

**EXPERIENCES OF MALE WOUNDEDNESS AND THE INFLUENCE
OF UNDERSTANDINGS OF CHRIST**

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to bring to consciousness the varied experiences that men have had of feeling wounded and to explore how a relationship to Jesus the Christ has influenced their understanding of those experiences. A modified naturalistic inquiry model was used as the qualitative research method, and the research was developed using grounded theory. This method of inquiry encouraged participants, and the researcher, to voice their experiences and to utilize them in a way that made the research significant. This methodological approach allowed themes to emerge, while honouring the stories and experiences that the participants shared. The theoretical framework for the study emerged from two major fields of research: *Christian theology and gender–male studies*. This research is located where these two fields intersect and overlap. It builds on the research from gender-male studies, specifically the psychological study of men and masculinity, organized men’s movements, mythopoetic movements, profeminist movements, as well as the Christian theological understanding of a Messiah who has been portrayed and understood as the “wounded healer.” The research focuses on the point at which men’s experiences connect with their own sense of woundedness, their Christian faith, and their process of healing. The researcher engaged a discriminate group of men in exploring and trying to understand their experiences of feeling wounded in relation to the Christian story. Four men were identified who have had formal education in both pastoral psychology and theology. The participants were interviewed, and a constant comparative method was employed. Throughout the process of interviewing these men and being privy to their stories, my own story of feeling wounded often surfaced. This research is significant because allowing these men to articulate their experiences of woundedness

facilitates healing, for themselves but also for other men who may access their own stories of feeling wounded through hearing those of the participants. Identifying and articulating woundedness helps to manifest the path of healing and self-understanding, ultimately leading to happier lives.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Introduction

The experiences men have of being wounded or deeply hurt from the events of life and being in relationship with self and others have captured my interest as a man and a theologian. In this research, I engaged a discriminate group of men in exploring and trying to understand their experiences of feeling wounded in relationship to the Christian faith. The Christian faith is one which I believe invites us to believe in a wounded Christ as a Saviour for humanity. The Christian faith, understood as a religious belief system, claims we can be healed from our suffering and live new and renewed lives because Christ understands our human feelings of being wounded because he endured human suffering and death and conquered death by being resurrected from the dead: “I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?” (John 11:25-26)

Connected with this belief system is the experience men have or have not had in healing their woundedness and the impact Christ, as the central figure of the Christian faith, has had in this healing process. “In the gospels and in the rest of the New testament, death and resurrection, dying and rising, are again and again a metaphor for personal transformation, for the psychological-spiritual process at the center of the Christian life” (Borg, 2004, p. 107).

I identified four men who have formal education in pastoral psychology and theology and are Christians. The men expressed that they trusted me enough to share their stories of feeling and being wounded. I joined them in attending an Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education, which is

where I conducted the interviews about this topic. Throughout the process of interviewing these men and being privy to their stories, my own story of feeling wounded often surfaced within me. At times, I shared this feeling of connectedness with the men when it felt appropriate and later in this thesis I share my own reflections and epiphanies that resulted from being invited into the sacred stories of these men's lives.

Rationale

Based on my experience as a man, a pastoral minister in the United Church of Canada, and a counselor, it is my belief that as human beings we share elements of feeling and being wounded. As we journey through life, our self-understanding and relationships with others impact our emotional, psychological, and spiritual development (Emmons, 1991). There are experiences in life that wound us and it is imperative we articulate and come to an understanding of how we have been wounded in order to find healing and wholeness. If we do not articulate and subsequently address our woundedness, it remains a part of us that surfaces at different times in our lives and may contribute to becoming sad, unhappy, or it may manifest itself as an undesirable behaviour. Hollis (1994), in addressing the wounding and healing of men states, "He must begin by acknowledging the wounds he carries, wounds that leak daily into his life, if ever he is to heal himself or help his world" (p. 82).

Our woundedness, if unattended, may also influence the quality of relationships we have with self and others, for example, our relationship with our partner or children. On the other hand, if we address our woundedness, it can be a scar that is somehow healed; but it is a scar nonetheless, understood for why it is there and what it represents. It becomes a reminder of a healed wound instead of a tender wound that is in need of

healing. In particular, men have often neglected their sense of woundedness (Bergman, 1995); therefore, my research has focused on men. This was not to negate feelings of woundedness experienced by women, but for the purposes of this inquiry and in order for me to use my own experiences, I focus on the experiences of men.

I am drawn to hearing men articulate their own experiences of being wounded for a variety of reasons. I pursued this topic mainly because my professional experience has given me cause to believe that many men hold a deep sense of hurt, have an inarticulate soulful cry to be healed, and find they lack the tools to aid themselves in healing. Levant (1995), in *Masculinity Reconstructed: Changing the Rules of Manhood*, draws on his experiences of counseling men and their experiences of being men to present a comprehensive work advocating a need for a change in the “rules of manhood.” The author devotes a chapter in his book to “Men’s Wounds” and categorizes them into five basic areas: father wound, mother wound, wife, relationships, and work. As a researcher I was interested in learning what wounds my participants would identify as having experienced throughout their lives, the stories that they are enmeshed in and how they have dealt with them.

I was also interested in exploring and identifying with them wounds they had not yet acknowledged. In hearing their collective experiences, I was interested in how they would impact my own feelings of woundedness and reflected on this throughout this entire research.

The significance of this research is that it allows for the articulation of men’s experiences of woundedness and how this expression facilitates healing for them and other men who may access their own stories of feeling wounded through hearing those of

the participants. It is in this identification and articulation of woundedness that I believe the path of healing and self-understanding can be manifest, ultimately leading to happier lives. According to Park (1993), those who are feeling wounded may require two kinds of awakening. First, they may need to awake to their own woundedness, and second, to the sources of their woundedness.

Given the research that has been done in identifying men's experiences of being wounded and their path to healing, I am interested in hearing about another dimension of feeling wounded. Based on my own theological background, I am interested in how these men understand the Christian message of a wounded and healing Christ as impacting and influencing their own feelings of woundedness. Fundamental to the Christian faith is the central figure of Jesus, the Christ who was wounded and crucified as an act of salvation for humanity: "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was on him, and by his wounds we are healed." (Isaiah 53:5)

How an individual believer understands salvation theology varies. This quotation from the Book of Isaiah prophesizes about a Christ who takes on the iniquities of the world in His suffering so that we may be made whole. What is clear in the Gospels is that the humanity of Christ, the earthly journey Jesus endured, enables Him to identify with our humanness, our struggles, our wounds, our hurts. This has led me to my research question: What is the experience of male woundedness as articulated by a discriminate group of men and how have they related to the Christian faith in their own self-understanding and healing?

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in pursuing this research question is to bring to consciousness the varied experiences men have of woundedness and how they describe those experiences as living realities. Further to this, as all four men have a background in theology, how has the Christian faith influenced their path of healing? The sharing of these experiences brings to surface how people and events contributed to the participants' self-understanding and how they may have wounded them. In the telling of these stories, I encouraged rich description of the events, the people, the feelings, and the depth to which these experiences affected these men. Their descriptions invited my own engagement in this research. While interviewing the participants and throughout the research process, I noted my own thoughts and emotional reactions to what they were sharing. I often saw myself in their stories and was easily able to empathize with them. It is my hope that because the stories of my participants hold meaning for me, they will hold meaning for other men as well.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for my study emerges from two major fields of research: Christian theology and gender–male studies. My research is located where these two fields intersect and overlap with one another. I will build on the research from gender-male studies, specifically the psychological study of men and masculinity, organized men's movements, mythopoetic movements, profeminist movements as well as the Christian theological understanding of a Messiah who has been portrayed and understood as the “wounded healer”: “He himself bore our sins in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been

healed.” (1 Peter 2:24). Therefore, my research focuses on where the experiences of men connect with their own sense of woundedness, their Christian faith, and their process of healing.

In my research, I was interested in hearing the participants’ name and discuss the experiences of woundedness in their own lives and the metaphors that these generate. Furthermore, my theoretical framework is participant driven (Spradley, 1980). I am interested in identifying themes as they emerge from the participant’s named experience because I anticipate that there will be some similarities in their experiences and that other men, including myself, may resonate with those experiences.” One’s own experiences are the possible experiences of others and also that the experiences of others are the possible experiences of oneself” (Van Manen, 1990, p. 58). I also anticipate that a message of faith or spirit will emerge from my participants that will make a unique contribution to research in Christian theology and the general field of male studies.

Limitations of the Study

There are limitations of this research which are inherent in qualitative research. First, I used an open-ended interview format to elicit data from the participants. An essential element of this approach was the willingness and ability of participants to respond to the questions openly, honestly, and articulately. Therefore, this research required that the participants be willing to engage in the telling of their own stories meaningfully and potentially painfully. The richness of description and depth of experience attained depended on the participants’ willingness to share their own feelings of woundedness and offer them to this research. Care had to be taken to ensure participants were comfortable with me as the interviewer so that they would offer as

freely as possible their stories and their lives. If they were not comfortable with me, the depth and breadth of insight I may receive could be limited.

Second, there is potential that important themes are not uncovered because of time constraints, the participant's disposition, or my inability to identify themes. I attempted to address these issues by employing a constant comparison method of data analysis, which I will explain in the section entitled Inductive Data Analysis of Chapter 3.

I was the data-gathering instrument and am therefore predisposed to certain questions and themes, and hold particular assumptions. That is, I bring to the interviewing process my own biases, humanness, and interests and needed to be alert to them (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I knew three out of the four participants prior to the interview and entered the interviews with a respect for all of them as theologians, counselors, and men. I do not believe this prevented me from asking and exploring what I felt led to investigate. In fact, I believe my established relationship and rapport with the participants was a significant aid in the interviewing process. However, my background and my relationship with the participants likely lead to certain questions being asked and others not. It is my belief that acknowledging my background and interest in this topic helps to lay bare my assumptions and biases for the reader. An assumption I held is that all of my participants would offer something of significance and depth, and resonate with my research question. I believed they would all thoughtfully answer my questions, engage the process honestly, and be willing to be vulnerable.

Throughout the interviews I needed to be mindful that I had established professional relationships with some of the participants and be conscious not to allow this to impede my questioning or identification of themes in the data analysis process. Further

to this, I needed to ensure that I did not find myself aligning more deeply with any one participant over the other in an effort not to cloud my limited objectivity (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I knew three of the four participants prior to the interviews and wanted to be cautious to not over identify with one participant over the other. That is, I needed to be aware not to censor my own questioning. One of the ways I addressed this in my data collection process, was to limit the amount of social time I spent with my participants at the conference. The conference was an annual meeting and gathering of the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education. I felt that my rapport and the trust between me and the participants was more an asset than a liability in this process. “Research could not succeed without the trust that rapport engenders” (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992, p. 100). It is because of the rapport that was established with the participants, that the stories and feelings about male woundedness were able to emerge.

I came to this research with assumptions that may be limiting in the following respects. I assumed we are all wounded and have stories of being and feeling wounded. Further to this, I assumed my participants would share not only some of these stories, but the most significant ones for them. I assumed that I would have the skill set to elicit these stories from them, be able to establish the rapport that is necessary, and finally, that there would be a spiritual and meaningful connection between their stories and their belief in Jesus the Christ. I will discuss my role as the human instrument in this research more fully in the section entitled *Human Instrument* of Chapter 3.

Definition of Terms

Woundedness is a term that has a history of being associated with Christian theology. According to the Christian tradition, Christ’s body was pierced five times in

His crucifixion and this has become known as the “five wounds of Christ.” Inherent in Christology is the dimension of a wounded and suffering Christ. That is, He took on the pain of the world through this act that is understood in Christian theology as an act of salvation and redemption. “God’s human form, simple and warm, the wounded Christ arises. The marks of his dying are portals of hope, open to all that suffers” (Sisters of Bon Secours, 2003).

As a counselor and minister of the United Church of Canada, I believe it is important to acknowledge both the spiritual dimension of a client and feelings of woundedness, as it is here that a deep sense of hurt may dwell. It could be said that woundedness penetrates one’s spirit. If my premise that we are all wounded is true, then there is immeasurable value in a faith that offers hope to those who suffer or have been wounded:

The Holy Spirit’s desire is to enter the memory (the wound) and begin to heal the damage. This usually involves a time of grieving over the event. Most victims need a “season” of mourning the fact that a very bad thing happened. (Corkery, 2001)

Christianity claims this belief and offers Jesus the Christ, God, and the Holy Spirit as the hope, the Saviour, the Divinity that can accompany us, heal us and make us feel and be whole. Anderson, Zuehlke and Zuehlke (2000) state that “Emotional wounds from the past can damage our intimacy with God and stand in the way of our experience of freedom” (p. 190).

In a resource for practitioners entitled *Integrating Spirituality into Treatment*, Miller (1999) notes that, “An understanding of people, individually and collectively, is

incomplete without knowing about their spirituality” (p. xvii). He furthers the argument by stating that “95% of Americans say they believe in God,” and that for many, “Spirituality and religion are important sources of strength and coping resources, and not infrequently people name them as the most important aspect of their lives, central to their meaning and identity” (p. xviii).

Webster’s dictionary (2001) defines wounding as “one’s intentional injuring of another, usually with a weapon.” I will use the following definition as my operating definition because I am focusing on woundedness to one’s spirit. To be wounded means that an individual has been hurt either intentionally or unintentionally by a life experience, relationship or person that has a lasting effect and no immediate sense of healing. This often happens during childhood and at significant points of development: “The wound to the heart and psyche occurs when a child’s vulnerable and developing sense of core self is not seen and reflected back by the adults around him/her” (Marks, 2002). O’Connel (1994) claims that “Most of us become wounded in one way or another throughout our lives,” and defines woundedness as “alienation from self” (p. 9). As a result, the individual feels hurt, pain, and has been metaphorically lacerated. That is, although no wound may be visible as if one was cut with a knife, metaphorically the wounds one suffers from may be as long lasting and deep. Therefore, the assemblance of events of being wounded is one’s woundedness. As indicated, my research is focused on men. Hollis (1994) claims that, “Today’s man suffers his wounds in isolation, but his reactions trouble and damage those around him” (p. 82). The experience of being wounded has not only been demonstrated as an experience of men, but has often been a “crucial dimension of male initiation into adulthood” (p. 82).

This study provides insight into male woundedness by enabling the reader to hear the stories and experiences of the men in my study and therefore hear their own stories of woundedness. This study synthesizes and identifies major themes of woundedness from the participants as well as their understanding of who Jesus the Christ is for them. The images and relationship to Jesus the Christ, they provide may help others in their own understanding of woundedness in a new way that leads to a potential healing, or in a way that affirms their current understandings.

In summary, it is evident through literature devoted to men's studies that men have experienced woundedness and it has contributed to them living less than full lives. Levant and Pollack (1995) present findings of a study by Brooks and Gilbert that takes "a penetrating look at two of men's most significant roles in society and shows how the male gender socialization process has inhibited their full capacity to function as fathers and husbands in a balanced family life" (p. 384). Hicks (1993) comments:

For Carl Jung, this wounding is critical to the development of a deeper masculinity. He sees the worst of it coming from what a boy or man does to himself. It is only through wounding that a man becomes aware of many of the unconscious elements in his being. (p. 100)

The overall feeling that men are wounded is established, and as a pastoral minister and counselor I am interested if believing in the Christian faith, in particular the relationship to Jesus the Christ, helps the men I interviewed and helps me in our journey to healing.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The purpose of this study is to develop an understanding of the lived experiences of woundedness that men have endured and how their Christian faith, in particular their relationship to Jesus the Christ, has helped or perhaps not helped in their journey to understand or heal their woundedness.

This study focuses on the place where Christian theology and the general field of male studies intersect. There are two major pieces to this study. First, I examine Christian theology in a broad sense and specifically the understandings of Christ or Christologies. I will focus on literature that is embedded in the general theological ethos of the United Church of Canada. It is difficult to locate this ethos because of the diversity of beliefs and positions within the United Church of Canada. From the beginning, those who envisioned the United Church believed that Christians could distinguish between “the substance of the faith” and all particular (e. g., denominationally or culturally specific) expressions of it (United Church of Canada, 2006).

While the United Church does have The Statement of Faith, Articles of Faith, and A New Creed, the Church “does not believe that faithfulness consists in assenting to particular statements. Rarely, if ever, does the church use doctrinal standards to exclude anyone from the circle of belonging.” This means that there is a strong belief that in the Church: “Each new generation is called to state the Gospel afresh, in terms of the thought of their own age and with the emphasis their age needs” (United Church, 2006).

Second, I review literature particular to the wounding experiences of men within the field of male gender studies. I begin with a survey of the literature in the field of gender male studies and focus on the literature that has a Christian and/or wounded male

focus. I also address literature within this field that emphasizes the healing dimension of the wounded male. The literature in the general field of male studies and the psychology of men is vast. Therefore, I have narrowed my review to the literature that broadly speaks of both the male experience and theology.

There is a volume of literature in both of these areas, but I am particularly focused on the experiences of feeling wounded and the relationship the participants have with Jesus the Christ. I also outline the major themes in the literature and discuss the literature within subsections of the two main areas of Christian theology and male gender studies.

Christian Theology

Christian theology is a broad topic. Within it, there are a variety of emphases including feminist theology, black theology, liberation theology, and others. Theologian John Hall (1998) makes a distinction that is important in theology; he distinguishes theology as being either “liberal” or “conservative.” Within these two distinctions, there is a continuum of theological positions and beliefs, as Hall explains:

Conservative Christianity, fearing that the centrality of Jesus, the Christ will be compromised, emphasizes all the more adamantly the indispensability of an explicit confession of belief in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. Liberal Christianity rejects this as unwarranted exclusivism, maintaining that it is fundamentally un-Christian because of its intolerance of difference. The liberal preference is to deemphasize or downplay the role of Jesus in order to be true to the spirit of tolerance and inclusivity that, as liberal Christians feel, Jesus himself exemplified.

(pp. 31-32)

The label of “liberal” or “liberalism” within Protestant faith became popular at the end of the nineteenth century when mainline churches attempted to accommodate the doctrine and practice of the principles of the Enlightenment (Wikipedia, 2005). It was the thinkers of the Enlightenment who “sought to expunge from Christianity certain beliefs that were, in their opinion, the work of superstition,” including the role of Christ (Lowe, 1982, p. 233).

Harvey (1964) defines liberalism as “a somewhat loose designation for a wide range of religious thought unified less by specific doctrines than by a temper of mind and certain common motifs.” (p. 143). Harvey characterizes “Liberal Protestantism” by the following five points: an eagerness to discard old orthodox forms if they were judged to be irrational in the light of modern knowledge or irrelevant to what was regarded as the central core of religious experience; a confidence in the power of man’s reason when guided by experience; a belief in freedom; a belief in the social nature of human existence; and a faith in the benevolence of God and the goodness of creation (p. 144).

The term “conservative” is a descriptive word that is applied to persons or groups who generally oppose progressive or liberal theologies (Wikipedia, 2006). Conservative theology is simply a label, like liberal, that points to a spectrum of beliefs. Within the conservative element, there are those who are more right wing who might be understood as fundamentalists, and those that are evangelicals. Christian groups and churches are constantly redefining these two terms, and there is no agreed-upon definition. The term “fundamentalists” was first used by Christian Protestants in the early decades of the twentieth century in an attempt to distinguish themselves from more liberal Protestants who were, in their opinion, entirely distorting the Christian faith. (Armstrong, p. xii) An

example would be American Christian fundamentalist Jerry Falwell, who, immediately following the terrorist attacks of September 11 on the World Trade Centers, “proclaimed that the tragedy had been a judgment of God for the sins of the secular humanists in the United States” (Armstrong, p. ix). Like many terms in the church and within the Christian faith, different meanings and experiences have been ascribed and attached to a variety of terms. One such term is “evangelicals.” The *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (McKim, 1996) refers to “evangelicals” in the following terms:

A term used in Europe for ‘Protestant.’ In America it has come to refer to one who stresses the need for a personal relationship with God in Jesus Christ by faith. Some who claim the term seek to define it further in terms of theological beliefs about particular issues. (p. 96)

Clearly defining the differences between conservative and liberal theology is difficult because theologians will differ in their opinions. A helpful example to deepen understanding of the ethos of difference might be to examine the Holy Bible, the acknowledged sacred text of the Christian faith. Some have accused the liberal element of rejecting the authority of scripture, but liberals believe in interpreting scripture anew and “read it with an emphasis on interpreting it with insight and individual self-consciousness” (Hutcheson & Shriver, 1999, pp. 24-25).

The conservative element makes a strong claim to the authority or centrality of scripture. “The principle of the reliability and final authority of the Scriptures in matters of faith and practice is central” for the conservative element (Hutcheson & Shriver, 1999, p. 33). The two sides, for lack of better term, approach the scripture differently. The conservative more readily quotes the Bible and, while there is an appreciation for

historical and cultural criticism, essentially reads it literally. Historical criticism is applied to deepen the literal Word. Liberals approach scripture with a complexity and openness indicating that there can be different interpretations of scripture. A modern day example of this would be the positions liberal and conservative churches have taken in respect to homosexuality. The liberals have embraced a liberation and inclusive theology that the conservative element rejects by quoting scripture and applying a literal interpretation that brands homosexual persons as sinners and in need of redemption (Hutcheson & Shriver, 1999, p. 25).

Theologian Marcus Borg prefers to not use the terms “liberal” and “conservative” because both are imprecise. He believes that “[the term] Conservative covers a spectrum ranging from Jerry Falwell and Pat Robertson to C. S. Lewis to Karl Barth. The latter two would find the first two to be strange bedfellows” (p. 2). He adds that “[the term] Liberal can be applied to a range of Christians from those with a strong sense of the reality of God and a deep commitment to the Christian tradition to advocates of a nontheistic Christianity for whom tradition is a negative term” (p. 2). While I believe Borg makes a noteworthy point, for purposes of this thesis I will use the terms “liberal” and “conservative” as they are more widely accepted, as distinguishing paradigms.

It is clear that the fastest growing churches, in terms of numbers in North America, would be of the conservative theological nature. A study conducted by the Glenmary Research Center and sponsored by the Association of Statisticians of American Religious Bodies, found that the fastest growing religious denomination in the last ten years was the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, and the next fastest growing were the conservative Christian church and the churches of Christ (Church Business

Magazine, 2002). Further to this, would be fundamentalist promotion when Christian Theology is understood in a multitude of ways. The director of Glenmary Research Center stated, "I was astounded to see that by and large the growing churches are those that we ordinarily call conservative" (Church Business Magazine, 2002). The United Church of Canada, in its statements, demonstrates a juxtaposed position to the conservative element. Within the United Church of Canada and other more liberal denominations, there is an understanding that theology is systematic, interpretive and metaphorical versus literal, and mystical in juxtapose to defined liberalism. Yet, it is important to note that, regardless of theological orientation within the Christian tradition; at the center of Christian theology is a male figure, Jesus, the Christ.

Christology

"Christology is the part of Christian doctrine concerned with the revelation of God in Jesus, the Christ" (Harvey, 1964). It is the doctrine of the person of Jesus, the Christ and the claims that Jesus, the Christ is Lord and that he brings salvation (Migliore, 1991, p. 140). Christology "is a reflection upon the one whom the Christian community confesses as Lord and Saviour" (Lowe, 1982, p. 222). This has been traditionally understood as the doctrine of Incarnation. That is, the union of the divine and human natures in one person; Jesus, the Christ, and the "becoming flesh" (Harvey, 1964, p. 130). We must understand that Jesus, being a real person, is not reducible to our thoughts and doctrines about him; our Christologies. The person Jesus "puts us in touch with the universal God, who as living Person transcends our ideas and images of the divine in the very act of coming close to us." (Hall, 1998, p. 33) The New Testament introduces us to

Jesus as Emmanuel: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel – which means, ‘God with us’” (Matthew 1:23).

The United Church of Canada in its Statement of Faith, section II on Jesus, the Christ, states the following:

We believe in Jesus, the Christ, the Son of the Father, Who, for us men and our salvation became man and dwelt among us.

We believe that He lived a perfect human life, wholly devoted to the will of God and the service of man.

We believe that in Him God comes face to face with men; so that they learn that God loves them seeks their good, bears their sorrows and their sin, and claims their exclusive faith and perfect obedience.

We believe that in Jesus, the Christ God acted to save man, taking, at measureless cost, man's sin upon Himself; that the Cross reveals at once God's abhorrence of sin and His saving love in its height and depth and power; and that the Cross is for all time the effectual means of reconciling the world unto God.

We believe that Jesus was raised victorious over death and declared to be the Son of God with power; and that He is alive for evermore, our Savior and our Lord. So we acknowledge Jesus, the Christ as the Son of God Incarnate, and the Saviour of the world. (United Church of Canada, 2006)

This statement needs to be understood within the parameters mentioned earlier about context and strict adherence to belief statements.

Spong (2001), a writer, theologian, and former Episcopal Bishop of Newark, New Jersey, states that he seeks, “a Christology that preserves divinity but not supernatural

theism,” – a distinction that he feels is not often made (pp. 83-84) Through the narrative of Holy Scripture, it is learned that Jesus is wounded, suffers, and is crucified. It is further understood that by Christ’s suffering, he understood our pain and mediated grace between humanity and God. There is a humanity to Jesus that the Council of Nicea (in 325) made clear that his oneness with God and that, “Christ’s role as mediator did not mean that he was more than human but less than God” (Lowe, 1982, p. 227).

The story is furthered by a Christ who is resurrected from the dead, emphasizing that through pain and suffering, even death; there is hope for new life. The Christian faith promotes healing, an opportunity for all to find their resurrection. It is through a belief in Christ that people are able to have their lives transformed, by accepting the grace and love that is offered through this sacrificial act. Japanese theologian Kitamori (quoted in Park, 1993) claims that, “Through God’s pain, God resolves human pain, and through God’s own pain Jesus, the Christ, heals human wounds” (p. 117). Boyd (1995) explains:

Jesus died because of his passionate, divine commitment to the dignity and inclusion of all persons in the realm of God. The result is that, in the words of Paul, Christ sets us and the creation “free from our bondage to decay” (Romans 8:21). (p. 111)

The grace of redemption is grace that comes to us personally and historically, by means of particular events and persons. For many Christians, God is believed to have acted historically and particularly in Jesus, the Christ. That is, “Redemptive grace was given by means of the incarnation, the life and ministry of Jesus, his suffering and death, and his resurrection and continuing presence in the world” (Boyd, 1995, p. 109).

In Christian theology is an understanding that God knows we suffer: “The Christ must suffer because suffering is the condition of those in relation to whom God would be” (Hall, 1986, p. 33). Life is filled with moments of suffering and woundedness and it is God’s desire for us to have new life and to heal us. As Soelle (1975) notes: “There is a history of resurrections, which has vicarious significance. A person’s resurrection is no personal privilege for himself alone – even if he is called Jesus of Nazareth. It contains within itself hope for all, for everything” (p. 150).

I am interested in how Christian theology of the “wounded healer” connects to the experiences of men, particularly men who themselves are wounded and have a relationship with Christ. Jesus, the Christ is understood pastorally and theologically as “the wounded healer . . . [who] restores the fractured relationship between God, man, and the whole universe” (Campbell, 1981, p. 38). It is understood that being wounded is part of life itself and that it is precisely at this point that Christian theology speaks to us. Accordingly, God knows we suffer and through the act of Jesus, the Christ dying on the cross, presents us an invitation to heal: “For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross” (Colossians 1:19-20).

Woundedness

Theologian Andrew Sung Park (1993) talks about *han*, a Korean word that can be best translated as wounded or woundedness. It refers to the deep pain we experience as human beings throughout life. Park connects human woundedness with God and Jesus, the Christ by stating, “We come to know the reality of God only in the midst of

experiencing *han* in the world” (p. 126). There is a relationship between our own woundedness and Christian faith: “*Han* is the point of contact between Jesus, the Christ and suffering humanity and between Jesus, the Christ and God” (p. 126). Campbell (1981) defines a wound as “an opening in the walls of our body, a breaking of the barrier between us and the whole world around us” (p. 39).

Martin Luther understood that Jesus on the cross is a divine expression of woundedness, and that Jesus on the cross cannot be understood without the human experience of woundedness (Park, 1993). It is in our state of woundedness that we are able to identify with Jesus on the cross. It is understood that by His dying, He took on the pain of the world so that all may have life: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:16)

Within Christianity, there is an understanding of “the five wounds of Christ” and therefore, because Jesus was wounded, he suffers for us and understands our human pain or woundedness. The Five Wounds or Sacred Wounds of Christ are understood as a mark of love. The reference is specifically to the wounds Christ suffered in his hands and feet and the piercing from a lance to his heart: “They did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water” (John 19:33-34). For the Roman Catholic Saints St. Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) and St. Francis of Assisi (1182-1226), “[these] wounds pointed to the fulfillment of Christ’s love because God, humbled himself by taking on vulnerable flesh and died to free mankind from death” (College of the Holy Cross, 2006).

It is through Jesus' painful death that Christians believe he took on the pain of the world:

The wounds were the channels through which Christ's blood was spilled. This precious blood sealed for Christians a new covenant to replace the old covenant of Moses. Whereas once a sacrificial lamb was offered to God in atonement for sins, now divine blood from the holy victim pure enough to atone for all of humanity's transgressions was offered. (College of the Holy Cross, 2006).

Thus Jesus' wounds "in life and in death" are "expressions of his openness to our suffering" (Campbell, 1981, p. 38).

Christianity therefore presupposes that human beings are wounded or broken and in need of redemption and salvation. This is an assumption that this study is based on. A traditional Christian understanding has been that salvation comes for individuals when they accept that Jesus, the Christ died for their transgressions, now making them free and able to live as forgiven and redeemed individuals. However, this is only one understanding. The theology of Alastair Campbell (1981) would resonate with many as well when he claims the following:

We do a grave injustice to the incarnate love of God if we try to understand the suffering and death of Jesus merely as some kind of legal transaction paying the 'penalty' for man's sin in a distanced, 'objective' way. (p. 38)

In this study it is assumed the participants are wounded. Hollis (1994) claims that wounding has always been a critical part of male initiation into adulthood. In order to find healing and freedom from our wounds, we must acknowledge they exist, come to an understanding of them, and engage our woundedness if we want to move towards

healing. Hollis claims that “There are necessary wounds, those that quicken consciousness, obliging us to move out of the old dispensation into new life, catalysts to the next stage of growth (p. 65). In the field of study of pastoral counseling and psychology, Anderson, Zuehlke & Zuehlke (2000) state that, “Emotional wounds from the past can damage our intimacy with God and stand in the way of our experience of freedom” (p. 190).

In surveying both Christian theology and gender male studies, it is clear that men have been wounded and that these wounding experiences can prevent men from experiencing the fullness and abundance of life that Jesus claims he brings His followers: “I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full” (John 10:10).

Woundedness has a paradoxical dimension to it. Literature suggests that all men experience it and that is both necessary and appalling (Hollis, 1994, p. 64). Nouwen (1972) makes a similar acknowledgement, pointing that from our woundedness we can experience pain and despair as well as freedom and healing:

Shared pain is no longer paralyzing but mobilizing, when understood as a way to liberation. When we become aware that we do not have to escape our pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope. (p. 93)

Patrick Morley (1995), a leading figure in the Christian men’s movement, identifies seven major categories of how men experience woundedness in their life. Those categories are: identity, relationships, money, temperament, integrity, and time management. As Morley mentions, psychologist Ron Levant (1995) categorizes “men’s wounds” into five basic areas: father wound, mother wound, wife, relationships, and

work. It seems clear that the literature devoted to Christian theology acknowledges the importance of woundedness, and now I will turn my attention to literature devoted to male studies.

It is from our woundedness, our pain, that we can find healing. As Hollis (1994) claims, “There are wounds that crush the soul, distort and misdirect the energy of life, and those that prompt us to grow up” (p. 64). However, “Woundedness that is still raw and has not begun to be healed and put in some sort of perspective actually can destroy” (Culbertson, 2000, p. 278).

One of the selection criteria for participants in this study was that they had engaged in personal therapeutic process, thus a process of healing. There is an understanding that the participants are at a sufficient place in their healing of feeling healed or whole. Thus, the assumption was that the participants would be able to articulate and bring understanding to their woundedness and their engagement of it. In discussing a Christology of a suffering and resurrected Christ, there is an acknowledgement that this sacrificial act was intended to offer redemption and salvation for humanity as has already been demonstrated. The term salvation means “to save” which comes from the Greek root *salvos* which translates to mean “whole.” Therefore, a significant part of the research focused on the participants understanding of Christ as an agent for their healing.

Male Gender Studies

There is a considerable volume of literature written within the broad category of male studies. The focus of these works varies greatly but it appears that much of what has been written focuses on specific dimensions of being male in today’s society, for

instance, male violence, father-son relationships, or men as workaholics. These studies tend to document men's experiences from the point of view of participants. Meade (1993), Bly (1990), Keen (1991), Sheehy (1998), Some (1993), and others approach the field using myth and metaphor as a means of accessing the stories of men. In this section I will discuss the literature devoted to male studies in two broad categories: organized men's movements and the psychological study of men and masculinity. Within the broad section on organized men's movements, I have subdivided the discussion into the mythopoetic movement, profeminist movement, and the promise keeper's men's movement as a way to address the topic of male woundedness and subsequent healing.

Organized Men's Movements

There has been widespread recent interest in the "men's movement" made popular by Bly's book *Iron John* (1990). In search of their "inner king" and the "warrior within," men have been buying books and heading off on retreats by the thousands attempting to reclaim or understand their manhood. Men are organizing themselves in a variety of formats to try and address this deeper issue that they long to change something about their current understanding and expression of who they are.

Early writings in the men's movement often centered on the male condition and were supportive of or a reaction to the women's liberation movement at a time when many men were caught between traditional roles as men and the newer expectations. (Menstuff, 2006)

In 1998, I attended a large annual international men's gathering, the Chicago Men's Conference. At that conference, groups of men were present and participated, including the "New Warriors Network" and "Wild Man." Other men's movement groups

exist in addition to the followers of Bly and the mythopoetic movement, which will be discussed in the next section. For instance, The National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS) has existed as a profeminist group that is often at odds with other movements. NOMAS states as its goal the “ending of all forms of violence against women, ending racism, affirming gay relationships, and enhancing men’s lives” (Nonn, 1995, p. 323.). In the last decade, a popular Christian group called the Promise Keepers has emerged that fills football stadiums with men who recommit themselves to Christ and the traditional role of the father. Promise Keepers base their movement on literal interpretation of certain scripture, making them part of the conservative element discussed earlier, which refers to men as head of the household and that women are to serve their husband. Saint Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians, 5: 22, orders, “Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord.”

In the following sections I will continue to outline the literature that I have reviewed within the following broad categories: mythopoetic movement, profeminist movement, and the Promise Keepers.

Mythopoetic Movement

The mythopoetic movement is an example of an organized men’s movement and has been founded on and dominated by the work of Robert Bly. “Men respond to him enthusiastically because he talks about things men feel a crying need to talk about – things no one else is discussing” (Brod, 1995, p. 89). Since the release of Bly’s *Iron John* (1990), there has been a surge in his popularity and his leading of men into retreat and self-discovery. As Beneke (1995) comments:

He offers a solution in a lost deep truth about masculinity which can only be reclaimed by following some kind of initiation...the particular initiation he advocates centers around the reclamation of grief over one's lack of connection with one's father, and rituals which enable men to feel their wildness. (p. 154)

It is clear to Bly and the mythopoetic movement that this must be done in the absence or accompaniment of women. He adheres to and promotes the construct of masculinity: "Eventually a man needs to throw off all indoctrination and begin to discover for himself what the father is and what masculinity is" (Bly, 1990, p. 25). It is a movement that began in the 1980s and became more popular after *Iron John* was published (Messner, 1997, p. 17). Mythopoetic movement leaders such as Michael Meade (1993), James Hillman (1975), and Robert Bly (1990) helped guide men on a spiritual journey using fairy tales, myth, and poetry with the purpose, "aimed at rediscovering and reclaiming the 'deep masculine' parts of themselves that they believed had been lost" (Messner, p. 17). In *The Politics of manhood: Profeminist Men Respond to The Mythopoetic Men's Movement (And the Mythopoetic Leaders Answer)*, edited by sociologist Michael Kimmel (1995), Shepherd Bliss, a mythopoetic leader, states that he first developed the term *mythopoetic* and that it means more than the assumed myth and poetry; it comes from the word *mythopoesis*. This word refers to re-mythologizing or "re-making, so the mythopoetic approach means revisioning masculinity for our time" (Bliss, p. 293).

The movement advocates the clear themes of initiation, ritual, wounding, and the notion and necessity of a quest or journey is paramount in the movement. There exists an

understanding that men need to begin a journey of discovery. Keen's (1991) popular *Fire in the Belly* begins with the following:

A man must go on a quest to discover the sacred fire in the sanctuary of his own belly to ignite the flame in his heart, to fuel the blaze in the hearth, to rekindle his ardour for the earth.

That is, men need to take the time and be intentional about examining themselves and working through their woundedness to discover where they become alive, who they are as a person healed and who understands their wounds.

Within the mythopoetic men's movement, emphasis is placed on initiation, ritual rites or passages into manhood, and a journey to healing. African writer Malidoma Some (1993) claims that, "The abandonment of ritual can be devastating. From the spiritual viewpoint, ritual is inevitable and necessary if one is to live" (p. 12). Gustafson (1992) declares, "It seems the male psyche begins to require initiations for itself in the preadolescent and early adolescent years" (p. 74). Through the use of stories, men are encouraged to understand how they have been initiated as boys, the woundings they have experienced, and to examine their relationships with their fathers. For Messner (1997), "A major preoccupation of men at mythopoetic gatherings is the poverty of men's relationships with fathers and with other men in workplaces" (p. 19). Mythopoetic leader James Hillman (1975) says, "The terrible traits in the father also initiate the son into hard lines of his own shadow" (p. 72). Writer, drummer, and lecturer Michael Meade (1993) of the movement adds the following:

Initiatory events are those that mark a man or a woman's life forever, that pull a person deeper into life than they would normally choose to go. Initiatory events

are those that define who a person is, or cause some power to erupt from them, or strip everything from them until all that is left is the essential self. (p. 11)

A core belief of this movement is the use of myth as a means for men to access their beliefs and stories about what it means to be a male in our society. Stories of kings, warriors, and boys are used as parallel stories to men's experiences. In the myth of the Fisher King, a popular myth that is used, a young boy burns his hand on a cooked fish and drops it. The story symbolizes that he touches something in his life too soon, is wounded by it and never forgets it. "Many psychic wounds in a man come because he touches his Christ nature," writes Johnson (1974); "that is, his individuation process, prematurely, can't handle it, doesn't see it through, and is wounded by this" (p. 73).

Keen (1991) comments on the importance of myth and quest:

To be on a quest is nothing more or less than to become an asker of questions. In the Grail legend, the classical tale of male heroism, we are told that when the Knights of the Round Table set out on their quest, each one entered the forest at the place it was darkest and forged a path where none had been before. The inner, psychological meaning of this myth is that full manhood is to be found only when we commit ourselves to a life of questioning. (p. 132)

Central in this movement is the acknowledgement that men must be initiated into manhood and the use of ritual. "Wounding has always been a crucial dimension of male initiation into adulthood, to sacred societies, and even sometimes to profession" (Hollis, 1994, p. 65). Within the literature, there is an acknowledgement that initiation involves a wounding experience, a process that is painful but makes the initiation into manhood.

Keen (1991) makes this point:

From the beginnings of recorded human history to the present day the most important tacit instruction boys receive about manhood is: Masculinity requires a wounding of the body, a sacrifice of the natural endowment of sensuality and sexuality. (p. 31)

Finally, the mythopoetic movement is a movement for men that, “acknowledges and validates their painful wounds, while guiding them to connect with other men in ways that are nurturing and mutually empowering (Messner, 1997, p. 23).

Profeminist Movement

The profeminist movement is a relatively small body of research compared to the mythopoetic literature and the publications within the field of the psychological study of men and masculinity. The profeminist research and perspective “resides somewhere beyond the militant poles of feminism and so-called patriarchy” (Kipnes, 1995, p. 276). Over a decade ago, Shepherd Bliss called for men “to discard the warrior as the dominant male-congruent image in favor of an evocative image of men who dance, make music, protect nature, and love women” (quoted in Kipnes, p. 277). The profeminist movement has existed primarily in academic circles and therefore has not received the attention and profile that the popular mythopoetic movement has received. The profeminist movement is organized through the National Organization for Men Against Sexism (NOMAS), which established itself officially in 1983 under the name National Organization for Changing Men, and in 1992 changed its name to the current one. The movement began as a loose-knit social movement in the early 1970s. It is primarily an activist organization of men and women who support positive change for men. It emphasizes “a perspective for enhancing men’s lives that is pro-feminist, gay-affirmative, anti-racist, and committed to

justice on a broad range of social issues including class, age, religion, and physical abilities” (NOMAS, 2006). Unlike the Promise Keepers or Mythopoetic movement, it does not emphasize individual change as much as it does social change.

In the early 1970s, profeminist men began to articulate their discourse as “de-emphasizing the costs of masculinity and emphasizing the ways that all men derive power and privilege with patriarchal society” (Messner, 1997, p. 50). The profeminists understand themselves as an opposing and alternative view to the issues within male studies. Profeminist Timothy Nonn (1995) identifies the movement using the term “Masculine Renewal” (p. 172) in reference to antifeminist elements of the church renewal men’s movement. He understands Masculine Renewal as part of a historical social project “whose purpose is the continued subordination of women, gays, and people of colour” (p. 173). Under the banner of Masculine Renewal, Nonn states that there are three basic claims that unite religious conservatives and mythopoetics:

- 1) men are victims of oppression, either directly by newly empowered social groups (feminists, gays), or indirectly by an indifferent social order;
- 2) men must gather together in spiritual retreats to discover their authentic masculine identity;
- and 3) men must unite under male leadership in order to preserve and protect the natural gender order and Western Civilization. (p. 174)

Faludi (1991) also views the mythopoetic movement as a part of a contemporary antifeminist backlash. The profeminist movement holds a view that debates about men and masculinity require “more broadly political discussions of collective movements, made up of men and women who are working together to transform existing social institutions” (Messner, 1997, p. 62). This is an important movement in the study of male

woundedness as it opens the doors for women to be part of the dialogue and experience of healing and understanding of male woundedness.

Promise Keepers Men's Movement

The Promise Keepers is a right wing conservative Christian men's movement that was started in 1991 by the University of Colorado's football coach, Sam McCartney. The movement boasts over a million men as members. A self-defined evangelical Christian, McCartney states that, "There is a hunger among men who want to learn to live successfully in today's world" (Menstuff, 2006). Promise Keepers invites men to commit or recommit themselves to their families and to Jesus, the Christ. It offers conferences, normally in football stadiums, and a multitude of resources including Bible Study guides, books, videos, and seminars throughout North America. The Promise Keepers website (2005) describes the organization as follows:

Promise Keepers is a Christ-centered organization dedicated to introducing men to Jesus, the Christ as their Saviour and Lord; and then helping them to grow as Christians. This is mainly accomplished through our Seven Promises and our men's conference ministry.

Millions of men have participated since 1990 when Promise Keepers first began. They are well organized with a vision, mission, and statement of faith and core principles. The Promise Keepers vision statement is "Men transformed worldwide." Their mission statement is as follows:

Promise Keepers is dedicated to igniting and uniting men to be passionate followers of Jesus, the Christ through the effective communication of the 7 Promises. A sovereign move of God's Spirit is stirring the hearts of men. In a

world of negotiable values, confused identities, and distorted priorities, men are encountering God's Word, embracing their identities as His sons, and investing in meaningful relationships with God, their families and each other. Clearly, Christian men have an unprecedented opportunity to seize this moment and make a difference for Jesus, the Christ. We believe that God wants to use Promise Keepers as a spark in His hand to ignite a nationwide movement calling men from all denominational, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds to reconciliation, discipleship, and godliness. (Promise Keepers, 2005b)

The Promise Keepers Statement of Faith is as follows:

We affirm the historic Christian faith and proclaim the life-transforming Gospel of the Lord Jesus, the Christ. The Gospel is good news, the very best news anyone can hear.

1. The one living God, who eternally exists in three Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, loves everyone.
2. God uniquely revealed and inspired the Bible, so that it alone is God's Word written, hence the Holy Scriptures are the only inerrant authority for what we believe about God's moral law, salvation from sin and how we should live.
3. Since the disbelief and disobedience of Adam and Eve, all humans have failed to obey God's two major laws summed up by the Lord Jesus, the Christ. We have failed to love God with our whole being and we have failed to love our neighbours as ourselves. People have become slaves to selfishness and are alienated from God and one another.

4. Jesus' death in our place reconciles us to God. His atoning sacrifice provided redemption from the power of sin, forgiveness for our guilt, and reconciliation to Himself and others. We become acceptable to God, or justified, not by works, but by God's grace alone, through faith in Christ alone. We believe in the deity of Jesus, the Christ, His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, death on the cross to provide for our redemption, bodily resurrection and ascension into heaven, present ministry of intercession for us, and His return to earth in power and glory.
 5. The Holy Spirit draws sinners to repentance, belief in the Gospel and trust in the risen Christ of whom it speaks. The Holy Spirit then assures believers of salvation, gives them gifts for servant ministries, and empowers them to meet the needs of the lost, the poor, and the oppressed.
 6. All believers in the Lord Jesus, the Christ are members of His one international, multi-ethnic and transcultural body called the universal church. Its unity is displayed when we reach beyond racial and denominational lines to demonstrate the Gospel's reconciling power.
 7. Our primary calling is to communicate the Gospel to everyone in our generation and nurture disciples. Nothing must divert us from carrying out our Lord's great commission until His glorious return to reign in righteousness.
- (Promise Keepers, 2005d)

In addition, the Promise Keepers list seven principles by which men are to live:

A Promise Keeper is committed to honoring Jesus, the Christ through worship, prayer and obedience to God's Word in the power of the Holy Spirit.

A Promise Keeper is committed to pursuing vital relationships with a few other men, understanding that he needs brothers to help him keep his promises.

A Promise Keeper is committed to practicing spiritual, moral, ethical, and sexual purity.

A Promise Keeper is committed to building strong marriages and families through love, protection and biblical values.

A Promise Keeper is committed to supporting the mission of his church by honoring and praying for his pastor, and by actively giving his time and resources.

A Promise Keeper is committed to reaching beyond any racial and denominational barriers to demonstrate the power of biblical unity.

A Promise Keeper is committed to influencing his world, being obedient to the Great Commandment (see Mark 12:30-31) and the Great Commission (see Matthew 28:19-20).

Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: Love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 12:30-31).

Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age (Matthew 28:19-20). (Promise Keepers, 2005c)

Promise Keepers have attracted attention throughout North America not only from evangelical men, but from pro-feminist men's women's groups. The National Organization for Women (NOW), for example, makes regular updates to its website

about the activities of Promise Keepers and offers an alternative opinion about the movement, its values, and how they affect both men and women. According to an article in *National NOW Times*, prominent Promise Keeper leader the Rev. Jerry Falwell stated, “It appears that America’s anti-Biblical feminist movement is at last dying, thanks God, and is possibly being replaced by a Christ-centered men’s movement” (Recer, 1995).

Messner (1997) recognizes the influence of the Promise Keeper movement. He believes the Promise Keepers movement is part of a “historical ebb and flow of overt masculinity politics within fundamentalist Christianity in the United States” (p. 24). This “flow” has followed in the wake of “feminist challenges to taken-for-granted assumptions about men’s positions of authority in families and communities. The Promise Keepers have as a stated goal to reclaim the spiritual leadership in their families and communities” (p. 26). According to sociologist Jay Coakley who attended a 1992 meeting of Promise keepers, men were between the ages of 35-50, 98 percent were white and middle-upper class, and the discourse was exclusively heterosexual (cited in Messner, p. 26). According to Faludi (1999), Promise Keeper founder Sam McCartney has proved himself as a “dedicated foe of women’s reproductive rights, not to mention gay liberation” (p. 229). A year before he was urging men to commit themselves to family leadership, he was calling for the criminalization of abortion at pro-life rallies and decrying homosexuality as “an abomination against Almighty God” (p. 229).

It also needs to be noted that there is a strong organization of fundamentalist Christian women who support the values of the Promise Keepers movement and the certainty that in keeping with Biblical principles, the man is the leader of the home and community. The women’s supportive organization is called the Promise Reapers. This

emphasizes the importance of Christianity and male woundedness. This branch of Christian thought supports the importance of Christ in the male experience of woundedness, but that it does so from its conservative theological position in contrast to movements like the profeminists.

Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity

Ronald Levant and William Pollack have dominated this field of study. The psychological study of men has recently focused on boys and their socialization. In *Real Boys*, Pollack (1998) examines the socialization that boys experience to become men and the experience that boys have had of this socialization. Levant and Pollack collaborated on an edited book, *A New Psychology of Men* (1995), which covers the psychological development of men, the strain of the gender role paradigm, theory and research on men and masculinity, as well as applications of the research to families, sexual orientation, and gender roles and identity. In addition, psychologists are attempting to address the issue of masculinity. The American Psychological Association has as its 51st division the Psychological Study of Men and Masculinity, which publishes a comprehensive academic journal.

I was drawn to Stephen Bergmen's self-in-relation theory (1995) and his presentation of current theories of male development in order to document the current state of understanding men's issues:

The seeds of misery in men's lives are planted in disconnection from others, isolation, violation, and dominance and from relationships that are not mutually empowering. To participate in relationships that are not mutual is a source of sadness and rage that even in the dominant gender (male) can lead over a period

of time to withdrawal, stagnation, and depression and, characteristically, insecurity, aggression, and violence. (pp. 72-73)

John Rowan, a Fellow of the British Psychological Society, has written on “men as wounding and healing” in his book entitled *Healing The Male Psyche* (1997), Rowan draws on the work of several people in his text. Speaking about therapy with men, he states: “There are pressures on men to be masculine...we should speak of many masculinities rather than just one...however, it may still be true that there is one dominant masculinity, and many subordinate masculinities” (p. 133).

Marvin Goldwert, in *The Wounded Healers* (1992), describes the life experiences of Individual Psychology founder Alfred Adler. Adler was a man who overcame great personal and physical challenges as a child. At the age of four he overheard his doctor tell his parents he would die and took this as a challenge to live. At age ten he was failing math and was told he would not be able to go on in school and should take up a trade and responded by becoming the leading student of mathematics in his school. Adler devoted his life to finding ways to help others. Goldwert (1992) describes Adler as a “wounded healer,” a man who drew from his own illness to build a theory of healing (p. 113). His own life example demonstrates, as in Christian Theology, that there is hope for men to heal from feelings of woundedness. Adler also wrote on males and females from a gender perspective. Writing in the 1920s about male dominance, he said:

Masculine dominance is not a natural thing. There is evidence to prove that it developed chiefly as a result of constant battling between primitive peoples, in the course of which men assumed the more prominent roles as warriors and finally

used their newly won superiority to retain leadership for themselves and for their own ends. (Adler, 1998a, p. 103)

Regardless of which movement one follows -- mythopoetic, profeminist, conservative Christian or other similar movements -- fundamental to all of them is an understanding that men need to connect or re-connect with themselves and others in order to live healthier lives. All acknowledge that men experience a sense of dislocation from each other, families, or their role in society. Although the different movements may emphasize differently where this connection needs to happen, for example, with father, other men, or in the company of women, the core principal of connection remains. How this re-connection is attained or expressed varies with the different movements. The Profeminists believe it needs to be done in the company and relationship of women, the Promise Keepers focus on male only events, and the mythopoetics tend to isolate themselves from women and utilize male only retreats. It is important for every man, on his path of healing to find a method or process that is congruent with his own needs and needs for healing. That is what will invite him and move him into a new way of being and wholeness.

The primary focus of this research is on men's experiences of woundedness and the influence that a relationship to Jesus Christ has had on their understanding and healing. This notion of healing parallels traditional therapeutic work as related to client change. Counseling psychology literature supports the claim that one of the most important factors in facilitating client change is the relationship between the client and counselor.

There are significant studies emphasizing and supporting that successful counseling outcomes are dependent on the counseling relationship (Hill & Corbett, 1993; Horvath & Symonds, 1991). Other studies advocate that the most significant factor in achieving a successful counseling outcome is the established relationship between therapist and client (Duncan & Moynihan, 1994; Gaston, 1990; Horvath, 2000; Krupnick et al., 1996; Marziali & Alexander, 1991; Quinn, Dotson & Jordan, 1997). Given that this research explored with the participants their relationship to Jesus Christ, it would seem worth considering how this relationship with Jesus Christ impacted their growth and change.

The Contribution This Study Will Make to the Literature

This research offers a unique contribution to the literature because it attempts to integrate the male experiences of being wounded with a liberal Christian theology. Research to date that has attempted to do this seems to approach the spiritual dimension with Biblical literalism that reinforces the traditional male roles. The recent Promise Keepers movement exemplifies this. Men are called to change and transform their lives by committing themselves to becoming head of the household and reclaiming their “place” in family and church.

Other writing has simplified the psychotherapeutic process by emphasizing only a need to repent and pray for healing. This I believe denies the complexity of the human soul or psyche. It is integral that psychology and spirituality be reunited in a fashion that promotes not only the healing of the individual male, but society at large. This is important because it is my premise that the issues at hand for men of feeling wounded are spiritual in nature. Furthermore, psychology is literally the study of the soul.

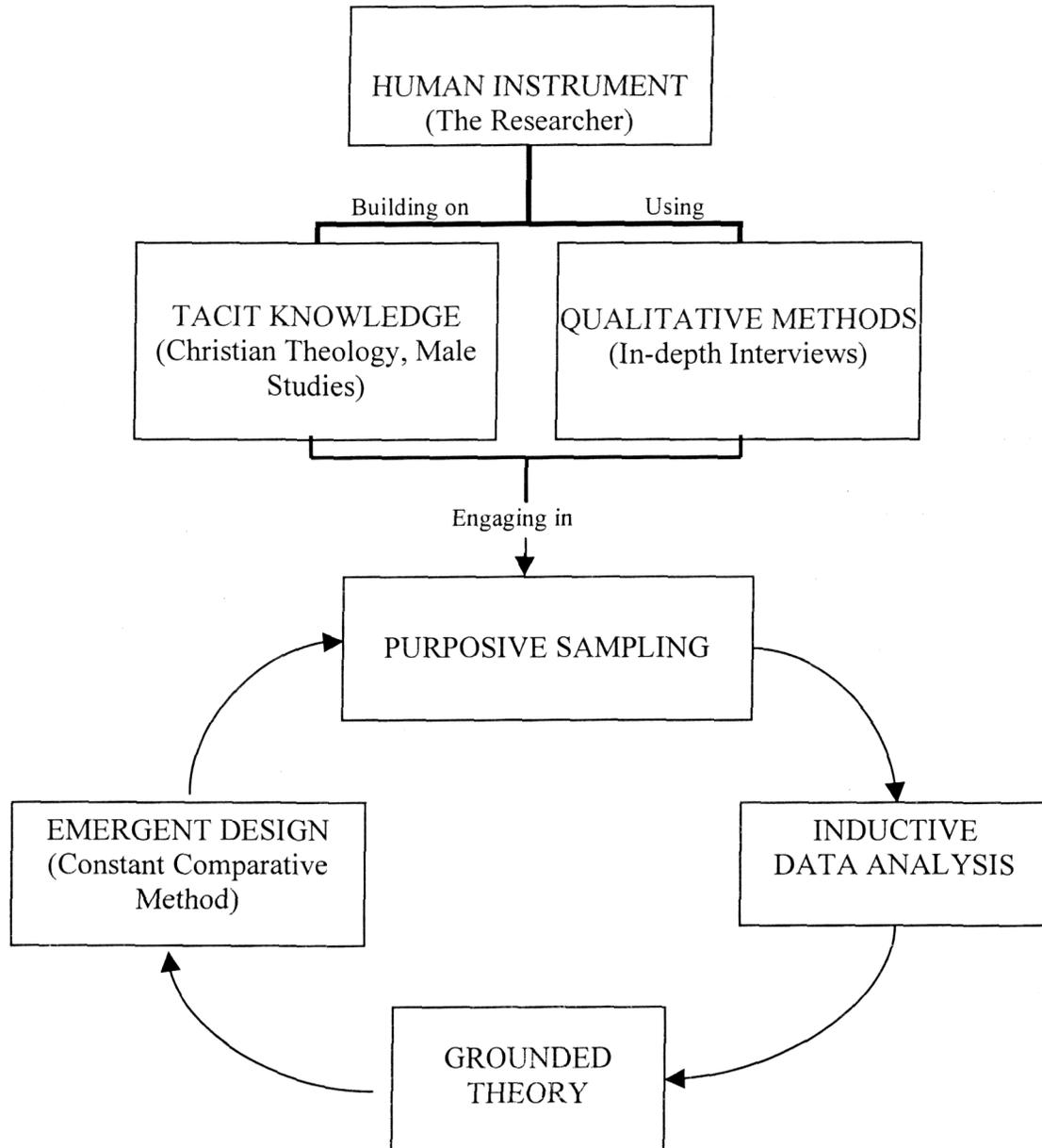
The movements I described earlier demonstrate the attempt being made for both personal and societal change. The mythopoetic movement generally meets the needs of those seeking personal change; organizations like NOMAS are primarily interested in a change social paradigm or systemic reconstruction. I believe researchers such as Levant (1995) are attempting to affect both arenas of change. It is my hope that this study will highlight the significance of a spiritual journey that is in concert with the expressed needs of societal change. Too often Christianity has been presented as a right-wing conservative alternative instead of an expanded view of how individuals and society can find healing from the ideologies of masculinity.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Design

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to bring to consciousness the varied experiences men have of feeling wounded and how a relationship to Jesus the Christ has influenced their understanding of those experiences. I used a modified naturalistic inquiry model as the qualitative research method and the research was developed using grounded theory (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This method of inquiry was selected because it encourages participant's experiences to be heard, including mine, and utilized in a way that made the research significant. This methodological approach allowed themes to be revealed while honouring the stories and experiences the participants shared. Participants were able to share their experiences in their own words, which helped me understand the context, which is largely lost when textual data are quantified (Kaplan & Maxwell, 1994).

Figure 1 illustrates a modified flow of naturalistic inquiry. In the chart, the Human Instrument is the researcher, building on tacit knowledge, which includes Christian theology, men's studies and the psychology of men. Paralleling this process is the qualitative method, including in-depth interviews. Both tacit knowledge and qualitative methods engage in purposive sampling, inductive analysis, grounded theory, and emergent design. It is illustrated in a circle to emphasize that it is a circular versus a linear process.



Modified from Lincoln, Y., & Guba, E. (1985). *Naturalistic Inquiry*.

Figure 1. A modified flow of naturalistic inquiry.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a thorough description of qualitative methods and the chosen methodology; grounded theory. This includes an explanation for each of the specific components employed in this methodology, which include the human instrument, tacit knowledge, purposive sampling, inductive data analysis and the constant comparative method.

Qualitative Methods

Qualitative methods are a natural pursuit when using the human instrument approach to collecting and interpreting data. In this research, an in-depth, semi-structured interview was utilized as the main research tool (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This is an effective tool for uncovering and exploring the experience of woundedness in men. Seidman (1991) states that, “At the heart of interviewing research is an interest in other individuals’ stories because they are of worth” (p. 3). Therefore, an in-depth interview of approximately two hours was conducted with each of the participants. This allowed time to explore with the participants themes and experiences relevant to them. It was my belief that because a personal, professional relationship existed with the participants that I would be in a favourable position to uncover information, ideas, feelings, and personal and meaningful experiences. The interview method also allowed me to seek clarification and engage in an active process of meaning-making with the participants (Kelly, 1963).

It is suggested that “inquiry must be carried out in a natural setting because phenomena of study.... take their meaning as much from their contexts as they do from themselves” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 189). The participants interviewed shared their “natural setting” or “natural life” with me in the telling of their experiences. The participants were not observed in their homes and relationships, but were invited to draw

me into their world during the interview. Therefore, the natural setting in this research was the world as the participants defined it and made meaning of it (Carlsen, 1995). Qualitative methods allowed me to experience the participants as they developed their own definitions of the world. “We experience what they experience in their daily struggle” (Taylor & Bogdan, 1998, p. 8). It was important to me that I was able to enter their world as much as possible in order to hear the fullness of their story and be equipped to probe further in the interview.

All of the interviews were within a three-day period and planned to culminate with the participants in a group interview or discussion. Once immersed in the interviewing process, it was discovered that the participants preferred not to share in a group setting and also came to be understood that it would not add anything significant to the research. The relationship that had been established with each participant was pivotal in his feeling confident and safe to expose his woundedness to me.

Marshall and Rossman (1998) define qualitative research as a process “that values participants’ perspectives on their worlds and seeks to discover those perspectives, that views inquiry as an interactive process between the researcher and the participants, and that is primarily descriptive and relies on people’s words as the primary data ” (p. 7). Employing a qualitative approach to this research afforded the opportunity to hear the men’s experiences of feeling wounded in their own words, by their own expression.

The researcher was also an active participant in this research and kept a reflective journal of thoughts, feelings, stories and reactions throughout the interviewing process and during the data analysis.

Grounded Theory

A grounded theory approach is “a qualitative research method that uses a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon” (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 24). Grounded theory was developed in 1967 by Glaser and Strauss. Critical to this theoretical approach is to begin with an area of study to explore, and through the process of data collection and analysis, relevant themes are allowed to emerge. It is a theory that is faithful to and illuminates the area under study (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This method of qualitative research is unique in that categories and themes emerge as the data is collected and analyzed. It is a method that allows the theory to emerge during the process, which also encourages further data collection. This is achieved through what has been termed the “constant comparative” method, which includes a coding process.

Grounded theory is a method of inquiry that encouraged the stories and experiences of the participants in the study to be heard and understood in ways that were helpful to themselves and the research. As stated, grounded theory begins by focusing on an area of interest; in this study, the experience of male woundedness as it relates to understandings of Jesus, the Christ.

Data was gathered by a semi-structured interview and observation. It is from this data collection process that a theory begins to emerge that is constructed from the research and the methods employed (Glaser & Straus, 1967). Grounded theory has a general goal to construct theory from a question in order to gain understanding of a phenomenon. Here the question is, what is the experience of male woundedness as it related to influences of Jesus, the Christ? The purpose of grounded theory, according to

Charmaz (2001), is to understand and describe participants' life experiences by understanding the common themes that emerge when participants describe their experiences in their own words. Grounded theory derives theories from data, while at the same time, from observations built on constant comparisons. As participants share their experience, the emerging themes are compared with other participants including myself, so over time a theory is constructed by employing a constant comparative method.

The Human Instrument

The human instrument is clearly I as the researcher. In using grounded theory, it is important that the human instrument, like any testing instrument, is trustworthy and capable of refinement. The questions asked in the interview, the themes identified in the data analysis, and the areas that were probed more deeply were all filtered through my lens as a researcher. I have been an active participant in this research in that the experiences and stories of the participants impacted my own. I will attempt to honour their experiences as theirs, but feel I must name the biases and filters I bring to the research (Glesne & Peshkin, 1992). I am a white, Christian, heterosexual man, married with two daughters, and have my own experiences of being wounded. The quality and reliability of the data I collect directly correlate with how effective I am as an interviewer, and how much my participants trust me with their experiences.

There is no reason to believe that humans cannot approach a level of trustworthiness similar to that of ordinary standardized tests – and for certain purposes, given some of the special characteristics enumerated above, even higher levels. (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 195)

I understood that the experiences participants shared with me impacted my own sense of woundedness. I kept a reflective journal throughout the process of interviewing and research, which then become data and an integral part of the research. I knew three of the participants personally and professionally, the fourth participant, I did not know personally but was an important person to the other participants. All of the participants knew each other professionally and personally.

Tacit Knowledge

“Tacit knowledge is all that we remember minus words, symbols and other rhetorical forms” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 196). Every individual has “great stores of tacit knowledge with which to build new understandings” (p. 196). I will use my tacit knowledge as the basis on which I develop my thesis and build in my insights into my data. My tacit knowledge has been formed from my relational experiences as a man, my work as a pastoral counselor, my formal education as a theologian, and my lived experiences. While tacit knowledge is coupled with explicit knowledge gained through research, “It is essential that the human instrument be permitted to use his or her tacit knowledge at full strength and in most explicit fashion” (p. 198).

Purposive Sampling

“Barbara Tuchman (1979) makes the case for one person’s story as being the prism through which we can see and understand many others’ lives” (Butt, Yamagishi, & Chow, 1992). Intrinsic in this argument, is the belief that the lived experience of one will hold commonalities for others. This study involved four participants as a means to identify common or general themes that would be part of each participant’s story. I am not claiming that hearing the story of one individual, or even four, is substantive enough to

make generalizations. However, according to Tuchman, the stories will be accessible enough for men that they may hear their own experiences coming alive in the stories of the participants. Readers themselves will determine whether or not specific aspects of a participant's story are generalizable or not.

Naturalistic sampling is based on informational considerations and not statistical ones (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used discriminate sampling as my method for selecting participants. In discriminate sampling, I am able to choose the locations for interviewing and the participants in order to "maximize opportunities for verifying the story line, relationships between categories, and for filling in poorly designed categories or themes" (Strauss & Corbin, 1990, p. 187).

I identified four men who demonstrated an awareness and insight into their life experience. The criteria for selecting the participants was that they had engaged their own life story in a significant way through previous counselling or a therapeutic process, had an understanding and articulation about their life experience, state that they would be comfortable talking to me about their experiences of being and feeling wounded, and have similar backgrounds and formal education in both the areas of Christian theology and psychology and are therefore able to offer a valuable contribution to my research. Participants were initially contacted by telephone and a brief description of the study was offered to them as well as the procedures for confidentiality and anonymity.

Paramount in this study was the need for the participants to trust me, and feel comfortable exploring their experiences of woundedness. There was a high potential that these experiences might be painful and participants therefore needed to be able to be vulnerable with me and trust that I could hold their stories with integrity and honour. I

also needed to feel the same way towards them, as I too would be vulnerable and needing to trust. I believe that my methodology enabled me to be open to this mutual exchange.

Interviews were conducted at an annual meeting and conference of the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education, which the four participants attended. Conducting the interviews at this conference gave me opportunity to meet with all of them over one weekend.

Three of the participants live in Canada and one in the United States. An invitation to participate (see Appendix A) and a written description of the study (see Appendix B) were given to each participant to read. Confidentiality procedures were explained, including that the researcher would use pseudonyms. The participants were advised that only the transcriber, the researcher, and supervisor would be the individuals to have access to the raw data. It was also communicated that the data collected would be presented in this thesis, and would only be published in academic journals and/or for conference presentations or in a teaching environment with the participants' permission. The participants were supplied with the name of the chairperson for the University of Lethbridge's Human Research Subjects Committee as well as the name and telephone number of the thesis supervisor in case they had any concerns or questions. The participants were instructed that they could discontinue the interview at any time for whatever reason.

Letters of consent (see Appendix C) were signed by each participant. Written consent to have the session audio taped was also given. The interviews were conducted using a semi-structured interview (see Appendix D). Traditional counseling skills such as

open-ended questions, empathic listening, and verbal reflections were used to help encourage the participants' sharing of their experiences.

It was important to establish an environment that was safe for the participants. This was accomplished by conducting the interviews in a private suite, at a time of day they chose, and by using interview skills to prompt disclosure and openness. I also disclosed, during the interview, as a means of offering vulnerability and encouraging sharing. This also seemed to be a very natural way to communicate, as colleagues, as well as researcher and participants.

During the interview process notes were kept, and non-verbal communication was observed. I also noted my own reacting and feelings as I listened to the stories the participants shared. At the conclusion of each interview, time was spent talking about how it went and all participants were advised of referral services for counselling if they felt the need for these. Each interview lasted between one and a half to two hours. Participants were free to break when they needed to and water was available to them throughout the interview.

Once the data had been transcribed and themes began to emerge in the analysis, the participants were contacted by mail with a copy of the transcript from their interview as well as a list of the major themes identified. Once they received the material, they were contacted by telephone/email to ensure they felt the transcript accurately reflected the interview. Participants had the right to delete any portion or section of the transcript that they did not want included. In all cases they left the original transcription as it was. They were also asked if the transcript honoured their story, as well as to determine if the

identified themes resonated with their own experience. In all cases the transcript was left as presented.

Inductive Data Analysis and Constant Comparative Method

In the grounded theory approach, data analysis is a fluid process that allows themes and categories to emerge within the research process. As themes emerge, this guides further data collection. In this study, the interviews and data were coded by the researcher as themes were identified. Also noted were my personal reactions, thoughts, and feelings to the themes and the listening of the participant's stories. Data collected from interviews and follow-up interviews by telephone and/or e-mail was used in the analysis. The data was analyzed inductively and a constant comparison method was utilized (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This means, as the data was analyzed, themes were identified within the experiences of each participant.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) offer that there are four stages in this method of constant comparison. The four stages are (1) comparing incidents applicable to each category, (2) integrating categories and their properties, (3) delimiting the theory, and (4) writing the theory.

The transcriptions from the interview were bound into a workbook. The interviews were read through and each time a theme or concept was identified, it was coded. Once themes were identified, they were compared with each of the other coded themes for redundancy and clarity. This lengthy process was used for all interviews.

After this was completed, the identified themes within each participant's interview were compared with the other participant's experiences or data individually and then compared to the previous data as new themes emerged. As a result of this process, it

became evident that a follow-up discussion for further clarity for the participants was needed. The new information was analyzed in the same manner. This process was “aimed at uncovering embedded information and making it explicit” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 202). Using the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), allowed the researcher to sort data into tentative theme categories by similar characteristics.

As the process of analysis continued, I worked to re-define the theme categories and the criteria for each. As one example, a theme that could have and did emerge was that of “father-son relationships.” In *The Prince and the King*, Gurian (1992) identified that father-son relationships are often a source of woundedness. This process is a fluid one. The theme categories are defined by the data and not by pre-existing categories. Although it is likely that the researcher’s explicit and tacit knowledge affect the themes, this will be noted throughout the analysis. Inherent in grounded theory is an emergent design. That is, themes were named as they emerged from the participant’s stories. I have identified themes to be explored as the process of data collection proceeded. In an emergent design, constant data analysis is important so that insights, questions, hypotheses and ideas, can be continually identified and explored (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Confidentiality and Ethical Considerations

This study was granted approval by the Human Subjects and Research Committee of the University of Lethbridge. No identifying information of the participants has been used in this study. Participants were required to sign a letter of informed consent, which outlined the nature of the research and the applications of it. A separate informed consent form for audio recording was also attained. Participants were informed they had the right

to withdraw from the research at anytime during the research period and that the researcher was following the University of Lethbridge Human Ethics Research Committee criteria.

All recordings will be destroyed within three months after the successful defense of this study. A summary of the findings was provided for participants to react to before writing the findings in this study. This ensured participant data is accurate and fair, from the perspective of the participants. Participant data will not be used in other publications, except the thesis, unless permission is granted.

Participants were provided with the telephone numbers of the chairperson of the Human Subjects Research Committee at the University of Lethbridge as well as the name and contact information for the thesis supervisor. Participants were given the name and telephone number of a professional counselor for referral if they needed it. Participants were told that the interviewing process may bring up painful memories, and they could discontinue the interview at any time. Confidentiality of their identity, identifying characteristics and stories was given high regard.

Chapter 4: Analysis, Findings And Discussion

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis was to bring to consciousness the varied experiences men have of feeling wounded and how a relationship to Jesus the Christ has influenced their understanding of those experiences. In this research, I engaged a discriminate group of men in exploring and trying to understand their experiences of feeling wounded in relationship to the Christian story. Based on my experience as a man, a pastoral minister in the United Church of Canada, and a counselor, it is my belief that as human beings we share elements of feeling and being wounded. As we journey through life our self-understanding and relationships with others impact our emotional, psychological, and spiritual development (Emmons, 1991). This chapter includes a brief biographical review of the participants, interview data in the areas of understandings of and relationship to Christ, definitions and experiences of woundedness, themes of woundedness, and unanticipated results.

I have used pseudonyms and changed identifying information to protect the participant's identities. All participants are male, Caucasian, and citizens of Canada.

Biographies

Chris

Chris is a forty-three year old male who has been married for fifteen years to his partner and they have two children. They live in a medium-sized city and Chris teaches at a seminary as well as sees a small client load for counselling. He is an ordained clergy of a mainline church in Canada and has worked professionally as a congregational minister as well as a hospital chaplain. Chris spends his free time exercising, riding his bike to

work and swims year round. His parents, both living, dwell within a mile of his current home. He is the eldest of three children. Chris has a Bachelor of Arts, a Master of Divinity, and a Doctor of Ministry. Chris also holds certification within the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education as a Specialist in Pastoral Counselling and is a Full Teaching Supervisor of Clinical Pastoral Education.

Sam

Sam is a fifty year old male who currently teaches in a seminary in the United States. He has been married for twenty-six years and has three children. He is the oldest of five children of German decent. He is the Director of a program in Pastoral Counselling and Psychotherapy and has a small clinical counselling practice. Sam has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, a Master of Divinity, a Master in Pastoral Counselling, and a Doctor of Philosophy in Psychology and Religion. Within the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education, Sam no longer has status because he lives in the United States. However, he held certification as a Supervisor in Pastoral Counselling and Clinical Pastoral Education. He is currently a diplomat within the American Association of Pastoral Counselors, a sister organization to the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education and has state licensure.

Barnes

Barnes is married with three children and is forty-six years of age. He is an ordained clergyperson within a mainline church in Canada and currently works in a hospital as a pediatric chaplain. Barnes also carries a small counselling client load. He grew up in a fairly isolated community with a father who was born in Poland and who speaks Ukrainian. This became an important piece in Barnes' own understanding of his

identity. He is a Teaching Supervisor in Clinical Pastoral Education certified by the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education. He holds a Bachelor of Science, a Master of Divinity, a Master in Forestry, and a Doctor of Ministry.

Edgar

Edgar is forty-four and grew up on a small rural farm. He is married with four children. He grew up in a home that included his paternal grandparents. He is the youngest of five children and grew up mostly in poverty. His family would take in foster children for financial reasons and they too were part of his family experience growing up. He has a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology, Master of Divinity, and a Doctor of Ministry. Edgar is an ordained clergyperson in a mainline church in Canada and currently works as the director of a hospital's spiritual care department. He is a Full Teaching Supervisor of both Clinical Pastoral Education and Pastoral Counselling Education within the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education.

Understandings of and Relationship to Christ

One of the key questions I asked participants during the first section of questions in the interview was how they perceive and understand Jesus, the Christ. Subsequent was an inquiry as to how they describe their relationship to Him. This was done because this study is focusing on a particular segment of society that wants to understand their lives in a Christian context. It was important for this study to establish that the participants can articulate how they understand a most important aspect of Christianity, Christ and their relationship to Him. This needed to be established so that I could have an understanding of their perceptions of this key relationship. In this study, I wanted to hear not only about the participants' woundedness, but their woundedness in relationship to Jesus, the Christ.

That is, how they understood their woundedness within a Christian context. Jesus Christ is understood and related to as the historical Jesus, that is, the man who walked the earth, and also as the messianic figure or divine manifestation known as Christ. Hence, I use the term Jesus the Christ in referring to Him as the Christ-figure.

I have organized the participants' responses individually under their pseudonym as a heading. I have done this because I believe it is important that a sense of each the participants permeates this chapter as it is my hope it will deepen your appreciation and understanding of them, their stories, and the common themes that have been identified.

Chris

In his response to what images and perceptions of Christ he held, Chris, an ordained clergyperson in a mainline church in Canada, offered that for him "Christ is multi-dimensional, essentially a comrade. He is a teacher, the embodiment of good teaching. He's earthy. There's a smell, a physicality to Jesus. So I would say very incarnational. He is alive and well in my own life because I believe He can be alive and well. I see him much more as a colleague and teacher." I invited Chris to expand on his comment as Christ as colleague and he stated:

I would not put myself on the same level as Christ. But rather I think He invites me into a collegial relationship – He's a teacher, storyteller, traveler, journeyer, a contemplative, passionate soul, who is interested, takes time to meet people, I think a wonderful example of how to live a very rich life.

Chris expressed that it is difficult to describe his relationship to Christ. He claimed:

[I think of] Him as a distant but intimate friend. I don't mean distant in the sense of being away, it's like, how you and I, Jeff, chat once in awhile and yet I feel a

great kinship toward you, and appreciate you, and when I am with you I feel great. There are a number of people in my life who are in that group. Jesus is doing His thing wherever He needs to do it, and I'm over here. When we connect it feels good and is exciting; there are times when I need Him. I then bring him into my consciousness in a big way. It's a very embodied relationship.

Chris describes his relationship with Jesus as being very joyful at times:

It's like sharing joyful moments with a friend and there are other times when I might feel confused about an action or interaction and want to talk and say, 'Did I do this correctly? Should I have approached the issue from a different perspective or should I have paused more, reflected to a greater degree?' Those seem to be the key times or when I think I'm in the midst of trauma and when things feel very chaotic. It's much more a consultative relationship than Jesus help me! There are times when I need my own wisdom checked out, when I need counsel.

Chris offered that his relationship is very "conversational and dialogical." I further probed Chris with a question as to how important his relationship is to Christ. He made the distinction that "Jesus is pivotal to me; Christ less so." I further asked Chris to clarify the distinction he made between Jesus and Christ. He offered that within his experience and reading of literature, that:

Christ is much more involved in the soulific act of Christ, you know, the Christ on the cross, as opposed to Jesus the teacher, the person who walks the streets with us, so I would say it's much more Jesus that I affect with or connect with. The Christ figure that saves the world, I can't access that, it doesn't capture my imagination.

I asked Chris if his image and perception of an earthly, embodied Christ or Jesus captures his understanding and he agreed. As a result of the distinction that Chris made between Jesus and Christ, I decided it was important enough to incorporate this in my questioning with the remaining participants to see if it would be as important to them to make this distinction. He articulated that he could not imagine a life without Jesus because this “significant relationship helped me develop a constellation of relationships and relational patterns that for me are sustaining.” Chris also made it clear that this relationship does not “consume or dominate my life either.” He stated that he has been able to:

See the transcendent through Him; I’ve also been able to see the imminence. It’s a bit of a cliché to say you should see Jesus in all people, look for the Christ in people. I’m looking for Jesus in people, the humanity of people. Their goodness, their struggle, their life, their pain and sorrows, the Gethsemane’s, their miracles, their wonders, their stories, their piece of wisdom, their piece of failure.

Please note that Chris’s reference to Gethsemane is a reference to the Biblical account of Jesus’ suffering on the eve of His crucifixion in the Garden of Gethsemane where he prayed and was arrested (Mark 14: 32).

Sam

I began this first section of the three-section interview with a question relating to a distinction between Jesus and Christ and whether or not Sam, a director of a program in pastoral counseling and psychotherapy at a seminary, would want to make that distinction. With regards to his understandings of Christ, Sam expressed that the duality of Christ’s nature, the human and Divine, are to be taken seriously:

I relate to both poles in his identity; Jesus and Christ,” he said. “Both the historical person who lived and walked and talked and struggled and was confused and had to sort out life’s linkages, directions, and meanings and so on. I have an affinity for that struggling, that growing Christ, Jesus, I should say, who searched out His own sense of identity and calling.

Sam made it clear that:

[He also] holds out to the kind of universal or encompassing reality of the archetypal Christ if you like, who is eternally present, who’s present in all things, and has presence in my own life. I guess that’s the image, He would be like a beacon, but a light that lives within me, it’s not just a light that is outside of me, but a light that’s within me. It goes out of both the narrative of His life, but also the ongoing way in which that reality kind of permeates my own being.

I questioned Sam about his relationship to Christ and he told me that he tends “not to think of Jesus as a separate person or entity,” He stated:

[I] wouldn’t use the language of relationship as much as the language of infusion or permeating. It’s more of a molecular or energy thing than a distinct person. So it doesn’t feel as dialogical as that. It’s not somebody I sort of talk to in my head but its more somebody I’m trying to be. I am trying to join or immerse myself, be permeated by a Christ consciousness so that my own nature is aligned in that mode of being. It’s more a question of being than relationship.

When asked about the significance of his relationship to Christ, Sam said:

[I don’t want] to call it seasonal, but maybe arrhythmic in terms of experiencing God or divine life. There are different modes of experiencing God’s presence. I’m

at a place in my own spiritual journey where I am sort of linking with the Christ dynamic as directly as the spirit dynamic. For me there is not a discontinuity there its just kind of another mode that is seasonal though. There are times in my life when I think I do go back to aspects of the Jesus story, like the Easter story. At Easter I think a person is drawn into a different kind of narrative and how it parallels ones own life and so on. Right now I think the Christology part of my life is sort of less, lowered a bit and I'm more into the numinous, at least in terms of my sense of prayer and reflections on ministry.

Sam refers to Christology as it is defined by the *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (McKim, 1996), that is, to mean “the study of the person and work of Jesus Christ...early church councils produced Christological statements” (p. 48).

It was evident that Sam's current understanding of his relationship to Christ is more ethereal than personal. The historical figure of Jesus is less significant to him right now and the Christ dynamic is more active. I understand this to mean that he is identifying more with the salvation figure of Christ, with Christ as one who resurrects life as he drew attention to the Easter narrative. Sam offered that he was “more into the numinous.” *Numinous* is defined by the *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* as “elements in the experience of the holy that are fascinating, awe-inspiring, and mysterious” (p. 190).

Barnes

In response to my question about the distinction between Jesus and Christ, Barnes, an ordained clergyperson in a mainline church in Canada, responded:

I like the distinction between Jesus and Christ. Christ for me is the more mystical element to my understandings of the divine in incarnational form. The Jesus of the Bible is more or less the historical Jesus of story, more the rabbi, the teacher, whose narratives come down to us from scripture, but the meaning of that is pretty much frozen in time other than the facts that the stories could be stories of Buddha or any of the great spiritual teachers. But the Christ, as I interpret Christ, the mystical Christ for me is tuned to my experience of God and the divine through a kind of realized understanding of the other involved in my life. So what that would mean is a recognition that there is a, I would use the theological words divine otherness that I can tap into at the deepest levels of myself and I can actually access that. And that's an empowering presence that pervades not only me but others that I encounter, and at the space, that creative flow of energies are exchanged in terms of a relationship at a meaningful level. Christ isn't so much an anthropocentric kind of understanding of God; it's more a force of life which is available to all of us.

Barnes understands his relationship to Christ in that he "experiences Christ in other people, and within myself to a degree. I really resonate with the expression that when you meet another person, you are actually meeting Christ." Barnes defined this by saying that "at least there are qualities of that divine presence and so what that means is that there needs to be respect, dignity and honouring of the other person no matter who they are. Now that works great in theory, I'm not sure that I can always do that, but I certainly try." For clarification he affirmed for me that his relationship to Christ is through other people.

For Barnes, “Christ is ultimately significant because the other is ultimately significant, especially with those whom I’ve become mostly attached. I would begin with my life partner, continue with my children, and extend from there.”

Barnes has brought together, or unified, what often seems like a dichotomous relationship into one. He does not define or understand Christ as separate from the relationships and experiences with other people. That is to say, that by acknowledging the spirit of another, you are acknowledging Christ, the God within. Therefore, Christ is significant because people are significant.

Edgar

Edgar, an ordained clergyperson in a mainline church in Canada, began this part of the interview stating that the question was complex but offered that his first and immediate image of who Christ is, is one of companionship. He began by saying that:

The life I live He has also lived. And so He knows full well the experience of being in human flesh and in human experience. I think that He had probably a much more clearer sense of His divinity than I do but I guess we share a sense of, I say, companionship with Him because He is for me in the journey of life. A companion along the way.

I asked him to expand on how it is complex. He stated:

I find swirling around in me many different theological perspectives about that and so when I first begin to answer, those springs into mind because I’ve been steeped in them. I guess what makes it complex for me is to sort through at a more deeper soul level for me – what is it that I would really want to say in answer to your question.

As the interview moved into a discussion of Edgar's relationship to Christ, he reiterated the importance of companionship. "I see him as a friend, someone who I relate to, someone who I turn to, you know, feel encouragement with, feel understood by, feel presence with." I asked Edgar how he experiences that presence in his relationship. He said:

It's an inwardness as compared to something that is of sensate nature. One of my struggles is to be able to articulate into words the experience that I'm going through, so my silence is a manifestation of that struggle. I guess that I would say that the presence of Christ for me is that I feel a sense of being sustained by that presence. If I were to compare that to an absence of that which would feel more of emptiness or estrangement. So, the manifestation is more of a warmth of presence, a genuineness of love, compassion, at times laughter, at times disagreement. That would be the best way to describe it.

We continued our conversation with the acknowledgement that Edgar's relationship to Christ is significant and important. He gave an example of how he relates to Christ at times:

I remember being in a meeting in which I was going to present some material and a person who entered the room was to be part of the meeting. This person had been quite destructive in his relationship with me and I felt an energy shift when he entered the room and I could feel that effect upon me, of feeling in turmoil. But I also knew I needed to present something to a group of staff in a way that would enable stability for them and so for me what I experienced was turning to Christ to say, you know, be here with me, I don't know if I could do this alone so can we

team up on this one? And then feeling a sense of presence through that was empowering but that was not negating the impact of the other person in the room, but was empowering me to be who I am.

It was important to elicit the participants understanding of their relationship to Christ because it may inform their understanding of how Christ's woundedness or Christ as healer, impacts on their sense of well-being. The participants understanding of who Christ is for them is important as it relates to their understanding of their woundedness and healing as Christian men. It became important that a distinction be made between Jesus and Christ, the former being the more human dimension, the latter His divinity. Participants emphasized the importance they place on Jesus as a friend, ever-present, and one who also knew struggle.

The second section of questions in the interview with the participants focused on how they understand and would define woundedness as well as their experiences of being wounded. They were encouraged to identify the most hurtful and critical experiences of their lives and to expand on how those experiences have affected them. In their ability to articulate their sense of woundedness, it was clear they had an understanding of their wounds and how they have coped or dealt with those wounds. I include, in this first section, the definitions of woundedness that the participants offered.

Definitions of Woundedness

Chris

In response to the question of how he would understand and define woundedness Chris contributed this:

A wound is something that was or could be considered scarring as opposed to an injury. I suppose there would be degrees but a wound for me has blood associated with it. It can either be a small hole or a gaping hole but nonetheless it's a hole, an opening. A wound that at one time is very painful. I am speaking metaphorically. An injury is a bruise, a bump, a knock down. They might be injurious but I would not say they're wounding. A wound needs to heal but it's always there, the scar will always be there. It could be a physical wound, but that's not what I'm talking about right now.

When I asked Chris if he understands wounds as being spiritual, he responded in these words:

I try to think dimensionally about this. Could be spiritual, emotional, physical. A hurtful comment could manifest itself physically, for example. Goes from the inside out – may not eat for a day, etc. Can also be the other way. I had a serious football injury to my knee, a physical wound that has affected me in other dimensions beyond the physical. It's movement between two forces.

Chris has a well-integrated definition in which he connects both the spiritual and physical natures of woundedness. Emotional trauma may cause one to vomit, for example. It was important in his definition to clarify that wounds may heal but always leave their "mark" or scar. He acknowledged that whether physical or spiritual, the wound never completely goes away and there is always a reminder of the wound.

Sam

Sam offered the following as his definition of woundedness:

I think woundedness implies trauma at some level where one's intactness of being, or cohesion, or its unity, harmony, its rhythm's are interrupted or impacted. It's an interruption if you like of the intactness of a being. That woundedness can come and show up in various ways – fragmentation, brokenness, alienation, splitting off within oneself, can have a variety of manifestations.

Sam understands woundedness as having a spiritual and psychological dimension. Woundedness, for Sam, is connected to the experiences of feeling alienated or disconnected from a healthy sense of self. Through this woundedness, that may manifest itself in a variety of ways from self-esteem to self-destructive behaviors.

Barnes

In the questioning, the participants were also invited to share associations and images that woundedness evoked for them. Barnes openly shared the following:

I link with the word “woundedness” the word “survivor.” It feels like a word not routed in the past but very much brought into the present for me. At one point when I was wounded I was more of a victim in the sense of feeling the freshness of those wounds as impinging my ability to be who I was and to function. I'm not wounded now in the same way as I was. But I bring my woundedness into the present and allow it to inform my ability to do and be who I am. Those are some of the associations I make. To define it I would say profound hurt.

Barnes's comments point to how wounds become filters to how we relate to others. He commented he brought his wounds into the present. That is, wounds even if administered in the past, impact and influence current situations, relationships, and experiences.

Edgar

Finally, Edgar acknowledged in the definition of woundedness, the following personal meaning:

The image woundedness evokes for me is of an open wound of flesh, with blood and the rawness of the flesh laid open. That's the image. I would define it as a state of existence which is experienced with some degree of suffering and some degree of strength. Woundedness to me implies something that happened in relationship with the external. Now I guess I would like to take that into the metaphysical and there's certainly, I would go further to say that I know I'm quite capable of self-inflicted woundedness. But there is some sense of relationship still, I mean, me being in relationship with myself. So woundedness in some respects always co notates for me relationship, relationship orientation.

Initially the four participants describe woundedness as a physical wound or injury. As they spoke, they broadened their definition to include the less physical, and in some cases used it as a metaphor for the debilitating wound of the spirit or for emotional wounds. There was a sense from all the participants that being wounded is lasting, deep, and impacts your personhood. This speaks to the significance of this study. All four participants discussed woundedness in a personal and profound manner. The issue of woundedness in men is an important research issue and it demonstrates what was revealed through the literature review, namely that men collectively have a sense of being wounded.

Experiences and Themes of Woundedness

In this research, I engaged a discriminate group of men in exploring and trying to understand their experiences of feeling wounded in relationship to the Christian story. The Christian story is one which I believe invites followers to believe in a wounded Christ as a Saviour for humanity. Based on my experience as a man, a pastoral minister, and a counselor, it is my belief that as human beings we share elements of feeling and being wounded. Bergman (1995) states:

There is a primary desire for connection with others, and that it is less accurate and useful to think of self than to think of self-in-relation – or even better, movement in relationship – as process.... The seeds of misery in men’s lives are planted in disconnection from others, isolation, violation, and dominance and from relationships that are not mutually empowering. (p. 72)

There are experiences in life that wound us and it is imperative we articulate and come to understand how we have been wounded in order to find healing and wholeness.

The participants in this study openly shared their deepest experiences of feeling wounded. The sharing of these experiences, often through stories, was rooted in the major themes of: abandonment and loneliness-a foreigner in one’s own family, the search for blessing, and the blessing found in the wound. All of the participants’ stories demonstrated these themes in common and previous research points to them as major themes (Groff, 1999; Hillman, 1992; Levant, 1995).

I will discuss these themes under their specific headings and address them with each participant. The themes, however, are not isolated but interconnected. Throughout the interviews, it was clear that the discussion of one theme was often the catalyst for

another theme, meaning these were not presented as discrete or autonomous ideas in the participants' stories. For purposes of presentation, I have identified the major themes separately and believe they inform one another.

Abandonment and Loneliness: A Foreigner In One's Own Family

The participants' experiences of feeling alone, abandoned and disconnected all occurred in their families of origin. While none of the participants were the only child in their families, they all shared that they felt separated from the rest of their family; that is, a foreigner in their own homes.

Chris

Growing up, Chris had a difficult relationship with his father, as did all the participants except for Barnes, as will be discussed further in the following section. Chris describes growing up as "feeling very lonely and isolated." He told a powerful story about his father coaching baseball. He recalls that his father ended up coaching baseball teams that played against his own son. Chris was eleven to fifteen years of age when it occurred. Chris expressed the pain of this experience and the depth of this wound:

You want your dad to be cheering for you and he's cheering for the other guys. Not only was my dad their coach, but he was a good coach. And I never really had a good coach. So I'm there on the outside and he's coaching these neighborhood kids, many of whom I'd compete with as athletes. They were getting an edge from my dad.

Chris went on to add that in a reflection piece for his clinical training as a therapist he wrote a paper in which he reflected that, "The best baseball coach I ever knew coached against me, and he was my father." This was a vivid expression in Chris's

feelings of not being able to connect with his father nor having the belief that his father was with him and supportive of him.

Chris also claimed that during his childhood and teenage years he felt like he had to do everything on his own. He expressed that he felt there was an expectation that he was responsible for many chores and tasks around the home without the support or teaching that he desired. Within his experience of disconnectedness and loneliness, a major theme in his experience became that of abandonment. He experienced this in his family, in particular from his relationship to his father. There was a profound sense of being alone in his pain and hurt.

The theme of abandonment became profoundly alive for Chris in his early twenties. He tells the story of a girlfriend he had while studying in seminary. He describes her as a “lovely human being who began to disclose to me that she was a victim of incest.” Chris goes on to say that he remembers not knowing how to handle this information and that he “saw her as tainted, as damaged goods.” He articulated this feeling:

[I felt] overwhelmed, not wanting to hear anymore of her story and that it was really the termination of our relationship. I became very cold. I felt a wound. It was a wound of self-discovery, discovering something about myself that left me very uncomfortable. I think it’s a wound of self-discovery. And that wound came about two years later during clinical pastoral education training. It was a pain of awakening, of becoming conscious; there was a wound that came with that. I began to replay the conversations I had with my old girlfriend and I thought, O

God that was bad. In fact, giving her exactly the opposite of what she deserved and needed.

The realization that he abandoned his former girlfriend in the same way he had felt abandoned by his father helped Chris recognize the wound he had experienced and feel the deep hurt that lived within him: “I think it’s a wound of self-discovery...it was a pain of awakening, of becoming conscious that there was a wound.”

Sam

The theme of abandonment and loneliness is further exemplified in the interview data with Sam. Sam had shared that he was German born but came to Canada as a very young boy. He expressed that, as a boy, there were strong anti-German feelings in Canada and “being representative of the evil Germans I bore the brunt of a lot of ridicule and aggression. I got beaten up a few times and had many shaming experiences.” Sam named this childhood experience as one of social dislocation and disconnect. That is, he never belonged in any one group and so was alienated from his peers. He further named the wound as one of rejection and of not being accepted for who he is and feeling alone. Sam felt most strongly that his deepest wounds revolve around this feeling of not belonging. It has been a wound that he has collided with throughout his life. He expressed that within his family, at school, and now that he works in the United States, he has been “a foreigner in virtually every place that I’ve gone.” He continued by adding that because of his life journey he can “move into very different worlds and find my way in them, but also I’m quite aware of my different ness, that I don’t quite belong.”

There has been a culminating effect of events in Sam's life that has reinforced his childhood experience of being an outsider and not belonging. Implicit in his expression of this wound is his desire to connect and belong, to feel like people identify with him.

Barnes

Barnes expressed his feelings of woundedness by sharing that he had been sexually assaulted in a school playground when he was five years old. While this was a painful experience, he expressed that the most painful part was that he never told anyone which led to feelings of shame and isolation. The wounding came from "the echoes of having an experience and not being able to go anywhere with it." Barnes grew up with two sisters but states "I grew up essentially alone." He reflected on how he felt he was kept apart as the only male and one who was constantly trying to please his mother. As the interview continued, I invited Barnes to share more about his wound of isolation. This is his response:

At the deepest existential levels of how I come to understand is right around that time I had a dream as a five year old which stayed with me all my life. I've had it in other forms since where I would go down, fall into some kind of abyss, or hole, or spiral, basically into extinction. As a child the experience was of absolute fear and terror.

Barnes experience of feeling silenced and shamed from the sexual assault with no one to confide in as a child isolated him as did the experience of being the only male child. Alfred Adler, one of the fathers of modern psychotherapy, in a translated book (Brett, 1998) states that, "An only boy brought up in a family of girls has a hard time ahead of him... He feels different and grows up isolated" (p. 123). Like other participants,

a combination of isolating experiences culminates in a deep wound of being alone. Barnes's last comments as he describes a recurring dream are haunting and graphic. The dream emphasizes his wound of being non-existent and the terror that accompanies one when he is isolated and alone. This points to a deep need that we all share of needing acceptance and belonging. Adler believed that dreams of falling show that one is occupied with "self-preservation and the fear of defeat" (Adler, quoted in Brett, p. 87).

Edgar

In reflection, Edgar attributes the source of his woundedness to the relationship with his father. He spoke at length about his relationship to his father and expressed that while growing up, " [My father] was unavailable for engagement, lively encounter and for someone whom I could test my strength. That has placed an indelible mark on who I am." As a child, Edgar felt a sense of disconnect and dislocation within his family.

Edgar lived on their family farm and his maternal grandfather, who owned the farm, lived with them. Edgar describes him as follows:

[He was the most] positive male figure in my life. He laughed a lot, joked a lot, and did all kinds of things my paternal side saw as sinful. He smoked, liked to have a good time, played cards. All the things my very rigid fundamentalist paternal side saw as of the devil.

Edgar shared what a powerful impact his grandfather had on his life and that when he was twelve, his grandfather died. The loss of his grandfather led to an emptiness, the loss of a strong male and it had an "incredible wounding effect on my life." Edgar lost his friend, a father-figure and felt a deep sense of loneliness:

That's why I remember mowing his lawn after he died, I knew the funeral would be in a day or two, I wanted his lawn to look good as possible, you know, as an expression of my love for him and my yearning for him.

Finally, Edgar shares the significance of a powerful symbol for him. Years later as his grandmother was preparing to empty the house and move to an apartment:

We went to the basement where he used to take me down, he was a carpenter and would build things for me, and I asked her if I could have his little level. I wanted a piece of him. I think the selection of the level was very powerful in terms of balance. The balance he brought to my life. So it has a permanent place in my garage and it's used frequently.

Edgar's story also points to the power of symbols and tools. The level, which had been his grandfather's, brought about a healing for Edgar, a sense of restoration and balance of the man who embodied that for him. His story also exemplifies how we carry with us the impact that others have had on our lives, both positive and negative. His grandfather played an obvious influential role that his father did not. His grandfather fulfilled the need Edgar had to be affirmed by his father.

The Search for a Blessing

The *Westminster Dictionary of Theological Terms* (McKim, 1996) defines "blessing" as follows:

Blessing: to praise, petition for divine favor, wish someone well, convey favor. Used biblically to describe God's actions, as in the frequent blessings that Jesus conferred on people. A blessing is defined as a particular goodness received or given. Liturgically, it is an expression of God's graciousness and love. (p. 32)

It has become evident in the participants' stories that there is a need for blessing. That is, that they have found favour from someone; they feel that favour has been conveyed upon them. It seems it initially needs to come from primary parental figures but if not given, can be found in an outsider. What seems to be critical is that each of the men interviewed receives the blessing he seeks, or at least comes to understand that it is a blessing he has been seeking.

Chris

In his experience of feeling alone and isolated, Chris spoke at length about this feeling of separation existing between himself and his father. He expressed that he felt he was left to learn and do things on his own and therefore did not get the teaching he desired from his father, nor the approval. "I had to learn things all on my own, everything from mechanics to installing eavestroughing and fascia. I learned how to do all that stuff on my own...because I was caught blind, I didn't have a father mentor."

It was clear in Chris's story that it was his father's presence, teaching, and blessing that he sought. He confirmed this to be true in a follow-up telephone interview. Chris stated in his interview that in his late twenties to mid-thirties he went looking for a father figure. He was able to find some male wisdom and counsel in a number of men, not one in particular. These men ranged from teachers to older males in his life. He expressed that he has come to terms with the rejection of his father and that he had "really wanted a father, and I wanted father's blessing, and I wanted the wisdom of the older male" and that he never received that from his father.

The themes of woundedness in Chris's life, unsurprisingly, are interconnected. His experiences of isolation are deeply routed in his desire to have his father's blessing.

He shared the story of a time when he was playing hockey at the age of fifteen or sixteen and not getting much ice-time. He felt he was the best centerman on the ice and couldn't understand why he was not getting played. He became very frustrated and confused about it. The coach's son was also a center and getting a lot of playing time. Chris recalled getting in the car after a game one day and complaining:

I complained the whole way, and I was really, really frustrated and angry, and we drove into the driveway and my father turned to me and told me to shut up. I thought, this is a guy who could have helped me, who could have asked me what we can do about it, but instead he told me to shut up. That was very injurious.

Chris's desire for affirmation, understanding, and blessing from his father was attacked as evidenced in his story. In his comments, the pain of the wound his father delivered to him is clear. There is much written in the psycho-mythic literature about the wounds our fathers deliver. Osherson (1998) states that one aspect of our image of the wounded father is that the son "may remember father as wounding, evoking the loss and needy feelings the son experienced in having been rejected by or disappointing to the father" (p. 241). Understanding and acknowledging the wound allows Chris, and others, to begin a process of healing.

Sam

Throughout the sharing of his experiences of woundedness, Sam drew attention to his long-time sense of not belonging and that he has continually had to navigate and "move into very different worlds." The most confronting experience Sam shared was the woundedness he had experienced from his father. "I experienced a lot of trauma at the hands of my father; I was abused by my father." It appears that the woundedness of one,

if not dealt with positively, will impact on others. Sam recognized that this was the case with his father. The abuse he suffered from his father “came out of his own trauma of dislocation,” referring to his father. While Sam recognized that his father is also wounded, he shared that, “I was the one who sort of bore the brunt of his uh, of his pain, trauma, so that was another burden that I had to carry when I was a younger boy.” Sam shared this as a means to explain that perhaps because his father was wounded, his father never could have offered him the blessing he sought.

Sam’s story is a vivid example of how the physical, psychological, emotional, and spiritual wound can be from the same trauma. His story also shows how the wounds of one, if not dealt with, can be passed on to another.

Barnes

The narrative of Barnes’s childhood is one of isolation, loneliness, shame and abandonment. As discussed earlier, he felt he grew up alone and as a result developed coping mechanisms and anxiety. He articulated that he was always trying to please his parents and that during a five-year therapeutic process identified issues with his mother as being at the heart of his woundedness. This was later confirmed in a follow-up telephone discussion.

Barnes did not feel supported by his mother and came to the painful realization that she could not help him with his feelings of loneliness and abandonment which further isolated him, especially from her. He realized he had been seeking her blessing and support and that she could not grant it, which meant he had to do it on his own. “I had to do it, I had to take responsibility...and become comfortable with the woundedness, not only comfortable with anxiety, but also comfortable with the woundedness, the pain

that comes out of not being able to connect.” Barnes ultimately realized that the blessing he was searching for needed to come from himself, that feeling affirmed and connecting was something he would need to pursue and find. Perhaps this was a blessing in and of itself. That is, that Barnes was now encouraged to claim it for himself. He exerted responsibility in this case for understanding his woundedness and dealing with the pain of his wound.

In all the participants’ stories is a desire, especially in childhood, to feel affirmed and have the blessing of their parents. The participants all expressed that they desired that kind of blessing and that it was not given to them, leaving them in a place of loneliness and disconnect. The wound for these men seems to open at the point where the individual realizes they are not going to get the blessing, leaving them shattered and wounded (Groff, 1995).

Edgar

Edgar shared his experience of feeling wounded by his parental figures, which included grandparents in his life as he was growing up. He expressed that he believed the unavailability of his father may have been a result of the “lack of affirmation and blessing from his own father.” Edgar expressed that “I spent a lot of my life up until my early thirties seeking to please and trying to be whoever I could be so that I would find a blessing for me.” Edgar was seeking the affirmation he desired from his father and shared that he came to the recognition that he “had spent so many years, really decades, seeking to be the unblemished lamb that would be chosen. In actuality I came to acknowledge that in reality I am a goat.”

Edgar shared this in a tone of sadness and also realization. Edgar's reference as the unblemished lamb is to the Christian narrative in which Jesus becomes understood as the unblemished lamb who takes away the sins of the world through his death. The Hebrew Scripture reference is from Isaiah 53:7 which says: "He was oppressed and afflicted, yet he did not open his mouth; he was led like a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is silent, so he did not open his mouth." It is understood that Jesus was the perfect sacrifice that fulfilled the law and for once and for all completed any requirement for a sin sacrifice.

In the Old Testament times, before Jesus came in the flesh, there was a sacrificial system in place whereby an unblemished lamb was sacrificed for the sins of the people, once a year. Through the blood of this unblemished lamb being poured upon the mercy seat, in the Holy of Holies, by the high priest, God was satisfied and propitiation was made for the sins of the people. In other words, their sins were covered by the blood of the lamb that was slain for the sins of the people. This sacrificial system was done away with immediately following the crucifixion of the lord Jesus Christ, at Calvary. The scripture says that the curtain to the Holy of Holies was actually torn supernaturally at the time of the Lord's crucifixion. He was our perfect sacrifice. The lambs that had been sacrificed in years prior to Jesus were merely a type of Christ who was to come. The realization that he is a goat and not the unblemished lamb was powerful for Edgar and "freeing," as he puts it. Freeing in the sense that he does not have to live up to the expectations of being "the chosen one."

I encouraged Edgar to share more about his understanding of being the goat. Edgar also stated that it is not enough for him to only acknowledge the lack of blessing

from his father that he needs to also include his mother. "It's too simplistic to quickly reduce it to relationship with my father." As Edgar spoke he shared that he "could never really be all that my mother wanted me to be." He expressed that he was often disciplined without understanding why and that there was a sense that he kept disappointing her. Earlier Edgar spoke about his grandfather whom he connected with and died when he was twelve. This was his mother's father. In recent years he has heard his mother comment that of all her children, Edgar reminds her most of her father. This comment gives him a sense of gratitude and grief. He grieves the relationship he had with him because his grandfather is dead and is grateful that his mother sees a connection between him and the grandfather he loved.

Edgar did find the fatherly blessing he sought in a "wonderful, old, Jewish psychoanalytic therapist." As he shared the experience of being in relationship with this man he said:

I began to find an ability in someone male outside of myself who was able to mirror back to me a sense of myself that felt congruent with how I experienced, or with what I was going through or experiencing within myself. It was incredibly freeing and life giving, and I believe healing of the wounds" that were related to his father and lack of blessing.

It is clear within the experiences of all the participants that there was a need for blessing or affirmation from a parent; in three cases, their father, in the fourth, the mother. This is consistent with the literature, although there does not seem to be as much discussion around the relationships of mothers and sons. As Hillman (1992) points out, "Whenever, wherever we idealize the father, we remain in sonship, in the dales security

of a good ideal” (p. 77). The participants experiences demonstrated that what is critical is the blessing from those whom we as individuals seek affirmation and value. The source of woundedness appears to come from not receiving the blessings and affirmation of a father or mother, or both; that is, whomever the child seeks the affirmation.

The Blessing of the Wound

This theme, the blessing of the wound, emerged from the data because all of the participants spoke about what they found as blessing or healing from their wound. It must be recognized that each of the participants, as a requirement for participating in this research, had to have engaged a therapeutic process to address their wounds at some prior point in their lives. This ensured they would be able to speak about their wounds with informed self-awareness as opposed to engaging them at a point in their life in which they were still feeling and experiencing the rawness and openness of the wounds. Having engaged in self-reflection and therapeutic work in relation to feeling wounded, the participants’ were able to articulate aspects of healing that were particularly helpful to them, and these came in the form of blessings. As Nouwen (1992) states, “To give someone a blessing is the most significant affirmation we can offer” (p. 69).

Chris

Throughout the interviewing process Chris openly shared some of the most painful experiences of his childhood and as a young adult. A key theme for Chris has been the lack of presence of his father, especially as a presence of being on “his team” as he phrased it. Chris also had the profound experience of abandoning a girlfriend in a time of need and carries the pain of his lack of empathy and presence for her. These experiences have informed his current commitment to accompany and not abandon his

clients or his friends. The blessing he has found in his experiences of woundedness is the deep need for people to be accompanied as they journey through their own wounds and to have a consistent companion who is with them:

As a priest, as a man, as a therapist, as a dad, as a partner, I really work hard at trying to be as present as I can to people, as long as I can, just to keep that motor running, to keep that thing alive.

This is also Chris's understanding of one of the key functions of Jesus Christ -- companion. Chris shared about Jesus that "the fact that he would meet people, be where they are, be with lepers, be with the outcasts, be with those people, that's impacted me tremendously." It is this sense of accompaniment and courage from Jesus that has a healing effect for Chris. Throughout the Gospels there are examples of Jesus including persons that society marginalized and Jesus befriended them. Children were a marginalized group in Jesus' time with no rights or privileges. We are told in the Gospel of Mark, chapter 10, beginning at verse 13, that people were bringing their children to Jesus to have Him touch them. The disciples, keeping the custom of the day, rebuked them. When Jesus noticed what was happening he responded:

Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. I tell you the truth, anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it. (Mark 10:14b-15)

In the Gospel of Matthew Jesus gives a discourse in which he says people call him "a friend of tax collectors" (Matthew 11:19b). Jesus accompanied those that society wanted to ignore; he walked with those who were in pain, in need of companionship and love. Japanese theologian Shusako Endo, who interprets the meaning of Christian faith

for contemporary Japanese, states that Jesus is transformed into the Christ who is their eternal companion in their inevitable sufferings and despair “in speaking about the disciples’ rediscovery of the person of Jesus” (quoted in Matsuoka, 1982).

Sam

In an in-depth discussion about living with his wounds and the possibility of healing, Sam shared that his wounds have found resolution but that he does not believe we are “ever fully done with our wounds.” He stated:

I’ve been blessed to have had many contacts over the years in which they provided what I would call an environment within which stuff can get surfaced. So I’ve been very blessed to have multiple such environments starting with a teacher who would take me under his wing in junior high school to a great youth group and other mentors.

As we talked about his wounds and how they have formed his self understanding, he expressed it as a tapestry and weaving. The experiences of woundedness are now “just part of the fabric of who I am.” The wounds, now understood, function as “the substance of my consciousness” and it is “through these filters what I take in and how I meet others and carry my own sense of myself in relationships.” Sam does not deny how his wounds have shaped him, but rather it is the understanding of his wounds that allows him to be in relationship with others in a way that is congruent with his sense of self. Nouwen (1992) encapsulates this nicely: “The first step to healing is not a step away from the pain, but a step toward it.” (p. 94).

This is an important finding. That is, that accepting the wound now moves it from a place of pain and possible debilitation, to a source of energy and understanding.

Barnes

Barnes spoke about how his understanding of his wounds has shaped him as a person and as a parent. He shared how in his twenties he felt a “spiritual tug that pulled me into seeking ways of deeper exploration.” It was through a realization that he carried a profound unhappiness that Barnes began a therapeutic process of understanding his wounds. As the interview progressed, I inquired how his wounding experiences have informed his self- understanding. Barnes responded that:

The woundedness that I bring primarily from those developmental years of my life early on have contributed to the formation of who I am, and I quite like who I am. I don’t necessarily like God for the wounding experience, but I sure thank God for the motivation to follow the seeking that I’ve done to move towards healing.

He continued by sharing that he has come to discover the resources within himself, one of them being the Christ within. This was important acknowledgement as it demonstrates that the participant’s relationship to Jesus Christ does influence their understanding of feeling wounded. Jesus states in the gospel of Luke, chapter 21, verse 17 that “The kingdom of God is within you.” This is a reference by Jesus that the kingdom is a spiritual place that exists within all who acknowledge Him as the King.

Barnes does not minimize the effect the experiences of woundedness have had in his life but has come to see them as a blessing and how they have contributed to who he is. It is worth noting that until he engaged a process of understanding his wounds that he was unhappy. After the therapeutic process, he has been able to see the blessing, the good, and the contribution the wounds have made once he was able to understand them.

In a later discussion during the interview, Barnes also shared what a blessing it had been in his life for him to be able to share his story and experiences with other men. He noted that, “The affirmation of being able to share intimately and to be affirmed was incredibly important.”

Edgar

Early in the interview Edgar expressed that the “lack of affirmation and blessing from his own father” deepened his woundedness. It appears that a lack of affirmation or blessing manifests itself as a wound. Edgar felt a need to feel blessed and affirmed, a feeling or belief shared by all the participants. Edgar acknowledged his search for blessing: “I found that I spent a lot of my time up until my early thirties seeking to please, trying to be whoever I could be so that I would find a blessing.” A critical turning point for Edgar was when he began to find an affirming sense of himself in a male mentor, as earlier mentioned. Edgar was able to further understand that what he was connecting with in the mentor was the Christ within him. That is, he related to the Christ within his mentor and therefore ultimately receives the blessing for himself.

Understanding the Relationship of Christ to Experiences of Woundedness

The culmination of each interview focused on the relationship between the participant’s understanding and the relationship of Christ to their experiences of woundedness and the impact of this on their healing. This aspect of the study was undertaken in order to understand if and how the Christian story impacts male woundedness.

In the next section, it will become clear exactly how the participants demonstrate the importance of Christ in their own woundedness and subsequent seeking of blessing in order to live their lives.

Chris

Chris felt that the wounding connected with Christ's crucifixion was not at the "centerpiece of my relationship" with Jesus. The impact of this understanding for Chris is found in the narrative piece that Jesus "stays true to one thing." The fact that Jesus was willing to stay with his journey and "put himself on the line" holds meaning for Chris, and he understands this attribute of Jesus' as "incredible." Important parts of Chris's story are the wounds he experienced from his father of not being there for him, leaving him alone to navigate life, and the experiences where Chris abandoned others in his life. It is from these experiences of woundedness that Chris developed a commitment as "a priest, a man, as a therapist, as a dad, as a partner, to be as present as I can to people as long as I can," so that he can remain and stay with them as a companion, a person to accompany them. Chris understands that his wounds have shaped and inform who he is and it is this understanding that informs how he relates and practices towards others. Holding much more significance for Chris in the story of Jesus' life and ministry, than the stories of miraculous healing, are the images of Jesus reaching outcasts. The demonstration that Jesus would be with "people where they are, be with lepers, be with outcasts, has impacted me tremendously." This has a healing power for Chris and is why he places such value on accompaniment and being with others where they are. It is essential for Chris to be able to be "out there where people are hurt or injured."

Schlauch (1995) defines “faithful companionship”: “Pastoral psychotherapy is, at its heart, healing through the clinician’s attitude, method and presence” (p. 1). Schlauch adds the following explanation:

Pastoral psychotherapy provides the occasion for healing by the client’s experiencing being faithfully companioned.... In the midst of experiencing a sense of presence and safety, the client gains a deepened appreciation of being on-the-boundaries, an openness to the unexpected, an enhanced expectation of coming-to-understand, and, in the context of identifying and disconfirming patterns, living into and through new patterns of more flexible commerce and connection within her self and between her self and others. (p. 135)

The theme of accompaniment is important and theological in nature. Christians are called to see Christ in themselves and in others as Chris has articulated. Schlauch (1995) argues: “Persons do not experience God’s love and forgiveness simply by being told that God loves them; words are empty unless made manifest in deed. These words have to be incarnated in us” (p. 84). In a section entitled “In Faithful Companionship,” Schlauch states, “We mediate God’s presence to the other through the holy regard of the other as Christ. These various aspects of Christian identity and ministry are extended through the metaphor of faithful companionship” (p. 84).

In a discussion of how Jesus has or has not been present to Chris in his own experiences of woundedness and of healing, Chris stated that “He wasn’t present, wasn’t there at all.” This was not something that upset him and he felt he needed to “grow up on his own.” Chris has an understanding of Jesus as comrade, as stated earlier, and he summed up the absence of Jesus during the moments of his woundings by saying he and

Jesus “would compare war stories later.” As Chris recapped his feelings of guilt over abandoning a girlfriend in need, a source of woundedness for him, he articulated that he did not feel he had to go to Jesus to be forgiven. Rather, that what he needed and “wanted was someone who would understand the nature of what I was about.” He believes that Jesus offers that understanding to him in their relationship.

Sam

Sam did not connect his own woundedness with the woundedness of Christ and stated that he couldn't “draw any direct links between them.” For Sam, the wounded Christ is “not really an important piece of the Christian mythology that I gravitate towards.” He furthered this by saying that “It's not one that I would currently draw great comfort in, or say wow, great, Jesus understands me sort of thing.”

I continued to ask Sam where he finds inspiration and strength in the story of Jesus and he made it clear that he does not look “for God primarily in the places where it hurts...the pain points.” He revealed that for him he identifies more with a presence than a relational Christ, meaning that he believes in a Christ presence that remains with him as opposed to a relational or dialogical Christ.

As we moved into a discussion about the healing images of Christ and its impact on Sam's experience of woundedness, Sam stated that the “healing metaphors of Christ don't grab me.” He offered that if there was an image that did stand out, it would be of the Christ who is faithful.” A durability about him in terms of being true to the process, *faithfulness to himself, faithfulness to the path, faithfulness to the calling.*” It is Christ's faithfulness to endure, his commitment, and his call that captures Sam's interest. When I

asked him to affirm this he did and further offered for distinction that Christ's suffering did not "hold energy" for him.

As Sam reflected on his experiences of woundedness, he felt the ache of Christ's absence "and disconnect at times." He described the various times of life transition or when his "current framework of meaning didn't jive with his current dilemma" as a "moment of absence." Sam had earlier shared an experience of feeling wounded as he described a lonely and isolating moment in the schoolyard as a boy. It was while he was reflecting on this experience and being asked about the presence or absence of Christ that he stated he always felt a presence of Jesus, if only in a picture of Him in his room. From an early age, he held a belief of Jesus as "brother and our companion." As he shared how Jesus has been present for him he defined it by stating "that at times it was angelic, at other times more generic." He concluded by saying, "I definitely have this sense that Jesus was a friend and companion."

Sam reflected on how his experience of woundedness connected to his theology and understandings of Christ. He understands Christ as the mediating reality, the presence during the period of transition from a broken state to a state of wholeness but not necessarily as a healer for him: "I would see the Christ process the Christ event as that mechanism, that means by which we get from here to there." Sam understands this as the healing Christ, a process versus a miraculous and instantaneous event. Sam continued to share that our healing is a result of us being able to see the presence of Christ in others; it is in that connection with others that we find our healing from isolation, shame, or whatever is wounding us. Sam summarized:

Christ is still around, still working, through all the many people who are putting themselves in the middle of whatever the ruptured reality is. So it is an ongoing participation, it's a work of making whole salvation that continues.

Barnes

Barnes reflected on the question of how the central Christian image of a wounded Christ has informed his understanding of his woundedness and connection to his understanding of Christ. He articulated that he did not resonate with this traditional understanding or emphasis in the story, much like Sam did in this regard. Within the Christian narrative, Barnes, expressed that he identifies with the issue of abandonment, "where Christ feels abandoned by his Father." This is perhaps not surprising, given Barnes's own early personal experience within his family of feeling abandoned and isolated. For Barnes, it is in the hearing of Christ's feeling of being abandoned that he is able to access not only the narrative, but Christ.

Barnes continued to share that it is within Christ's feeling alone that he came to understand the freedom in being able to ask and question God, including asking the questions, "Is there a God?" "In that particular dramatic point in the passion narrative is realizing I can ask any question." Barnes was encouraged, in the interview, to identify whether or not there was a connection between Jesus asking the question and feeling that God has forsaken Him and his feeling of being abandoned. He expressed that he lives within that space and question everyday in his professional capacity as a pediatric chaplain.

I work with people who experience that, at the most obvious place for me, the hospital, where people's children are dying. I mean it's right there. It's not a story anymore, it's a reality. I mean these people are feeling totally abandoned.

He concluded this by saying that in the midst of these feelings, he also experiences an under girding of hope, "an underlying availability of a resource that's informing everything." He continued by stating that "[We may] call it God or Christ or whatever you want to call it, but for me it's real and the reason it's real is because, I felt it, that's been my story. I've, I've lived it."

The understanding of a healing Christ was not a way in which Barnes thought and expressed this idea was "too categorical" for him. He preferred to speak "in terms of the fact that I've experienced healing. And that healing has come because, for whatever reason, I've been able to touch into something, some wellspring within my own being and through others that have made that happen." Asked to connect this with earlier statements about connecting with the Christ in others, he affirmed that this was part of the touching that he meant.

Barnes was asked to share how Christ had or had not been present for him in his own moments of feeling wounded. He struggled with this as he tried to separate the past from the present. He renamed his experience of feeling abandoned and the power that Christ's feeling holds for him. "I identify with that, because that has so much meaning for me because I've felt the same question. You know, I've felt forsaken." As he continued to speak, he expressed that he does not feel wounded at present. He said he can "access the points of my healing over time, I can still move into those areas, but it's like I'm accompanied now." The feeling of being accompanied was a knowing the presence of

Christ with him. He stated, “I’m not abandoned, I’m not forsaken.” He expressed that Christ is a “deeper wellspring that’s available to all of us.” These were powerful statements and draw reference to Jesus on the cross: “About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ – which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46).

Edgar

Edgar began to answer the question of connectedness between his own woundedness and understanding of that woundedness by drawing attention to his earlier image of the self-representation of the unblemished lamb. It was there that he recognized he had wounds and “Christ as being redemptive.” This belief in a redemptive Christ allowed Edgar to have what he described as “A sense of companionship, that woundedness didn’t have to be looked upon as being a lack thereof, or lacking but rather as part of human existence. I think that’s where I find Jesus.”

Edgar, a director of a hospital’s spiritual care department, expanded as he talked about Jesus:

I take such delight in Him and find companionship or a sense of mirroring back to my own selfhood. I know not anyone who goes through the human journey of what we call life without experiencing wounding. To me it’s a kind of a ridiculous illusion to harbor that one wound, that there is such a thing as a person without woundedness. So, finding meaning in that woundedness then becomes the invitation. And that’s what I find the invitation from Christ is; that in His living, and the woundedness that He experienced He found meaning.

Edgar ended the interview by trying to remember a quote that in essence was this: “Christ didn’t come to take away our suffering, nor to ensure that it doesn’t happen, but rather to fill our suffering with His presence.” Edgar’s understanding of where his own woundedness intersects with his understanding of Christ points to the belief that Christ does not necessarily miraculously heal, but that He is present with us in our suffering and wounds. It also points to an understanding for Edgar, as with others, that Christ’s dying for our sins is not as pivotal as the understanding of a Christ that accompanies us in our own suffering. Edgar made a reference to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter 25, by stating:

When you have been with the one who is sick, or the one who is wounded or the one who is imprisoned, you’ve been with Jesus. And so, I guess I find that, and that certainly informs my ministry in the hospital.

Edgar reflected on his experiences of feeling abandoned by his parents:

I find Jesus, as a sufferer, someone who is wounded and is in a relationship with a parental figure, felt both love and affection but also abandonment, as was explained on the cross, I guess I know that in myself experience that and know that also for those whom I parent will experience some of that as well.

Edgar, in speaking about an understanding of Christ as a healer, preferred to speak of Christ as a presence. He referred to presence as that which feels the wound, suffering or hurt as described earlier. While he was grateful for always feeling the presence of God as a younger boy, he admits there are times when he “feels God forsaken.” Perhaps this is not surprising given Edgar’s past experience of woundedness whereby he felt forsaken by an unavailable father and a distant mother. But he

understands that it is possible to have a strong and healthy relationship with someone who was there for him, as a boy, and that was his grandfather.

Unanticipated Findings

One aspect of qualitative research is that it is an open and explorative methodology, which encourages research findings that may not have been anticipated. Due to the nature of qualitative research, I was open to the possibility that themes may emerge that I had not anticipated. In my role as a researcher, I was surprised by some of the findings that I discovered. Specifically, the focus that was drawn by the participants to seeing Christ in others, the lack of focus that the participants demonstrated towards Christ as the healer of wounds, and the profound influence of mothers and grandmothers on the participants.

The participants expressed a strong emphasis on Jesus Christ, not as a healer in the traditional sense of alleviating or curing pain, but as a companion who remains with them on their journey through whatever difficulties or wounding experiences they encounter. The theme of seeing Christ in others and being the Christ for others was very much alive in the participants' stories and a part of their core theological understanding. The traditional understanding of Christ as the Saviour for the world by dying for our sins did not resonate with the participants as powerfully as a Christ who journeys with us. For example, Chris shared that the crucifixion, the central aspect of the Cross, is not at the centerpiece of his relationship to Jesus. He described his relationship with Jesus as "consultative" and that he is "essentially a comrade." He also claimed that he actively tries to see the Christ in people, "I'm looking for the Jesus in people, the humanity of people." Chris connects much more with an understanding of Jesus as the "person who

walks the streets with us” as opposed to “the Christ figure that saves the world.” In terms of healing, Chris found that the healing presence of Christ was in His willingness to accompany and be with others, a principle and belief Chris has tried to embody in his own life and relationships. Sam shared a similar understanding and expressed that his willingness to accompany others grows out of his woundedness and that Christ is more in the process of healing than one who fixes the wound.

I had an expectation that the participants would share stories of how their fathers had wounded them. What I had not expected was the role mothers and grandmothers also played. It became evident that either the paternal or maternal relationship could be equally wounding. In Barnes’s case, he spoke about continually seeking the blessing of his mother. Edgar, it appears from his interview, was trying to please both of his parents, and Sam and Chris talked openly about wounding experiences from their fathers. Consistent in all of the stories is the need to be affirmed. Edgar’s grandmother offered him the gift of a level, a symbol of his grandfather in whom he found blessing, and she recognized the connection and relationship that these two shared. Barnes shared, in a follow-up email to the interview that he was “held up in my father’s eyes. He loved me and showed it in many ways.” But, concluded by stating that his mother was “emotionally unavailable” and this was one of the sources of his woundedness. It was evident in the stories that mothers and grandmothers played an important role in what seemed important was that a child felt affirmed and blessed.

Chapter 5: Recommendations, Future Research, Conclusions, and Reflections

My purpose in pursuing this research question was to bring to consciousness the varied experiences men have of woundedness and how they describe those experiences as living realities. In this research, I engaged a discriminate group of men in exploring and trying to understand their experiences of feeling wounded in relationship to the Christian faith. In hearing their collective experiences, I was also interested in how they would impact my own feelings of woundedness and reflected on this throughout the entire research process. Although this was not my main purpose in engaging in this study, it would be remiss to overlook how I as researcher was impacted by the findings.

The significance of this research is that it allows for the articulation of men's experiences of woundedness and how this expression facilitates healing for them and other men who may access their own stories of feeling wounded through hearing those of the participants. It is in this identification and articulation of woundedness that I believe the path of healing and self-understanding can be manifest, ultimately leading to happier lives. This is a goal of counselling psychology. According to Magnusson (1991), "Counselling serves one fundamental purpose: to facilitate personal growth and development" (p. 3). Magnusson advocates there are five sub-goals to the general goal of fostering client's growth and development: affirming client self-worth, developing a sense of being "heard," fully exploring the issue at hand, identifying barriers to growth and development; and, developing strategies for overcoming the barriers (p. 3).

In this chapter I will share my recommendations, suggestions for future research, conclusions, and personal reflections as a result of engaging in this research.

Recommendations

This section discusses the recommendations I make for counselling psychology and therapeutic applications, for the Christian community and theology, and for further study. These recommendations have implications for the church, men, and counselling psychology.

The findings of this study indicate that there is a place for an integrated understanding and practice of both Christian theology and counselling psychology within each discipline. There is a need for those in the field of counselling psychology, and those involved in the Christian community and theology, to affirm the importance and contribution each field of study can make to the other, and to the lives of men.

It was clear from the data analysis, that a theme identified in the participants' lives was that of accompaniment and wounds of being abandoned. In Chapter 4, I named this theme: abandonment and loneliness-a foreigner in one's own family. This has implications in counselling and therapeutic application. It emphasizes the importance that counselors must stay with and not abandon clients during the therapeutic relationship. The research with these men indicates that they have had many wounding experiences of not feeling accompanied and therefore it is a powerful indication that counselors must not perpetuate or further the wound, but act as agents of healing by accompanying their clients. This would suggest that the act of accompanying a client in and of itself is a powerful and healing modality.

There was also a theme in the study entitled: the search for blessing. While this study was limited to these particular men, it may point to a broader application and need among others that they too are searching for blessing. That is, they are searching to be

affirmed and feel worthy as was indicated in Chapter 4. Paramount in this study was understanding the influence of Christ for the participants. While the participants did not have someone offering them the blessing they desired, they all found it and continue to receive it in Christ. The participants in this study understood Christ as always available, present in others, and someone who knows their suffering because He loved and suffered, and therefore can understand them and offers hope to them in their own journey through life. This is important because the men were seeking blessing, could not find it from those they were seeking it from, but all received it in Christ.

Within counseling psychology, it is important not to diminish or underestimate the powerful influence and presence a client's belief in Christ may have on their ability to heal and navigate life. Perhaps counselors may ask, "Is my client searching for blessing?" This study indicates that Christian men are searching for blessing and counselors have an opportunity to acknowledge this, and play an important role in facilitating the affirmation they seek by not ignoring the importance of Christ in their male clients' lives. This study also points to the prominent and powerful role Christian faith has in men's lives. It is important that counselors not only respect a client's faith, but that they are careful not to assume what a client believes within a particular faith. This study showed, that, for these participants they had a different understanding of Christ, healing, and salvation than traditional conservative theology. For example, the traditional understanding of Christ as dying for our sins so that we may have salvation was not a theological position the participants claimed.

This study is one further support of the counseling psychology literature that relationship, in this case a faith-based or spiritual relationship that has been largely

ignored in counseling psychology, is an important factor in client change (c.f., Duncan & Moynihan, 1994; Gaston, 1990; Horvath, 2000; Krupnick et al., 1996; Marziali & Alexander, 1991; Quinn, Dotson & Jordan, 1997).

This study has revealed that men have experiences of being wounded. It is important that counselors offer hope that the wound can become a source of strength and positive motivation for a client as it was for the participants. In the previous chapter, I named this theme as: the blessing found in the wound. That is, the wound does not need to remain as a source of hurt, but by coming to understand the wound through therapeutic process, the wound can become a catalyst for change, strength and personal growth. In the case of the participants, their knowledge of the wound became a source of strength and therapeutic emphasis in their practice in counselling and caring for clients.

A recommendation of this study for the Christian church, broadly, is to ask and examine if it is offering an image and understanding of Jesus as a companion along a spiritual journey through life as the participant's have expressed as being an important understanding.

One implication of this study is that Christianity could emphasize the significance of Christ as a constant companion through life and as one who understands the nature of our suffering and woundedness. These were both important emphases of the participants. It was from this theological position that the participants found comfort and understanding from Christ.

The understanding that Christ died for our sins and thus offers us salvation from our sins and sufferings is not an understanding that strongly resonated with the men in this study. While Christianity, both traditional and liberal, emphasizes a relational Christ,

I would recommend that the depth and influence of this be strongly acknowledged and emphasized within Christian theology. Traditional Christianity has placed great emphasis on the belief that Jesus the Christ died for our sins and thus we have salvation. The participants in this study found salvation or wholeness in identifying with Christ as a comrade, one who lived and understood their suffering, and one who in spirit remains with them as they endure and understand the events of their life.

I would recommend that parents of sons seriously consider an examination of their own woundedness and how those wounds, if unexamined, have influenced their parenting style and the relationship to their son(s). This study suggests that wounds inflicted upon sons are often from parents. This study implicitly invites all of us to consider how our own woundedness impacts on others, in particular parental relationships.

Future Research

A recommendation for future research could be a similar study with woman and their experiences of woundedness and the influence of Christ in their healing. What are the themes of woundedness, if any, that have been present for women? What influence has Christ had in their healing and what dimensions of Christ, theologically, resonate with them in that journey to healing.

This study has implications for fathers and mothers as parents of boys. It was clear in the research that the men suffered wounds from their fathers and mothers. It may be worth studying how the wounds of parents have influenced their parenting and relationships to their sons. In particular, further study is needed in an examination of mother-son relationships.

Future research could also be broadened by including or focusing on other faith groups outside of Christianity. One focus could be on the role faith and/or the belief in a transcendent God has on the healing of wounds. The participants in this study were educated, white, middle-aged Canadian Christian men. Future research could be expanded by involving women, other cultural groups, nationalities, and faith groups.

Conclusions

This section is a summary of the findings of this research in the areas of experiences of woundedness in men, understandings of Christ, and the relationship between the two.

The data collection took place at an Annual Conference of the Canadian Association for Pastoral Practice and Education. There were four men who participated in the study, each with formal education in the fields of theology and psychology. In addition, each of them had completed a therapeutic process at some prior point in their lives in which they addressed their woundedness. The men were all citizens of Canada, affiliated with a Christian denomination, and were between the ages of 43 and 50. All the participants are married with children of their own and are self-proclaimed practicing Christians.

This study attempted to understand the experiences of woundedness the participants have experienced in their lives and the influence their understanding of Christ has had on those experiences. The participants expressed their understandings of Christ, their definition of woundedness, shared their experiences of how they have been wounded throughout their life, and concluded with articulating how their belief and understanding of Christ has impacted, healed or not, their wounds.

This study unveiled that all of the men have had experiences of feeling wounded and willingly shared those experiences. It was evident that even though they had an understanding of the wounds and healing had occurred that the wounds still held emotion and energy for them. All of the men expressed that the wounds are never completely gone, that they have become part of who they are and continue to inform their sense of self.

There were three major themes identified in this study. They were: Abandoned and Lonely – A Foreigner In Ones Own Family, The Search For A Blessing, and the Blessing of the Wound. All of the participants grew up in families where they had siblings and all expressed they felt lonely, isolated and alone. There was an expressed feeling that they did not feel they belonged, were an outsider, and were therefore isolated. In some cases, this occurred because of traumatic and shaming experiences such as physical or sexual abuse. All of the men offered experiences, both wounding and affirming that they had from their parents. They all acknowledged they were seeking a blessing from their parent(s); often it was from their father, but not exclusively. What was evident is that they sought it from a parental figure and believe they never received it. At later stages in their lives, the participants found blessing in another person. In one case, a therapist, and in another case a teacher. Ultimately, they each came to a realization that the ultimate blessing comes from themselves, and they stopped seeking the blessing which often manifested itself as seeking the approval of others and trying continually to please others.

Each of the participants as part of their vocation offers direct counselling service to others, and all are involved in helping professions, specifically in some dimension of

Christian ministry. What was revealed is that all of them in both their therapeutic approach, and theological understanding of Christ, have formed their identity as a result of their experiences of woundedness. They have discovered the blessing of their wound, and that blessing has become the impetus, the dimension which they work from when encountering others. For example, one participant often felt lonely and isolated, a foreigner wherever he went, and is committed in his practice and theology to helping people feel comforted and that they belong. Although this study did not address this specifically, it appears that the theological understanding of Christ the men have formed is directly correlated to their life long experiences of woundedness, healing, and their therapeutic emphasis.

Traditional Christian thought has held up the image of Christ as the Saviour of the world because he died for the sins of humanity. This traditional and conservative understanding of salvation, or wholeness, did not resonate with the participants as much as an understanding of Christ as companion and one who accompanies them on their journey through life. The participants did not place a strong emphasis on the traditional Christian understanding of Christ as a miraculous healer. They expressed a belief that healing comes from continuing to understand their wounds and the presence of Christ in themselves and in others.

Reflections

It has been some time since I began this process of interviewing and writing about the experiences of male woundedness and the understandings and influences of Christ. The study began in 2001 when the interviewing process began and the data analysis began in 2003. As previously noted, this study included four participants and I feel as

though I not only entered into a relationship with them as the researcher/interviewer, but they have remained with me and continue to do so as I write, reflect, and live with the process of writing this thesis. Each time I read the transcripts or have an e-mail or telephone call with any of the participants, my understanding and appreciation of them deepens. As mentioned, I have taken some extended time in writing this thesis as the story of my own journey and life has been simultaneously unfolding. A principle belief I hold is that life is in relationship and therefore any choices and decisions any one of us makes impacts on the other. Choices I have made about my personal life have impacted on my understandings of this material and on my writing.

In order to fully understand the findings of this study, it is important for me to relate my own experience of some of what has happened while I have been writing. Since I began this thesis, I have moved to another country and therefore culture, and I have begun a new job, in a new congregation, with a new set of relationships to foster, nurture, and develop. The adjustment has had an impact, and as frustrating at times as it has been in keeping me from writing, in many ways it has been a blessing as it has lengthened out my own journey. I have grown as a minister, as a husband, counselor, father, community contributor, researcher, theologian and man.

On many occasions, I have found comfort in re-reading the participants' stories; I have also been challenged. I have found comfort in hearing my story and woundedness in the stories of the participants. I have been challenged at times as I have realized that I have wounds that still need to be healed, or that I commit some of the same mistakes and deliver wounds to others that men in the story have also experienced. But at the deepest levels, I have felt understood and they have become companions on my own journey. A

rich and explicit theme in this research has been that of isolation and loneliness. Yet my findings indicate that the participants also found in other men's lives affirmation and acceptance which have been powerful and healing for them. In many ways, the men in this study have provided that for me. As I read and hear their stories, their experiences, I have been able to hear my own. I have come to a deeper understanding of the formative parental relationship in my life, my own parenting and husbandry, and my identity as a person, as a man. I have also been able to find inspiration and hope in their stories as they have pointed me to new insights and understandings. In other words, I have benefited greatly from being allowed to hear these powerful stories and am grateful for how honest and open the participants were in their sharing. Their contribution to this research has been a contribution to me.

I found I personally identified with each of the participants, some in more profound ways than others. Edgar and Chris drew me in the most and I felt the deepest affinity with them. As I interviewed Chris and he shared the story of his father telling him to shut up after a hockey game, I unexpectedly welled up with tears. I began to remember a hockey tournament in which I got into my first fight. As I left the ice, I saw my father's eyes and knew he was not only disappointed but angry. After the game we walked quietly to the car and as we pulled away he simply said, "You asshole!" As Chris spoke about his father telling him to "shut up," my own story came alive again and I became aware my own wound. Chris and I shared almost an identical wound, the wound of a hockey dad not able to understand us and delivering the wound with a blow probably more powerful than he knew.

All of the participants shared the experience of growing up in a family but feeling alone. It is interesting that they could be surrounded by people who love and care for them, and yet feel as if no one does, or that they were distant and misunderstood. Some of the participants shared that this was because of a perceived deficiency, as in Chris's case, not being able to read well. In my case, it was the opposite. I was more than capable and competent; tasks seemed to come easy to me, and therefore I believe I was not a real worry to my family. There was an expectation and belief that Jeff would always be okay and therefore didn't need the same level of support and understanding as my siblings. While I was greatly supported in all that I did by my parents, I am not sure I ever felt understood and accepted as a child. I was accepted as the one who will always be all right, and of course, at times I am not.

I identified with Chris's metaphor of not having anyone in your corner. Again, while my relationship with my father was much different than his, I experienced profound loneliness that kept me searching for blessing, acceptance, and acknowledgement that I am okay. I have in the last few years come to realize that acceptance can really only come from myself and that it also comes from mentors who see me in more loving and accepting ways than I see myself. I believe I was searching for that in my parents and feel I have partially disappointed my father. I was never a good batter at baseball and struggled at football. While I know my father desired me to be greater, I wonder if he was embarrassed or even ashamed of my performance. I never played football because I truly enjoyed the game; I only ever played football because I thought it would please my father. I played for him.

I identified and found comfort in Christian theology and Jesus Christ. It was very powerful for me to see how many ways I identified with a variety of aspects within the participant's stories. Sam shared how he felt the presence of Jesus even as a little boy with a picture of Jesus in his room. At that point I remembered the same picture hanging on my wall. While it may seem like a small thing, it is the small things, symbols, pieces of our stories, that connect us to one another and opens us further, I believe, to really hear the story that the other is sharing with us. The picture of Jesus hanging on my wall was always a source of comfort, I felt it was a warm presence, and it was constant; it was always hanging in the same place. For Sam, the picture of Jesus gave him "a sense of presence." The picture of Jesus spoke to two different boys, at two different in history, who were both feeling lonely and offered them a sense of presence and of comfort in the image of Jesus. As Sam shared his story it hits my story; that is the power of narrative engagement. What I find interesting is how as I listen to their story and hear the details, it actually draws me deeper and closer to my own story and wounds. This was a powerful gift that the men shared by their willingness to speak of their wounds and share the *narrative of their life with me.*

Since all the participants share a strong background in Christian theology, and as I was seeking to discover how this aspect of their lives informed their understanding of woundedness, the men all spoke of how their wounds have informed both their theology and their approach in counselling. For example, Chris spoke of an experience of abandoning someone and feeling abandoned as a child. This was the impetus for his firm commitment to accompany and never abandon a client. This is the healing energy and source of an acknowledged wound. In hearing him speak, and Barnes speak of the

challenge of comforting dying children, I began to reflect on the nature of my own wounds. As they spoke, I was transported within myself and caused to wonder about how I have been wounded and what the nature of those wounds is. As United Methodist Church preacher Dr. Lydia Jackson Waters put it at a conference I attended, “We need to minister from our pain.” It is a powerful idea and calls forth a recognition and understanding of my pain, my wound. What was comforting in this personal search amidst intellectual pursuit, was that my wounds, my story, is not entirely different, but woven in the stories of the participants. This provided hope, inspiration, comfort, and a compass to help me navigate my own narrative in the company of others.

The most profound connection for me with the participants occurred as I listened to Edgar talk about his grandfather by whom he felt loved and accepted. My paternal grandfather died before I knew him. However, I always felt I knew him because my Dad had some of his tools, spoke of him, and my grandmother used to speak fondly of her late husband. I have always grieved that not only did I not know him personally, but I never benefited from his wisdom, his love, his teaching. Often throughout my life I have encountered people who knew him and he is always spoken of as a man of integrity, faith, and honesty. My father’s grandfather was also apparently a wonderful man. My dad, as a boy, spent a great deal of time with him and learned carpentry and trades from him. I never had that benefit from my grandfather. When Edgar spoke of receiving one of his grandfather’s tools, a level, it had an unexpected effect on me. In my family, as stated, I often felt and feel isolated. I fear one day not having some of my father’s tools; I fear they will go to others, and many already have. The tools, the symbols of my father, hold a great meaning for me, and obviously for other men. My father still has tools of his

grandfather, embossed with his initials. I think the tools represent something much deeper about my father for me. Perhaps it is the patience with which he used them, or that they stayed on a bench in his workroom, which was a place of creativity and possibility, or that they often hung out of his back pocket, the other pocket bulging as it held a can of Coca Cola. When Edgar shared how much he appreciated the gift of the level from his grandmother, somewhere deep inside me I understood, because I similarly remembered my grandfather and his tools, and what those tools mean to me.

As I reflected on the unanticipated theme of mothers and grandmothers, I perhaps should not have been surprised, for my own mother has been a source of wounding in my life, and my paternal grandmother has been a place of safety. My grandmother is gone now, but she remains with me in many ways. Often when I am preaching in my church, I spontaneously recollect and share stories of my grandmother. She was a woman of love, peace, acceptance and creativity for me. She represented the peace I desired and the acceptance I wanted, that I felt I did not receive in a household that valued busyness, competition and being more than who you were.

In reading the participants' stories, questions of my own story were simultaneously raised. Have I felt I received my father's blessing? I still wrestle with that but believe I have. How has my father been wounded? What wounds does he still carry? Do we share any of the same wounds? Perhaps the grief of his father, the pain of separation he feels from his sister, and his animosity towards his father-in-law are all kinds of pain that we share. There is commonness in our stories; they just don't get shared. Yet as I grow, I often recognize my father in myself, in the ways I move, think, the sayings I quote. I am not embarrassed by that, but proud. Discovering commonness

and woundedness in the men's stories, I believe, has helped me as a pastor and a counsellor to have a deeper appreciation for the pain of men, and also to understand my wounds more fully that my need for healing cannot get in the way of the client's. That is, as I have become more conscious of my own woundedness, I am able to counsel and minister to others not from a place of need, but more from a place of helpfulness.

One of the most liberating dynamics in this work for me has been the surprises. I have felt that these men's stories gave me permission to name my relationship with my mother as a source of pain. I need to feel I belong and need to be accepted, even though I am confident and successful at what I do. I found it positive and comforting to be among men whom I admire and who I believe have integrated their woundedness with their pastoral and psychological practice, as I heard them speak of the wounds they have endured. So much of public ministry and life in general is focused on image. What a comfort it is to be able to recognize our pain, to know that we are not alone, that others have walked and continue to walk that path, and that, as one of the participants put it, "Christ Himself has made that courageous journey."

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Appendix A: Letter of Invitation

Jeffrey MacIntosh Chant

PO Box 459
Picture Butte, Alberta
T0K 1V0

(403) 732-5775

January 14, 2001

Dear Participant:

I am conducting a study of the “experiences of male woundedness as they relate to understandings of images of Christ.” Attached is an outline of the purpose of my research. I would like your formal consent to participate in this research.

My research will begin January 24, 2001, and be completed by March 30, 2001. The research involves participating in a two hour in-depth semi-structured interview, a possible second follow-up interview of one hour, and possible correspondence with e-mail or by telephone.

All material will be kept confidential and you may withdraw from the interview or research at anytime and also do not need to answer any questions during interviews I ask that you are not comfortable answering.

A professional transcriber will do the transcription of audio-tapes, and pseudonyms will be provided. Furthermore, if there is identifiable information, e. g. place of employment, this will be replaced with a fictitious name to help eliminate the possibility of you being identified. Once the transcription is completed, I will request in written form that all files or computer files be destroyed. I will follow-up with a telephone call to ensure this has been done.

The only persons hearing audiotapes or reading transcriptions will be my supervisor or myself, and the only individuals who will have access to original data will be my supervisor and myself.

The data will be stored on a CD-Rom in my possession as well as all transcriptions, field notes, and audio or videotapes. At the conclusion of my research, all data will be destroyed.

There is potential that the process of the interview may surface strong emotional reactions or feelings to events in your life. I will have the name of a professional counselor you can contact if you need assistance.

You also have the right to inquire about the research, concerns that may arise, questions they may have, or the stage of development of the research at anytime.

I very much appreciate your participation in my research. If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at (403) 732-5775, or my supervisor, Dr. Robin Bright at (403) 329-2443, or the Chair of the Human Subject Research Committee, Dr. Keith Roscoe at (403) 329-2446.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey M. Chant

Appendix B: Description of Study

Introduction

I am interested in studying the experiences men have of being wounded or deeply hurt from the events of life and by being in relationship. I am particularly interested in how a discriminate group of men understand their feelings of woundedness in relationship to the Christian story which invites us to believe in a wounded Christ as a Saviour for humanity. Connected to this, is the experience men have or have not had in healing and what impact the Christian story has had, if any. I will identify four men who have formal education in both psychology and theology. It is important that these men are comfortable enough with me to share their feelings of being wounded. Throughout the duration of my research, I will reflect on how the woundedness of the participants speaks to my own life of being male and feeling wounded. This reflection on my own experience of feeling wounded will be shared with the participants when it seems appropriate and will become part of my data to be integrated into my thesis.

The Problem

Rationale

Based on my experience as a man, a pastoral minister, and my work as a counselor, it is my belief that as human beings we all share elements of feeling and being wounded. As we walk through life our self-understanding and relationships with others impact our emotional, psychological and spiritual development (Emmons, 1991). There are experiences in life that wound us and it is imperative we articulate how we have been wounded in order to find healing and wholeness. If we do not articulate and subsequently, address our woundedness, it remains a part of us that surfaces at different times in our

lives and may contribute to a sense of sadness, unhappiness, or manifest itself as an undesirable behaviour. Our woundedness, if unattended, may also influence the quality of relationships we have with others for example, our relationship to partner or spouse. In particular, I believe men have often neglected their sense of woundedness and therefore my study will focus on men (Levant, 1995). This is not to negate feelings of woundedness experienced by women, but for the purposes of this inquiry, I am focusing on the unique experiences of men.

I am drawn into hearing men articulate their own experiences of being wounded for a variety of reasons. Ronald Levant, in his 1995 book *Masculinity Reconstructed: Changing the Rules of Manhood*, drew on his experience of counselling men and their experiences of being men to present a comprehensive work on the need for a change in the “rules of manhood.” Levant (1995) devotes a chapter in his book to “Men’s Wounds” and categorizes them into five basic areas: father wound, mother wound, wife, relationships and work. As a researcher, I am interested in the wounds my participants have identified throughout their lives and how they have lived with them. I am also interested in exploring and identifying with them wounds they have not yet acknowledged. In hearing these experiences, I am attracted to how they impact my own story and therefore will reflect on this throughout the data collection process.

The significance of this study is that it will allow for the male articulation of experiences of woundedness and how this expression may then facilitate healing for them and other men who may access their own stories of feeling wounded through hearing the participants. It is in this identification and articulation of woundedness that I believe the path of healing and self-understanding can be manifest. Those who are feeling wounded

may require two kinds of awakening. They may need to awake to their own woundedness, and secondly to the sources of their woundedness (Park, 1993). Given the work that has been done in identifying men's experiences of being wounded and their path to healing, I am interested in hearing about another dimension of feeling wounded. Based on my own theological background, I am interested in how these men understand the Christian message of a wounded and healing Christ as impacting and influencing their own feelings of woundedness. Fundamental to the Christian faith is the central figure of Jesus Christ who was wounded and crucified as an act of salvation for humanity.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that made us whole, and with his stripes we are healed (Isaiah 53:5)

The question of my study is, "What is the experience of male woundedness as articulated by a discriminate group of men and how have they related to the Christian story in their own self-understanding and healing?"

Purpose of the Study

My purpose in pursuing this study is to bring to consciousness the varied experiences men have of woundedness and how they describe those experiences as living realities. Further to this, how has the Christian story influenced their path of healing? The sharing of these experiences will bring to the surface how people and events have contributed to the participants' self-understanding and/or how they may have hurt them. Through the telling of these stories, I will encourage rich description of the events, the people, the feelings, and the depth to which these experiences have affected these men.

These descriptions may invite my own engagement in this study. It is my hope that the stories of my participants will hold meaning for me and other men as well.

Appendix C: Participant Consent Letter

I am currently engaged in studies in the Faculty of Education at the University of Lethbridge leading towards a graduate degree with a specialization in counseling psychology. As part of my program, I am completing a thesis as outlined in the cover letter.

I am seeking your consent to participate in this research with an understanding that you may withdraw at anytime. It will also be helpful for me in my process of data collection if I have your consent to audio and videotape our sessions. All tapes are considered confidential and will be viewed and discussed only with my supervisor or academic committee. Professional transcribers will be given pseudonyms. All tapes will be erased and destroyed within three months of the completion of my research.

(Counsellor's signature)

I give permission to JEFFREY MacINTOSH CHANT to audio and videotape our interviews and to play the tapes during supervision sessions. I also give my formal consent to participate in this research.

(Client's signature)

Date

Appendix D: Interview Questions

INTRODUCTION

- Confidentiality Procedures
 - Informed of ability to withdraw at anytime
 - Preamble of Research Study
 - Questions participants may have
1. Tell me about yourself, your family growing up, marital life and your work – paint me a picture of who you are.

PART I: UNDERSTANDINGS OF THE CHRIST

2. Tell me what images and perceptions you hold of Christ? Who is He for you?
3. Describe your relationship to Christ.
4. How significant or important is Christ to you?

PART 2: EXPERIENCES OF WOUNDEDNESS

5. Tell me how you understand or would define the term “woundedness.” What images does this term evoke for you?
6. Tell me about times in your life when you have been hurt or wounded. These could be emotionally, spiritually, even physically if you feel it had a deep impact on you.
7. How have you managed to live with your experiences of feeling wounded? What have been your strategies? What has been helpful in your journey of healing?
8. How have these experiences formed your self-understanding? Both in positive and challenging ways for you? Which of the experiences you described would you articulate as the most critical?

PART 3: THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO

9. How has the story of wounded Christ impacted or informed you as you understand your own woundedness?
10. How has the belief in a healing Christ impacted you in your own process of healing?
11. In those moments of feeling and being wounded, how has the Christ figure been present or absent for you?
12. Have you had opportunity in your life where you have shared your experiences of feeling wounded with other men? Tell me what that meant for you? How do those moments inform your theological understanding and relation to Christ?

NOTE: These are the main questions I will follow although sub-questions for clarity and exploration may be used to illuminate the main question.