Resilience as the Relational Ability to Spiritually Integrate Moral Stress

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Abstract Resilience is an outcome of caregiving relationships that help people spiritually integrate moral stress. Moral stress arises from lived theologies and spiritual orienting systems—patterns of values, beliefs, and ways of coping energized by shame, guilt, fear of causing harm, or self-disgust (some of the so-called negative moral emotions that cut people off from social support). Spiritual care compassionately brings to light these life-limiting lived theologies of shame and fear shaped by intersecting social systems of oppression like sexism, classism, and racism. Spiritual care helps people co-create intentional theologies that draw upon goodness, compassion, and love—moral emotions that connect them to the web of life. This interdisciplinary approach to moral stress draws upon the living stories of moral stress and resilience by feminist theologians Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Valerie Saiving.

Keywords Resilience · Moral stress · Moral injury · Moral emotions · Lived religion · Lived theology · Spiritual integration · Pastoral care · Spiritual care

But blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord,
whose confidence is in him.
They will be like a tree planted by the water
that sends out its roots by the stream.
It does not fear when heat comes;
its leaves are always green.
It has no worries in a year of drought
and never fails to bear fruit. (Jer. 17:7–8 NIV)

Jeremiah's tree recovers from the hardship of heat or drought because its network of roots grows along a stream. This tree is a metaphor of resilience as an outcome of stress-related

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growth within trusting relationships, which are like roots alongside a stream that help a tree bear fruit during a drought. Resilient persons, families, and organizations continue to grow under stress because they are deeply rooted in life-giving relationships. Resilience is not a static trait located within individuals. Resilience is a relational and interactional process (Ungar 2012). Jeremiah's tree recovers because of the stream that feeds its roots.

A few summers ago, I organized a faculty women's writing support group because several of my colleagues were stressed about not being able to complete writing projects needed for graduation or promotion. I suggested we keep journals on when we sat down at our computers to work, how long we worked on our writing projects, when we took breaks, how long the breaks were, and what we did during our breaks. Each week we shared from our journals in a spirit of compassion rather than judgment, hilarity rather than lament. We each took comfort hearing how often our faculty sisters were distracted from difficult writing projects by urgent needs to garden, do laundry, and even clean toilets. Often what called us away from the challenges of writing was traditionally women's work. Though we didn't reflect too much on this, it could be that we coped with the inherent conflicts between values to do with professional achievement and homemaking by defaulting to an activity that made us feel competent as homemakers. For example, when I am working on a challenging writing project I can easily feel anxious, fearful of failing and not measuring up, and ashamed about my inarticulateness. In order to get out of this uncomfortable emotional state, I am often tempted to answer emails—a way of feeling competent by taking care of others—or, if I am at home, to get up from my desk and do a household task. I cope with my shame about being inadequate as a woman scholar by feeling adequate as a woman taking care of others—values internalized in patriarchal social systems, especially church and academy.

This vignette illustrates how moral stress arises from conflicts in values; how these values reflect internalized sexism, and how we became resilient to moral stress through supportive relationships. This relational experience of resilience raised questions for me about how spiritual care can foster relational growth and resilience in times of stress. In this paper I describe resilience as an outcome of caregiving relationships that help people spiritually integrate moral stress. My argument is that moral stress is inherently spiritual and religious, requiring both psychological and theological approaches to care.[1] There is considerable psychological research on how religion and spirituality can support or impede stress-related growth (Kusner and Pargament 2012; Pargament and Cummings 2010; Pargament et al. 2006, 2013; Werdel et al. 2014). Emerging research on moral emotions—emotions that preserve or threaten social relationships (Haidt 2003)[2]—highlights the social role of such emotions in moral stress (Fredrickson and Cohn 2008; Fredrickson, et al. 2003; Haidt 2003; Tugade et al. 2014). Using this research, I will describe how spiritual care fosters resilience through spiritual care relationships that help people integrate moral stress.

Spiritual integration counteracts the ways that moral emotions like shame and fear of causing harm generate values, beliefs, and coping practices—what I call lived theologies—that easily isolate people, cutting them off from social and spiritual support. Spiritual care compassionately brings to light these life-limiting lived theologies of shame and fear, helping

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[1] Kinghorn (2009, 2012) makes a similar argument about moral injuries arising from war trauma.

[2] Haidt and others study the social dimensions of emotions—their potential to make people isolate from or connect with others. Moral emotions like shame, anger, fear, disgust, and anxiety are labelled negative because they tend to isolate people, whereas "positive emotions such as gratitude, interest, and love" (Fredrickson et al. 2003, p. 366) move people to reach out and connect with others. Moral psychologists explore the social and moral functions of emotions that function to either bind people together or isolate people (Haidt 2003).

people co-create intentional theologies that draw upon goodness, compassion, and love—moral emotions that connect them to the web of life—like the tree whose web of roots grows along the stream. This interdisciplinary approach to moral stress brings together pastoral theology and psychological research on religious coping, spiritual struggles, moral emotions, and moral injury.

I will draw upon living stories of resilience of feminist theologians, notably Bonnie Miller-McLemore and Valerie Saiving, who did not succumb to the moral stress of being both mothers and scholars by allowing shame or fear to isolate them. Their stories of moral stress became a theological resource through a process of spiritual integration that connected them to a supportive web that helped them and others resist shame-inducing sexism within religious and academic circles. I will describe three steps in the process of spiritual integration:

1. Connecting with God/the goodness of self and others through compassion-based spiritual practices
2. Identifying one's embedded theologies that generate moral stress because of intersecting social systems of oppression like racism, sexism, and classism
3. Co-creating intentional theologies experienced through compassion-based spiritual practices that are flexible, integrated, capable of complex meanings, and relationally connected within life-giving webs of relationships

This praxis of spiritual integration is based on a postmodern liberative method of practical theology using social constructive approaches to knowledge in both psychological studies (Gergen 2001, 2002, 2006; Stolorow et al. 2002) and religious and theological studies in practical and pastoral theology (Beaudoin 2014; Doehring 2015; E. Graham 1996; Graham et al. 2005; L. K. Graham 1992, 2013b). The goal of this postmodern and liberative method of practical theology is spiritual integration aligned with social justice, which I explore using intersectionality—theories that identify social systems of oppression like sexism, racism, classism, and heterosexism that intersect from one moment to the next, giving or taking away social privileges (Doehring 2014a, b, 2015; Ramsay 2013; Weber 2010). Spiritual integration that takes social oppression into account helps people resist such oppression and become resources for others seeking social justice. I will begin by defining key terms—moral stress, moral injury, and moral emotions; spiritual integration; and lived and intentional theology.

Moral Stress and Injury as Inherently Spiritual and Religious

Moral stress arises from conflicts among core values and is experienced physiologically through emotions like shame, guilt, or fear about causing harm by putting ultimate commitments in jeopardy. Moral stress, sometimes called ethical stress or moral distress, results from "disparities in the ethical values and expected behavior of employees" (DeTienne et al. 2012, pp. 377–378). Compared to terms like family stress, workplace stress, and traumatic stress, moral stress locates the source of stress within conflicts in values, either within persons (intrapsychic moral stress), between persons (interpersonal stress), or within systems (systemic moral stress). Moral stress has been studied in the workplace (DeTienne, et al. 2012; Reynolds et al. 2012) and healthcare institutions (Nilsson et al. 2011), especially among nurses (Cronqvist and Nyström 2007; Forster 2009; Lützén et al. 2010).

Broadly understood, moral stress can be part of a range of experiences in which people feel responsible for or ashamed about the harmful consequences of

- traumatic events (like accidents and violence),
- ongoing stresses in one's work environment or family life (caring for young children, teenagers, elderly parents, or marital and work conflicts), and
- health and mental health crises and chronic conditions.

Within a larger cultural arena, moral stress arises from discrimination or not measuring up to cultural ideals. For example, the moral stress of coming out as gay or lesbian is fed by religious and cultural heterosexism. When young adults internalize religious prejudice against sexual minorities, their moral stress about their sexual identity is intensified by heterosexist religious beliefs, like beliefs that God knows and judges their sexual desires as sinful and that the community of faith will shun them. Being cast out by parents and communities of faith makes it seem as though God is casting them aside as sinners. Moral stress is shaped by internalized social oppression, which is why spiritual care must identify social systems of oppression that intersect and exacerbate moral stress.

Moral injury is an emerging concept that comes out of the living stories of military service members and veterans in the aftermath of combat (Brock and Lettini 2012). It is defined as the "psychological, biological, spiritual, behavioral, and social impact of perpetrating, failing to prevent, or bearing witness to acts that transgress deeply held more beliefs and expectations" (Litz et al. 2009, p. 700); see also (Drescher et al. 2011; Vargas et al. 2013). Moral injury can be placed at one extreme end on a continuum of moral stress, with everyday moments of moral stress at the other end. People with strong core values of responsibility and concern for others will likely be more susceptible to moral stress because of their feelings of being responsible for harm. Those with tendencies toward moral stress are more likely to experience moral injury in the aftermath of traumatic events. Moral stress results from a heightened sensitivity to the possibilities of causing harm, which can be life-giving if people don't isolate themselves but reach out to others in a process of spiritual integration in order to share responsibility for and realistically assess harm.

This sense of being responsible for harm is intensely emotional, with gut-wrenching feelings that make people want to hide from others and cut themselves off from family, community, and spiritual support. "Moral injury is often experienced as an intensely private, deeply sincere, and often distressing self-questioning and soul-searching" (Drescher et al. 2013, p. 54). This physiological experience of shame, self-disgust, or fear goes hand-in-hand with conflicts in core values and the belief that one has caused harm to others and/or oneself and that one will be condemned by God and rejected by one's community. Coping with such stress can involve addiction and compulsive behaviors that momentarily alleviate disturbing feelings but over time increase shame and isolation.

Moral stress and injury can be understood, then, as *a pattern of values*, *beliefs*, *and ways of coping energized by shame*, *guilt*, *fear of causing harm*, *or self-disgust* (some of the so-called negative moral emotions that cut people off from social support). These emotions pull together an interlocking pattern of values, beliefs, and ways of coping—what I call a lived theology (Doehring 2014a, 2014b, 2015), a term similar to lived religion. McGuire (2008), a sociologist of religion, describes this as "the ever-changing, multifaceted, often messy—even contradictory—amalgam of beliefs and practices that are not necessarily those religious institutions consider important" (McGuire 2008, p. 4).

Pastoral and practical theologians have studied lived theologies—the beliefs and values people put into practice in their daily lives. Bonnie Miller-McLemore's (1994) early work detailed the theological dilemmas arising from the embodied experience of giving birth and nursing infants. She put into words her feeling of being caught between caring for an infant and working as a scholar and professor:

> *Also A Mother* is written, as I say at the beginning of the book, in "the eye of the storm over my attention" as a seminary professor and a mother of three sons, seven, four, and 3 years old. It is written out of constant, mundane (and not so mundane) conflicts between loyalties and identities. (1996, p. 149)

> I cannot begin to describe the multiple costs of putting these words upon paper. I lost many precious moments playing with my sons. The waste of a mother's creative energies in this daily conflict between work and love, Suleiman argues, "cannot be overestimated." Nothing has ever subverted my peace of mind as my small sons and yet nothing has ever taught me as much about myself, my place in the world, culture, patience, people, and life. (1992, p. 71)

Miller-McLemore and other feminist practical theologians have explored how to explicate the theological dilemmas embedded in experiences like motherhood. Their work on the lived theologies of motherhood laid a foundation for understanding moral stress theologically. Work on the moral stress arising from conflicts traditionally experienced by women goes back to the early 1960s and Valerie Saiving's (1960) pivotal article "The Human Situation: A Feminine View." She argued that sin is defined according to the dilemmas of men with power "in terms of anxiety, estrangement, and the conflict between necessity and freedom." For such men, sin has to do with "pride, will-to-power, exploitation, self-assertiveness, and the treatment of others as objects rather than persons." Redemption involves "restoring to man what he fundamentally lacks (namely, sacrificial love, the I-Thou relationship, the primacy of the personal, and, ultimately, peace" (Saiving 1960, p. 37). In contrast, women's sins, shaped as they are by sexist social systems, have to do not with pride but with

> triviality, distractibility, and diffuseness; lack of an organizing center or focus; dependence on others for one's self-definition; tolerance at the expense of standards of excellence; inability to respect the boundaries of privacy; sentimentality, gossipy sociability, and mistrust of reason—in short underdevelopment or negation of the self. (Saiving 1960, p. 38)

Written over a half a century ago, Saiving's description of women's sins may not ring true for a number of women today. However, many women would still agree with Saiving's and Miller-McLemore's description of conflicts between values related to work—"self-differentiation, challenge, and adventure" —and values related to caring for children/others, as well as the life-limiting ways of coping with such conflicts described by Saiving as the sins women traditionally experience:

> Her capacity for surrendering her individual concerns in order to serve the immediate needs of others—a quality which is so essential to the maternal role—can, on the other

hand, induce a kind of diffuseness of purpose, a tendency toward being easily distracted, a failure to discriminate between the more and less important, and an inability to focus in a sustained manner on the pursuit of any single goal. (Saiving 1960, p. 39)

As Miller-McLemore (1996) has pointed out, Saiving's description of sin from a woman's perspective arose from the theological dilemmas of being a mother and a scholar—conflicts that Saiving did not fully acknowledge until 30 years later, when Saiving looked back on her experience of writing the first draft of "The Human Situation" in 1958 for a class. She recalled how she was

trying to take care of my daughter Emily who was very small then. She was three, or four, maybe. I was trying to be a responsible student and also a good mother, and sometimes it just seemed impossible, especially since I was living in the city, and I didn't have any relatives or anybody like that to call on. I don't know what else to say. . . . (Saiving 1988, p. 100)

Saiving's and Miller-McLemore's stories of the moral stress of motherhood could only emerge when they moved past socially isolating feelings like shame and fear or guilt about causing harm to their children. Saiving's doubts about being a good mother initially remained hidden— a "lost voice" (Miller-McLemore 1994, p. 85)—potentially cutting her off from social support until feminist theologians like Miller-McLemore used their spiritually integrated stories of moral stress to connect with others in a process that made their stories life-giving rather than life-limiting. Miller-McLemore details the moral stress generated by clashes that I have depicted in Fig. 1, addressing the lived theology of moral distress arising from conflicts among values about (Diagram 1).

- being a good mother (sacrificial and "unconditional love, which defines the 'good woman' and the 'good mother'");
- a good feminist ("self-fulfillment and self-assertion") and
- a good scholar ("independence, self-reliance, and achievement") (Miller-McLemore 1994, p. 13)

The intentional theology of generativity she developed through a process of spiritual integration is based on values of "self-respect, mutuality, shared responsibility, interdependence, justice, and passionate objectivity—in work and families" (Miller-McLemore 1994, p. 14).

This figure attempts to describe the ways moral emotions like shame constellate a lived theology of moral stress for mothers caught between work and parenting responsibilities. I use the term lived theology to describe the implicit, often unexamined values and beliefs that people put into practice, especially under stress. My notion of lived theology corresponds to Moschella and her colleagues' (Maynard et al. 2010; Moschella 2008a; b) research on lived religion, which they note is based on "a contextual theological model that owes much to Elaine Graham's 'critical phenomenology of Christian practice'. I think of this approach as a way of paying attention to what people and communities actually do when practicing their faith" (2008b, pp. 16–17).

Psychologically speaking, lived theologies function as spiritual orienting systems consisting of the "habits, values, relationships, beliefs that express one's spirituality or sense of the
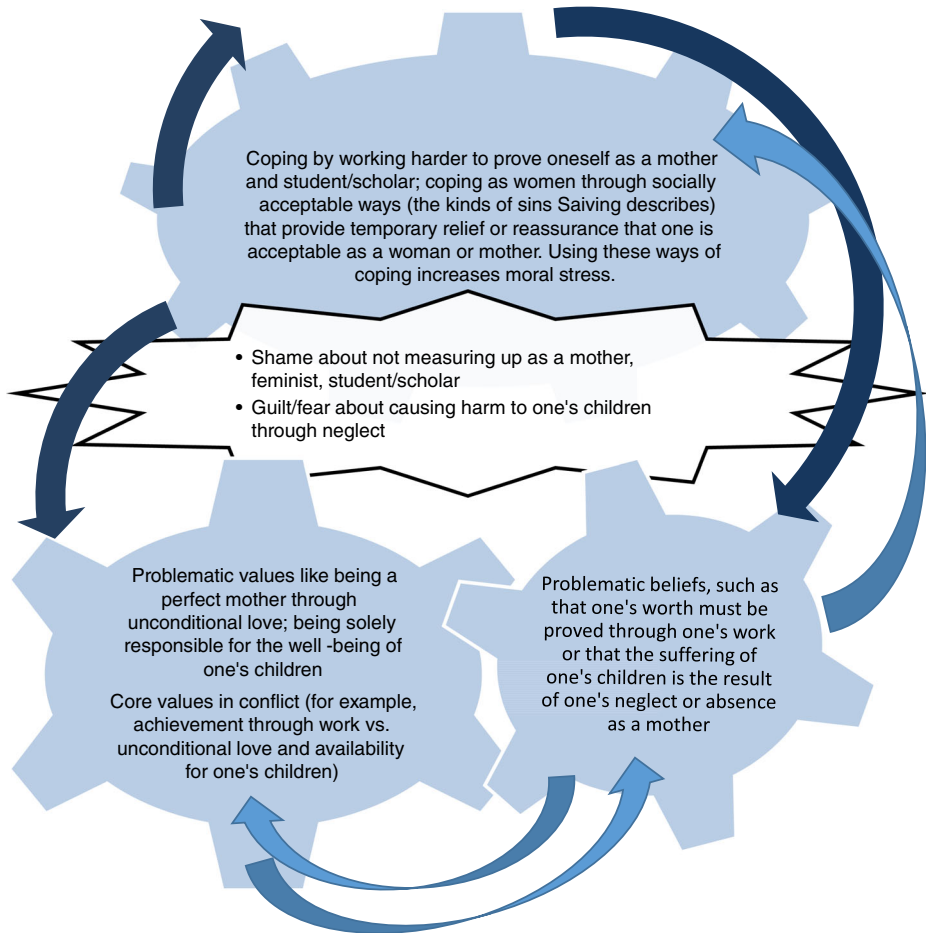
Fig. 1 A lived theology of the moral stress of being a good mother, feminist, and scholar

sacred" (Pargament, et al. 2006, p. 130). Pargament's research (2006) can be used to assess the extent to which a care seeker's spiritual orienting system is

- Integrated with all aspects of one's life and not compartmentalized or fragmented
- Flexible yet continuous without becoming rigid under stress
- Capable of connecting people with a benevolent sense of God, the sacred, or more generally the goodness of life, displacing an often automatic sense of judgment by God or others
- Complex enough to bear the full weight of suffering without being simplistic or individualistic

Pargament's four criteria work well alongside theological ways of assessing how one's personal theology of suffering may be functioning as life-giving or life-limiting. For example, I have used Susan Nelson's (2003) five ways of understanding suffering to elaborate how these

theologies of suffering often function in helpful and harmful ways for people experiencing moral stress (, Doehring 2014a, b, 2015).[3]

Emerging research on the role of emotions in moral reasoning is relevant for understanding how one's body shapes one's lived theologies. Theologians do not often consider how the physiological effects of emotions give rise to lived theologies. When practical and pastoral theologians take into account research on moral emotions, they will likely concur with (Miller-McLemore 2014a, b) argument: "[the] study of the place of emotion and feeling in learning should inform more fully how theology is constructed, taught, learned, and deployed in ministry." She proposes that theologians explore questions like:

> How [do] physical (sensual, somatic, visceral, material, carnal, mortal, fleshly, vulnerable—I search for appropriate adjectives here) dimensions of our bodies inform our thought and knowing [?] What is the relationship between this dimension of human bodies and human knowledge? And how do actual physical bodies shape religious and theological knowledge? (Miller-McLemore 2013, p. 744)

Haidt's research provides a helpful entrée into understanding how moral emotions shape the moral intuitions that make up the values and beliefs of embedded and often pre-reflective lived theologies. This research is relevant to theological education, as pastoral theologian Carol Cook (2013) has illustrated, especially in teaching pastoral and spiritual care. While pastoral caregivers since the 1950s have emphasized the importance of reflection on emotions in establishing a non-anxious presence, they have not fully understood the theological importance of reflection on emotions. Recent research on moral psychology helps caregivers understand the role of moral emotions in shaping lived theologies, as I describe below. How might theological educators incorporate emotional reflection into theological reflection that co-creates intentional theologies? I answer this question by outlining a three-step process of spiritually integrating moral stress.

Spiritual Integration of Moral Stress Begins with Compassion

Given the physiological, emotional, and intuitive ways that moral stress is experienced, spiritual care needs to begin at a gut rather than cognitive level, with felt experiences of compassion for self and others. Morally stressed persons need to experience the compassionate presence of others, notably through the body language of spiritual caregivers. Spiritual

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[3] Moral stress can be understood as a kind of religious struggle, as recent research on religious struggles suggests. Exline and Pargament's scale measuring religious struggles has two subscales that are useful for measuring moral stress as a dimension of religious struggles: the moral and ultimate meaning subscales. The moral subscale is self-focused rather than God- or other- focused and predicts "a greater tendency to attribute a specific r/s [religious and spiritual] struggle to the self. . . . Moral struggle also predicted slightly less anger toward God and less attribution of responsibility to God for a specific r/s struggle. These connections make sense if people are blaming themselves rather than externalizing blame to God. The other two indicators of divine struggle (religious fear and guilt, instability) focus largely on concern about one's own misdeeds and perceptions of God's disapproval toward the self.…Our main prediction about the Ultimate Meaning subscale was that it would predict more effort in searching for life meaning. We also reasoned that a sense of ultimate meaning would offer some protection against doubt. We thus expected that higher scores on Ultimate Meaning (i.e., more struggle about meaning) would predict more religious doubt and more doubt about whether God exists. These hypotheses were supported" (Exline et al. 2014, pp. 216–217).
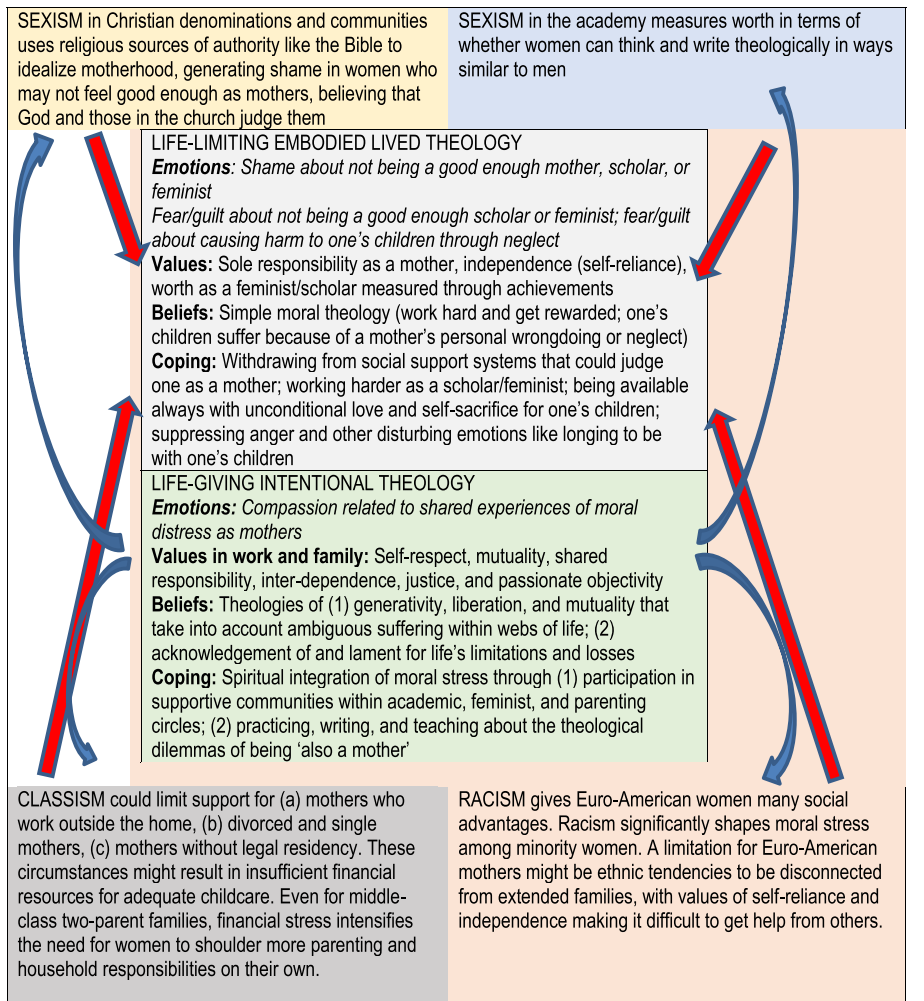
SEXISM in Christian denominations and communities uses religious sources of authority like the Bible to idealize motherhood, generating shame in women who may not feel good enough as mothers, believing that God and those in the church judge them

SEXISM in the academy measures worth in terms of whether women can think and write theologically in ways similar to men

LIFE-LIMITING EMBODIED LIVED THEOLOGY
Emotions: Shame about not being a good enough mother, scholar, or feminist
Fear/guilt about not being a good enough scholar or feminist; fear/guilt about causing harm to one's children through neglect
Values: Sole responsibility as a mother, independence (self-reliance), worth as a feminist/scholar measured through achievements
Beliefs: Simple moral theology (work hard and get rewarded; one's children suffer because of a mother's personal wrongdoing or neglect)
Coping: Withdrawing from social support systems that could judge one as a mother; working harder as a scholar/feminist; being available always with unconditional love and self-sacrifice for one's children; suppressing anger and other disturbing emotions like longing to be with one's children

LIFE-GIVING INTENTIONAL THEOLOGY
Emotions: Compassion related to shared experiences of moral distress as mothers
Values in work and family: Self-respect, mutuality, shared responsibility, inter-dependence, justice, and passionate objectivity
Beliefs: Theologies of (1) generativity, liberation, and mutuality that take into account ambiguous suffering within webs of life; (2) acknowledgement of and lament for life's limitations and losses
Coping: Spiritual integration of moral stress through (1) participation in supportive communities within academic, feminist, and parenting circles; (2) practicing, writing, and teaching about the theological dilemmas of being 'also a mother'

CLASSISM could limit support for (a) mothers who work outside the home, (b) divorced and single mothers, (c) mothers without legal residency. These circumstances might result in insufficient financial resources for adequate childcare. Even for middle-class two-parent families, financial stress intensifies the need for women to shoulder more parenting and household responsibilities on their own.

RACISM gives Euro-American women many social advantages. Racism significantly shapes moral stress among minority women. A limitation for Euro-American mothers might be ethnic tendencies to be disconnected from extended families, with values of self-reliance and independence making it difficult to get help from others.

Diagram 1 Intersecting social systems that shape lived theologies of the moral stress of being a mother and a scholar

caregivers need to be able to use a process of spiritual integration for themselves so that they can communicate compassion and create "sanctuary" (Moon 2015; Stallinga 2013, pp. 21–23) for the stories of morally stressed and injured care seekers. This process of spiritual integration described below works both in the formation of spiritual caregivers and in the process of spiritual care itself.

The first step in spiritually integrating moral stress is to identify moments in the day when one experiences peacefulness, beauty, calm, and love for others and oneself. What makes such moments good? Can these moments become a practice of self-care and a spiritual practice of connecting with goodness and beauty in oneself and others? These kinds of questions prompt people to identify what compassion feels like for them and what contributes to such feelings. By not explicitly using spiritual or religious language, spiritual caregivers cast a wider net that pulls in sometimes idiosyncratic ways of connecting with goodness, perhaps unique to

people's stories. For example, moments of goodness may include pausing to watch a sunrise or sunset, singing in a choir, snuggling with a pet, gardening, having a meaningful conversation, or listening to music. Exploring what makes such moments good can provide an entrée into another's existential world.

After identifying and exploring some of these ways of experiencing goodness, people might consider how to incorporate such moments intentionally into their daily routine, especially during times of the day when they are likely to be stressed. Given how insidious moral stress can be, people may need to learn how to identify the physical signs of moral stress, such as tense shoulders and facial muscles, headaches, or more general aches and pains. They might try momentarily checking for moral stress four or five times a day and then using a micro spiritual practice like deep breathing or focusing on natural beauty to release physiological stress and replace it with compassion.

Theological Reflexivity Co-Creates Intentional Theologies

This routine of noticing stress and releasing it through spiritual practices helps people become aware of life-limiting lived theologies functioning outside of their awareness that are physiologically experienced through moral stress reactions. Moral emotions like shame, disgust, and fear of causing harm give rise to moral intuitions that in turn shape one's moral practices (J. Graham and Haidt 2010; J. Graham et al. 2011; Haidt 2003, 2008, 2013). Moral intuitions are defined as

> the sudden appearance in consciousness, or at the fringe of consciousness, of an evaluative feeling (like-dislike, good-bad) about the character or actions of a person, without any conscious awareness of having gone through steps of search, weighing evidence, or inferring a conclusion. (Haidt and Bjorklund 2008, p. 188)

Such intuitions arise from emotions and are shaped by social moral systems defined by Haidt as "interlocking sets of values, practices, institutions, and evolved psychological mechanisms that work together to suppress or regulate selfishness and make social life possible" (2008b, p. 70). Moral intuitions are part of pre-reflective values and beliefs that form embedded theologies shaped by childhood and social systems.

Spiritual care conversations help people theologically understand and reflect upon these embedded theologies. Theological reflexivity includes understanding the role of intersecting social systems of oppression that shape moral stress and its attendant lived theologies. Theories of intersectionality help spiritual caregivers and care seekers explore how multiple systems of oppression like sexism, racism, classism, heterosexism, and ableism interact from one moment to the next to generate social privilege or disadvantage for persons, families, and communities (Ramsay 2013). This complex model can be taught using a chart that helps people understand the interplay of social privileges and disadvantages in moments of moral stress. The following chart could be used, for example, by Miller-McLemore in understanding how these social systems shaped her experience of moral stress as a young mother. The outer corners represent social systems that generate differences that "inevitably intersect—especially gender, race, and class—[helping us] explore how identity is experienced within a field of power relations that always include a dialectic of privilege and oppression" (Ramsay 2013). These outer

corners represent interconnected macro social systems that shape the microsystem of Miller-McLemore's lived theology, represented by the box in the center.

> Race, class, gender, and sexuality are historically and geographically specific, socially constructed power relations of dominance and subordination among social groups competing for society's scarce valued resources in the economic, ideological and political domains. (Weber 2010, p. 114)

These social systems encompass "three societal domains—ideological, political, and economic—that create, maintain, and transform the practices and social arrangements in such systems" (Ramsay 2013, p. 455).

These social systems intersect in Miller-McLemore's experiences of moral stress in an interactive rather than an additive way. The top half of the box in the center of this chart suggests the lived theology that could easily emerge from these social systems energized by shame, guilt, and fear, which could have made her cope by isolating herself and hiding her moral stress (the rigid arrows represent how these social systems shape the lived theologies of moral stress). The bottom half of the box in the center outlines a possible intentional theology that emerges from spiritual integration. Her intentional theology of being "also a mother" helps her resist the life-limiting cultural lived theologies generated by these sexist macro systems (resistance is represented by the curved lines).

For those engaged in a process of spiritual integration, spiritual practices fostering compassion help them feel the difference between *stress reactions*, with their accompanying lived theologies, and *compassion practices* that release stress and open up possibilities for embodying a more intentional theology[4] gained through theological reflexivity within spiritual care conversations. Spiritual care can be described as a "collaborative conversation" that "repairs torn souls" of morally stressed or injured care seekers (L. K. Graham 2013a). Once people pay attention to differences between how their bodies react either to stress or to compassion-based spiritual practices, they will notice how moral emotions like shame and fear/guilt about causing harm constrict not only their breathing and muscles but also their range of feelings and thoughts, as well as their social connections. Shame and guilt, or fear about causing harm, are life-limiting moral emotions because they cut people off from others. Many parents also experience sadness and longing about being pulled away from their children because of work. Shame makes people isolate themselves for fear of being judged. For example, Saiving's and Miller-McLemore's stories about the theological dilemmas of motherhood were energized by their fears about neglecting their children and being judged socially. These moral emotions internalized through sexist religious and academic social systems were life-limiting in pushing them to want to disconnect from social and spiritual support. The shame and fear they felt as mothers were instilled in them by these intersecting social systems, which could and often did shun them for not measuring up as good enough mothers or scholars. In order to survive and maintain standing

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[4] I use the term intentional theology in a way similar to how the term lived theology is used by the Project on Lived Theology based in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Virginia. According to the website http://livedtheology.org/, the project's mission is "encouraging younger theologians and scholars of religion to embrace theological life as a form of public responsibility." The website describes lived theology as the theology one hopes to live out in one's practices.

within these circles they had to pretend to be able to do it all. Miller-McLemore was able to resist such social oppression because of her roots within feminist movements that freed her to tell her story of moral distress, which became a living story that enacted an intentional theology of being also a mother.[5] Miller McLemore (September 25, 2014a, b) comments that sources of resistance were "wide-ranging, including feminist movements and beyond—women colleagues & friends, strong women in my family history, Christian academic communities (not really the church) that allowed me to reframe basic theological understandings, the people and training at the center where I was doing pastoral psychotherapy, etc."

As research on moral emotions demonstrates, emotions like shame, fear, and guilt constrict emotions, stress responses, and thoughts, narrowing one's horizon to immediate survival issues like how to not be shunned or judged by others (Peterson 2006, p. 56). Under such duress, people put into practice a lived theology of moral intuitions, values, and beliefs that help them seek immediate relief (Cohn and Fredrickson 2009, p. 15). These lived theologies usually have the hallmarks of life-limiting spiritual orienting systems—inflexible coping, lack of integration, constricted meaning-making that doesn't encompass the complexity of one's suffering along with the suffering of others, and lack of benevolent social and spiritual support. It is easy to imagine how mothers experiencing moral stress would enact such life-limiting lived theologies. The narratives told by shame researcher Brené Brown (2006, 2007) about her own experiences of moral stress as a mother provide vivid examples.

In contrast to the life-limiting spiritual orienting systems generated within sexist social systems by moral emotions like shame and guilt, spiritual practices that foster compassion, joy, contentment, and awe release tension and widen one's horizons, as demonstrated in Fredrickson's (2001) "broaden and build" model of positive emotion. Pastoral theologians are incorporating this research into their understanding of feminist narrative pastoral theology (Scheib 2014). Davidson and Begley's (Davidson and Begley 2012) work on the emotional brain also provides a rich resource for understanding spiritual integration that begins with compassion-based spiritual practices (Bingaman 2014). Research on 'positive' moral emotions helps to explain how spiritual practices fostering compassion make coping more flexible, help people connect with goodness and a benevolent God, and allow people to co-create complex integrated meanings —features of life-giving theologies and spiritual orienting systems (Doehring 2015; Pargament, et al. 2006).

The physical experience generated by emotions like compassion, awe, and love reveals possibilities for an intentional theology that puts core values and beliefs into practice, particularly in ways that connect one more deeply with one's community and with a sense of the sacred. Research on moral psychology highlights the social dimensions of religion and spirituality. Graham and Haidt (2010) use the analogy of people circling a maypole to describe the social benefits of religion, which are so much more significant than the benefits of particular religious beliefs held by individuals. Their research underlines the importance of spiritual caregiving relationships in

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[5] In this issue, LaMothe (2014) describes social imaginaries of faith in ways similar to the way I describe intentional theologies co-created within spiritually integrative relationships. These social imaginaries of faith "serve as interpretive frameworks that provide meanings, values, and beliefs that justify our motivations and actions in resisting Others." LaMothe's use of Martin Luther King Jr.'s early years illustrate King's moral stress of feeling hatred towards Whites as he tried to emulate the Christian social imaginary of faith emulated by his parents and their church.

supporting integration. Spiritual care conversation partners and communities of faith help people do the ongoing work of spiritual integration so that they do not default under stress to shame-based embedded lived theologies that have been internalized through intersecting social systems that continue to exert an influence.

Integration, then, is an ongoing process of resisting social oppression internalized and experienced physiologically through stress reactions. Spiritually supportive relationships and communities, spiritual practices fostering compassion, and theological reflexivity are all key ingredients in this ongoing process of spiritual integration. This process of spiritual integration of moral stress can be likened to the root system of a tree that draws water from the river, helping the tree grow during intense heat or drought.

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