

Afterword

Upon completing *Killing from the Inside Out*, I did not know whether to lock myself in my house and weep, or run screaming through the streets, “Repent! Repent!” Making war has apparently become as addictive to American political leaders as crack cocaine or heroin.

Over the last 15 or so years I have gotten to know a substantial number of American military officers, as a “missionary” to the US Armed Forces (sent by the psychologically and morally injured veterans I served as a VA psychiatrist)—a missionary on *prevention* of psychological and moral injury in military service. I have never yet met an officer who loves war. I expect that there must be some. Possibly they shear off when they see me coming, so I haven’t met them. Perhaps I have become too well known for them to say what they really think. However, at least one Marine officer, James N. Mattis, who was my direct boss for the *Commandant of the Marine Corps Trust Study* in 1999-2000, and treasured friend since then, has *never* short-changed me by less-than-complete candor.

Getting to know these officers—many Marines, many Army infantry and armor, hardly any Air Force, a few Navy—I have many times encountered a deep attachment to the Roman Catholic religious doctrine, known as Just War Doctrine, whether they were Roman Catholic or not. I forecast that the clarity of this book will make them squirm, because Just War Doctrine has become as American as apple pie. It spells out their patriotism of “For God and Country.” For them, Just War Doctrine is inseparable from their understanding of the legal principle of civilian control of the Armed Forces, because there is no doubt in their minds that the “Sovereign” in the American polity is civilian. After all, didn’t George Washington take off his military uniform, when he became President? But I suspect the doctrine sits less comfortably with their understanding of the Commissioned Officer’s Oath of Office under Section 3331, Title 5, United States Code, which is an oath to support and defend the Constitution, obedience to the President not mentioned.

Many are devout Christians, and just as devout American Soldiers, Marines, Sailors, Airmen. They will bridle at the stark flip-flop executed by Christian thought on war and military service—from comprehensively pacifistic before Emperor Constantine’s conversion to Christianity to downright warlike after his conversion. This was no less the conversion of the Roman legions, an army in which Christians had been discouraged if not banned from serving, to an army *requiring* Christian baptism.

I do not come from the rigorous Roman Catholic education of my dear friend, Bob Meagher, whom I have known mainly as a classicist, not a Church historian or theologian. Only recently did I learn that he is the author of an important book on St. Augustine—it was Augustine and Ambrose who first formulated the Christian Just War Doctrine. I have reason to suppose that Protestant theologians will not hold their noses, having recently read *Saving Paradise*, by

theologians Brock and Parker, which paints essentially the same picture of pre-/post-Constantine flip-flop on war, but in fuller scholarly detail.

I hope this book will be read widely within the US Armed Forces, bearing up under the squirming it will cause, and benefiting from the clarity that it brings.

Jonathan Shay, MD, PhD

Author of *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* and *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming*. Performer, *CMC Trust Study*, 1999-2000, Chair of Ethics, Leadership, and Personnel Policy in the Office of the US Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel (G-1), 2004-2005; 2009 Omar Bradley Chair of Strategic Leadership, US Army War College.