Do you have a hope or vision for the Trauma Response Ministry?

What else would you like for me, as well as others, to know about your assessment of the vision, potential or challenges of the Trauma Response Ministry?

Are there any other comments or materials you would like to share to help others understand the needs of survivors of traumatic loss through violence?
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study. This consent form presents the general purpose of the study, a description of your involvement, and your rights as a participant.

The purpose of this study is to explore the role of organized trauma ministries, and the practices they develop, in facilitating personal and/or communal healing in the aftermath of trauma.

The benefits of this research will be a contribution to academic scholarship on this issue as well as increasing awareness among churches and the larger society as to what is experienced as helpful and not helpful for healing in the aftermath of trauma. It is anticipated that you may also benefit from an opportunity to reflect in these areas and/or to have your particular story told and shared.

The methods that will be used include one-to-one interviews lasting approximately 1-1/2 hours, including the possibility of a follow-up interview if necessary to complete questions. There will also be an opportunity to share any materials (objects, pictures, writings, or other literature) that you desire to share with the researcher. The interviews and conversations will be audio-taped to help me accurately recall your thoughts and words. You may ask that the recorder be turned off at any time during the interview process. These audio-tapes will only be heard by myself and possibly a paid professional transcription organization. You may ask questions at any point regarding methods or purpose during the duration of the study and feel free to contact me by cell phone or email, listed above. The interview will be conducted at a time and place of convenience to you.

I do not expect your participation in this study to put you at any risk; however, it is anticipated that questions related to the recall of traumatic events may cause some psychological discomfort. Should you feel uncomfortable during the interview, you are welcome to discuss any concerns or questions with me or with my advisors, and again, request to stop at any time. This study is voluntary; you are not required to answer every question and you may withdraw from the study at any time with no penalties. In this case, any data connected with your interview will be destroyed and will not be included in the final dissertation.

Interviews and other materials submitted by you will be used in writing a doctoral dissertation in partial fulfillment of requirements for a PhD in Practical Theology at
Boston University. This dissertation will be read by my advising professor, Dr. Shelly Rambo, my second reader and core concentration advisor, Dr. Dale Andrews, other editors, the Academic Studies Committee, and the Dissertation Review Board at Boston University School of Theology, and it will be defended publicly should you desire to attend. Upon completion, it will be available through the Boston University School of Theology Library to subsequent readers and may be revised for future publication. You may obtain further information about your rights as a research subject by calling the BU CRC IRB Office at 617-358-6115.

Specific events upon which you comment may be a matter of public record and thus may not be anonymous, but every effort to protect the privacy of your participation in this study will be made. If as a participant in this study, you also hold a role as founder of the specific trauma ministry studied, your name will be used in relation to the oral history of this founding, but your identity and responses as a participant in the study will be otherwise protected.

All materials related to this study will be placed at all times when not in use in a locked fire proof safe located in the researcher’s home office. Only the principal investigator will have access to the locked safe. All data retained for future use will be kept in a locked secure location, with all identifiers stripped, and not distributed.

Through your signature below, you indicate your consent to participate in this study. You may withdraw your consent at any time as well.

Thank you again for your participation in this study.
CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT:

These are additional materials that I, the participant, am submitting for photographic inclusion in the results of this study:

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

In signing this form I, ________________________________, give my consent to 
                                                                                     Print Full Name

participation in this study on the terms detailed in this informed consent.

__________________________________________________________________________

Signature of the Participant                                      Date

RESEARCHER:

As the researcher, I, ________________________________, pledge to uphold this 
                                                                                     Print Full Name

agreement.

__________________________________________________________________________

Signature of the Researcher                                      Date
RECRUITMENT LETTER
Dissertation Research Project on Prophetic Pastoral Care in the Aftermath of Trauma
Conducted by The Reverend Michelle A. Walsh, MSW, LICSW

Dear _____________________________:

Your participation is sought in a study of organized trauma ministries and practices developed by [Name of particular organized trauma ministry] that are designed to foster healing on either a personal or communal level in the aftermath of trauma, particularly trauma related to violence. Subjects are being sought in the following categories:

1. 3-5 staff/founders/leaders of the [Name of the particular organized trauma ministry];
2. 5 survivors of trauma who have used the services of the [Name of trauma ministry] and for whom the initial traumatic event occurred at least one year ago;
3. and 3-5 external institutional supporters of the [Name of particular trauma ministry].

Through my contact with staff/founders/leaders of the [Name of particular trauma ministry], you have been identified as a potential subject within one of the above categories. This study hopes to make a contribution to academic scholarship on prophetic pastoral care in the aftermath of trauma as well as increase awareness among churches and society as to what is experienced as helpful and not helpful for healing in the aftermath of trauma. It is hoped that subjects will also benefit from an opportunity to reflect in these areas and/or to have your particular story told and shared.

If you are interested in participating in this study, please contact me at the above phone number or email address. We will set up a pre-interview time at your convenience and at a mutually agreeable location to review the informed consent form, confidentiality, demographic information, and your rights as a participant. If you agree to participate after this meeting, we will then schedule an interview session, again at your convenience and at a mutually agreeable location. It is anticipated that the interview will last approximately 1-1/2 hours, with an opportunity for follow-up as needed. Interviews will be audio-taped with your permission, and you may bring along any significant materials you would like to share for the purposes of the research. Please contact me directly with any questions.

Rev. Michelle A. Walsh, MSW, LICSW
DEMOGRAPHIC FORM

Dissertation Research Project on Prophetic Pastoral Care in the Aftermath of Trauma
Conducted by The Reverend Michelle A. Walsh, MSW, LICSW

Date: ______________________

Race/Ethnicity: ________________ Gender: ______________

Age: ______________________

Current Church/Religious Affiliation (if any): ________________________________

How long have you been with this church/religious institution? __________________

Other prior religious affiliation (if any)? ______________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Describe current relationship with the [particular trauma ministry]: _______________

________________________________________________________________

Years involved with the [particular trauma ministry]? __________________________

Highest Education Level/Degrees/Certificates: ________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Profession/Career/Job Title: _______________________________________________

________________________________________________________________

Number of Members in Household: _____________________________

Number of Persons Contributing to Household Income: _______________________

Household Income Range (categories based on IRS head of household):
Check applicable category

$0 - $11,950 ______

$11,950 - $45,550 ______

$45,550 - $117,650 ______

$117,650 - $190,550 ______

$190,550 - $373,650 ______

$373,650 and above ______
APPENDIX E

Demographics of LDBPI Case Study Participants and Study Limitations

See the case studies section of chapter one for basic demographic information. Interview participants were drawn from 3 categories for the Louis D. Brown Peace Institute: (1) ministry leaders; (2) survivors; and (3) institutional supporters. Interview participants in the first category of LDBPI ministry leaders included one co-founder who continued as staff, three additional staff members, and one board member who also served as a volunteer program leader. Four of the ministry leaders were direct family survivors of homicide (child or sibling) and one ministry leader was a survivor of a friend killed in a traumatic accident. Four females and 1 male ranging in age from 21 to 57 were among these five. Three were of Catholic heritage and two Protestant (Baptist and Pentecostal). One referenced their race as Black/Hispanic; two as Black; one as Haitian/Honduran; and one as White/Italian/Ukrainian. No ministry leader had completed higher than a bachelor’s degree (though the co-founder does have two honorary doctoral degrees and is currently completing a bachelor’s degree). This dissertation also used IRS Head of Household Income groupings for a very rough and quite limited, if not completely inadequate, method of comparing class and economic status. This researcher experienced the categories as having too great a spread in annual income to adequately reflect the actual levels at which participants may have been. Educational levels were considered a better measure of socioeconomic culture and background.

Interview participants in the second category included members of what was termed the “Peace Warriors” group, members who were family survivors of homicide, most often women, and in this case, all of those survivors interviewed were parents of a murdered child. The Peace
Warriors group numbered at least ten regular attendees to the “Tuesday Talks” by survivor report at the time these interviews were conducted. Invitations to be interviewed were extended to survivors who were at least one-year post-initial traumatic death and in a purposeful snowball manner. Ministry leaders and survivors were asked to recommend survivors who might be willing to be interviewed and who had experience giving public testimony or leadership on survivor homicide issues. Interview solicitations were stopped once five interviews were scheduled. Thus not all members of the “Peace Warriors” group were solicited or interviewed.

Given the sensitive nature of traumatic ‘recovery’, this interviewer sought to interview participants who had some demonstrated comfort in speaking publicly and who had marked at least one year since their loved one’s murder. In this dissertation, the survivors who volunteered ranged from two to five years post initial traumatic death at the time of these interviews. All five survivors had spoken at a Boston City Council hearing, sponsored by a Boston City Councilor in 2010 as a ‘listening hearing’ for human service providers and city government on the needs of families in the aftermath of homicide. Two also referenced other avenues of giving public testimony, including with the Massachusetts Governor as well as a public grant-giving foundation.

Interview participants in this second category were all mothers and females ranging in age from 40-48 at the time of interview. As recognition of gender differences in grieving were spoken of in the interview process, the solicitation of only female survivors does pose an additional limitation to this particular study and future studies will want to factor in a specific gender analysis. All participants identified themselves as African American or Black (with one identifying herself as mixed African American and Caucasian) – race thus can pose another
additional limitation to this particular study. Four of the participants were of Protestant backgrounds (3 Baptist and 1 Pentecostal) and one was of a Catholic background. One participant was currently in a master’s degree program; two were in or had recently finished a bachelor’s program; and two had completed high school or a certificate program.

Interview participants in the third category of institutional supporters included: (1) a mental health clinician experienced with trauma treatment; (2) a Unitarian Universalist urban minister; (3) a consultant for an antiracism/multicultural education institute that had been influential on the work of the Peace Institute; (4) a Boston City Councillor; and (5) a public health leader and doctor who spoke to the public health violence prevention model that had been influential on the work of the Peace Institute. Each of these supporters had been heavily involved with supporting the work of the Peace Institute over a number of years and represented a broad spectrum of supporters. Several of these supporters either declined to complete the demographic form or filled it in incompletely. The majority, however, were more highly educated than most of the ministry leaders of the Peace Institute or the survivors interviewed (at least a master’s if not higher for four institutional supporters) and they were generally on the higher end of the listed income levels (again, except for one). One was Unitarian Universalist, one Catholic, and one Episcopalian of those who self-identified their religious tradition. Four institutional supporters were female and one was male, and two were white and three were non-white (of whom two self-identified as Black). Most had been involved with the Peace Institute for several years, often well over five or more years.

It should be noted that neither of these case studies is meant to be a fully evaluative study of either trauma ministry but to give a glimpse into their operations, challenges, and perceived
and potential value in prophetic pastoral care practices, though the period of this researcher’s ethnographic immersion with case study one, the Peace Institute, was significantly longer than with case study two. As an additional limitation, it also should be mentioned that this researcher was the sole coder for all data, and it is possible that if additional coders were utilized, other ways of considering or organizing the data might have been considered.
APPENDIX F

Demographics of UUTRM Case Study Participants and Study Limitations

Interview participants were drawn from 3 categories for the Unitarian Universalist Trauma Response Ministry (UUTRM) case study: (1) UUTRM leaders; (2) TVUUC leaders who were survivors of the shooting attack, three who were present in the sanctuary that day and two who were not; and (3) institutional supporters of the UUTRM who were staff within the larger Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA). Interview participants in the first category included four who were direct founders of the UUTRM and one who began later. All had served on the UUTRM board in different capacities. All had substantial backgrounds in trauma work prior to the founding of the UUTRM, and 3 had served at Ground Zero in 9/11. While some had traumatic personal experiences in their family histories, there was no consistency in this across the board.

UUTRM leaders in this first category were four females and one male ranging in age from 41 to 62 at the time of the interviews. All were ordained as Unitarian Universalist (UU) clergy. Three self-described as lifelong UU’s or UU’s since birth and 1 was a former Roman Catholic and 1 was a former Congregationalist (non-UCC). Three were senior ministers for their congregations, one was a chaplain, and one was a District Executive within the UUA while also continuing to serve as a UUTRM member. One self-described as African American while the other four might be described as white, though 2 self-described as Euro-American and 2 as Caucasian. Three of the UUTRM leaders in this first category held Doctors of Divinity and two held Masters of Divinity as their highest degrees. Again, the IRS Head of Household Income groupings were used as a very rough means of comparing class and economic status, with the
same limitations as discussed in appendix D, though it can be said that UUTRM participants across the board were consistently in higher income brackets.

Interview participants in the second category were internally recognized TVUUC leaders at the time of the church shooting in 2008, including the minister, two former board presidents, a former church administrator, and a former volunteer media coordinator. Invitations to be interviewed were initially extended through the minister, who in turn gained authorization from the TVUUC board for the study to be done and deferred to a former board president to identify candidates who might be willing to be interviewed. As with the LDBPI case study, those who were identified as prospective interviewees were also seen to be more comfortable with the level of their trauma ‘recovery’ in agreeing to be interviewed. Interview offers again were extended directly to the potential participants identified by this TVUUC informant, and solicitations were stopped once five interview candidates were identified and able to be scheduled. All interviews were conducted over one weekend in the fall of 2011 in a site visit to the church, where additional ethnographic material was also gathered in the form of pictures taken and extensive literature and media materials gathered and provided by the TVUUC leaders.

Interview participants in this second category of TVUUC leaders included three males and two females ranging in age from 46 to 62.5 at the time of the interviews. All participants were white (two self-identifying as Caucasian), with one self-identifying as having two “black” children. As in the other case study, race and unexamined or unknown variables can pose an additional limitation to study results. One TVUUC leader self-described as a life-long UU from the age of 4; three TVUUC leaders identified as being UU for more than 20 years, of whom one grew up Episcopalian, one as Catholic, and one as Southern Baptist (but also having been
involved with Episcopalians and United Methodists); and one TVUUC leader noted being with this particular UU church for 15 years but not necessarily identifying completely as a UU, having grown up Baptist and feeling comfortable with the Alliance of Baptists also. One TVUUC leader held a Ph.D. as their highest degree; three held master’s; and one held a BA with some master’s level work.

Interview participants in the third category of institutional supporters of the UUTRM who were also UUA staff included: (1) a former UUA president; (2) a current UUA Vice-President; (3) a former UUA Transitions Director; and (4) two current District Executives at the time of the interviews. Two of these had had some introductory level of training with the UUTRM, and three had participated in trauma responses, including two to the church shooting studied, but none of these institutional supporters regarded themselves as members of the UUTRM. For the two District Executives interviewed, background and training in trauma response tended to come from other life experiences and other professional trainings. Each of these five institutional supporters had been involved in different roles supporting the UUTRM since either its founding or for a minimum of 4 years.

Of these UUA institutional supporters, 4 were male and 1 was female ranging in age from 56 to 65 at the time of the interviews. One identified as African American and four would be identified as white (though one used the term Euro-American and one Caucasian). One self-described as a lifelong UU while the other four had self-identified as UU for anywhere from 20 to 51 years, with one being a former Lutheran, one former Roman Catholic, and one former Baptist. For their highest degrees, one held a Ph.D., one a Doctor of Ministry, two Masters of Divinity, and one a Masters of Social Work.
As stated in chapter one of this dissertation, neither of these case studies is meant to be a fully evaluative study of either trauma ministry but to give a glimpse into their operations, challenges, and perceived and potential value in prophetic pastoral care practices, though it also should be noted that the period of this researcher’s ethnographic immersion with case study two was significantly less than with case study one. As with the first case study, it also should be mentioned that this researcher was the sole coder for all data, and it is possible that if additional coders were utilized, other ways of considering or organizing the data might have been considered. Nonetheless, an additional significant limitation should be mentioned in regards to the particular constraints of this study for the UUTRM.

As has been discussed, the UUTRM provides a wide range of services in a multitude of contexts, from large scale natural disasters such as Hurricane Katrina to a church shooting such as the one examined to smaller scale personal traumas in a congregational context. In seeking to find a comparative line with the LDBPI case study, and in also dealing with economic limitations in traveling for personal interviews, this researcher settled on examining the UUTRM’s role in responding to a situation of multiple violent losses at one congregational site. As was demonstrated, this was also a highly unique involvement by the UUTRM in which they were also partnered with multiple other responders, such as the Red Cross, rather than being the sole provider of services. Hence many of the findings of this study may be limited to this very particular and unique situation and, further, do not represent the fullest range of UUTRM service possibilities, including for other situations of violent loss. It is hoped that the UUTRM participants interviewed do complete their own study and book regarding their history and contributions, as some UUTRM leaders indicated was being planned.
One final limitation in the study of the Knoxville church shooting bears particular mention and emphasis. This researcher was unaware that a second UU congregation was impacted by the shooting that day, not only the Tennessee Valley Unitarian Universalist Church where the shooting took place but also the Westside Unitarian Universalist church, who had one congregant killed and several injured. In some ways, this study is replicating the heartfelt neglect experienced by the Westside congregation, by TVUUC leader reports, of attention to their losses as well as their struggles in the aftermath. For this replication, this researcher is particularly regretful as the economic limitations and study restrictions did not permit an expansion to include Westside at the time that this became known to the researcher upon her site visit to Knoxville. It is again hoped that future researchers will correct this neglect.
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