

Lest We Forget: The 100th Anniversary of the Black Wall Street Massacre



The Greenwood community after the massacre. Practically nothing was left. . .



There are many people living today who must continue to live with the trauma and pain of past events, the legacy of which is not over. May 31 and June 1 marked the 100th anniversary of the Tulsa Massacre, also known as the Black Wall Street Massacre. The Greenwood District in Tulsa, OK was the wealthiest Black community in the country at the turn of the century and was known as the Black Wall Street because of its thriving Black owned businesses and many prosperous people. Memorial Day weekend 1921, a young Black man was accused of assaulting a White girl and arrested (she never made any charges against him). Fear that he would be lynched, fueled by newspaper accounts saying he would be, brought a group of black men (some armed) to the jail to protect him. Some accounts say they had begun to disperse when a group of White men arrived (some armed). A shot was fired, and the situation exploded. An armed White mob descended on Greenwood and even had airplanes which dropped incendiary devices on the community and fired on Black residents. At least some of the mob's weapons were provided by White city officials who supported the mob's actions.

For two days the White mob ransacked and looted the homes of Black residents, killed Black people on sight, and burned 35 blocks of the Greenwood area to the ground. More than 800 people were hospitalized with injuries and some 6,000 Black

residents were imprisoned for days in large groups without charges or legal due process. There are reports that some White residents were asked to 'surrender' their Black servants to be locked up. Those who refused were themselves victims of attacks and looting by the White mob. 10,000 Black people were left homeless and the property damage ran into the millions in today's dollars (nearly 2 million at the time). 'Officially' only 30 some people died including 10 to 13 White citizens. The actual death toll was much higher – at least 300 Black citizens died. Many of the bodies are still missing. Living survivors & relatives still do not know what became of them. No charges were ever filed in the alleged assault case or for any of the mob actions. What happened to the bodies is still not known, however, the recent discovery of a possible mass grave may shed more light on the massacre.

The 'official' records of the event 'disappeared' shortly after it happened. The city blamed the violence on a 'Black mob'. No one was held accountable. Many Black residents fled the city, never to return. The city did all they could to make it difficult or impossible for Black residents to rebuild their homes and businesses. Much of the "burned area" was taken over for industrial development by White residents.



What is left of Greenwood homes smoldering

White residents covered it up; Black residents were too afraid to speak of it. A few efforts to tell the story were stopped by publishers who would not print them, or appeared in Black publications White residents never saw. For 75 years it was not mentioned in Tulsa or state history except for an occasional

reference to it as a “Black riot” or “race riot” in Tulsa. In 1996 a bipartisan effort in the state legislature created a commission to study the 1921 event. The commission verified that city officials had conspired with the White mob against Black citizens. They also called for reparations to survivors and their descendants including scholarships, economic development in Greenwood, and a memorial park for the victims. In 2001 state officials gave a gold-plated medal with the state seal on it to each of the 118 survivors who could be found. A park was dedicated in 2010, but the other recommendations about compensation and reparations have not been acted upon by officials. In 2020 the story of the massacre finally became a part of school curriculum in Oklahoma. Not until this year were Oklahoma librarians able to get the Library of Congress to change the subject heading for the event from “riot” to “massacre” to more accurately reflect what happened.

Sources/Resources:

Tulsa race massacre of 1921. Editor Jeff Wallenfeldt. *Britannica*. [Tulsa race massacre of 1921 | Commission, Facts, & Books | Britannica](#)
 Tulsa race massacre: 100 years after the massacre, the cry for justice is stronger than ever. CNN. [Tulsa race massacre: 100 years after the massacre, the cry for justice is stronger than ever \(opinion\) \(msn.com\)](#).
 The Tulsa Race Massacre. [Tulsa race massacre - Wikipedia](#)
 Brown, Deneen L. “Generations Lost”. **National Geographic**. June 2021. P.62-81.

Children & Guns: Some Facts

In a 2020 Children’s Defense Fund (a Washington based child welfare organization) **report they state:**

- Death by gunshot was “the second leading cause of death for children & teens ages 1-19.”
- Gun violence was also the “leading cause [of death] for Black children, claiming more child lives than cancer, pneumonia, influenza, asthma, HIV/AIDS and opioids combined.”
- the U.S. leads the world in child and teen gun deaths and is more than three times ahead of Turkey, the country with the next highest rate.

A September 17th *Guns and America* report found that 40% of Americans say someone in their household owns a gun. . .
 SEE CDF INFO
Newsweek: [Texas Boy Fatally Shoots 11-Year-Old With Gun He Found in Car at Walmart Parking Lot \(msn.com\)](#)

What is Moral Injury?

What happens to people when their basic moral compass is challenged? Psychiatrist Jonathan Shay and colleagues coined the phrase ‘Moral Injury’ as they worked on this issue with military/veteran patients in the 1990s. The concept has also been explored concerning healthcare workers since 1984. Those working with military patients and

those working with people in the medical field have been working on this question separately, but see common concerns.

From the military/veteran perspective, Shay's definition of moral injury had three components: Moral injury is present when:

1. there has been a betrayal of what is morally right
2. it happened in a high-stakes situation
3. by someone who holds legitimate authority (holds power)

In 2002, Shay put it: “Moral injury refers to an injury to an individual's moral conscience and values resulting from an act of perceived moral transgression, which produces profound emotional guilt and shame, and in some cases also a sense of betrayal, anger and profound "moral disorientation"”. The Shay Moral Injury Center, part of the Volunteers of America, states that “Moral injury is the suffering people experience when we are in high stakes situations, things go wrong, and harm results that challenges our deepest moral codes and ability to trust in others or ourselves. The harm may be something we did, something we witnessed, or something that was done to us. It results in moral emotions such as shame, guilt, self-condemnation, outrage, and sorrow.” Withdrawal from others and self-harm may result.

Especially in military circles, there is considerable focus on post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and its effects on soldiers who have experienced the horrors of combat. The concept of moral injury is different from PTSD and is less well publicized or understood. PTSD focuses on and involves fear related symptoms. Moral Injury focuses on symptoms that relate to guilt, shame, anger, and disgust. The affected individual has seen or participated in things they know to be morally wrong but that have been condoned, encouraged, or directed by someone whose authority they have been told to follow and respect. Moral injury can also result when a person discovers that the justification, they have been given for actions they know to be wrong, was false. In this case, the response is most likely to be a sense of betrayal or anger.

Veterans who have killed an enemy; seen sick or injured women or children they could not help; know they have killed a civilian; or know they are responsible for the death of a comrade or ally, may suffer from moral injury. More than a quarter of deployed soldiers say they have faced an ethical dilemma they did not know how to address. The longer a person is deployed, the more likely they are to

engage in unethical behavior since much of what is expected of a soldier goes against the moral code they were raised with. Part of the struggle many veterans have when they return home, is trying to return to the moral code they grew up with and shed the different expectations military training drilled into them. This switch back is expected of them, but how to do it is not addressed. The resulting deep sense of shame and guilt they feel about what they did in the military is symptomatic of moral injury.

Among healthcare workers, the term moral distress has also been used for this kind of moral dilemma. In healthcare, people are trained to do everything in their power to preserve life and provide the best care for their patients. In healthcare, moral issues that come up are related to the inability of a healthcare worker to provide the patient care they have been trained to know is proper, because systemic issues get in the way. These include insurance company requirements and limitations, the restrictions of electronic record keeping, hospital rules, and their own student loan debt which requires them to consider their financial situation when making career choices that affect their patient care decisions.

The trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic has made moral injury among healthcare workers a more present and immediate issue, especially in those places where healthcare systems have been overwhelmed. The reality of having to watch people die you know can be helped, because you cannot give them the critical care they need, has been devastating to many healthcare workers. Doing so day after day, week after week and watching so much death has been overwhelming for many.

From a psychological perspective Brett Litz and colleagues define moral injury as "perpetrating, failing to prevent, bearing witness to, or learning about acts that transgress deeply held moral beliefs and expectations." Anthropologist Tine Molendijk believes that both when the public condemns veterans for their being in the military *and* when the public glorifies them as heroes for being in the military, it contributes to moral injury because both condemnation and hero worship can involve doing an injustice to what the veteran actually experienced. Rita Nakashima Brock and Gabriella Lettini emphasize moral injury as "...souls in anguish, not a psychological disorder."

Treatment for moral injury is soul repair. Much of the treatment for PTSD does not deal with moral injury issues, and may make them worse. The effort to address moral injury is still new and developing.

Dealing with moral injury seems to need a much more individualized response. It involves letting a person tell their story and listening to them without judgment. Words may not be the best story telling method for many. The use of the arts as a form of storytelling has been helpful for some. It is a spiritual issue. The church and clergy need to be at the center of seeking to understand and help those who experience moral injury find answers. It is also very much a peacemaking task – restoring inner peace within moral injury sufferers and healing society so the injury does not happen in the first place.

Sources/Resources:

ACN webinar: "Moral Injury & Soul Repair" with Dr. Rita Brock. April 21, 2021. She works with the Shay Moral Injury Center of the Volunteers of America.

The Shay Moral Injury Center of the Volunteers of America. www.voa.org/moral-injury-war-inside. They have a resource list.

Syracuse University: The Moral Injury Project. <http://moralinjuryproject.syr.edu>.

Wikipedia: Moral Injury (for the reference list)

Truth?

In the book of John, we read: You shall know the truth, and the truth shall set you free. (John 8:32)

Throughout history there have been times when people have tried to hide the truth or change the facts when recounting events in an attempt to make the narrative meet their own needs and help them achieve their own goals. Sometimes this is done to exclude people, belittle them, or deny their important contributions to society. For example, making sure the Chinese workers who built the transcontinental railroad from the west (which was the hardest part of the route to build), were deliberately excluded from all commemorative pictures of the driving in of the golden spike event that marked connecting the eastern and western sections of the track. Sometimes people alter facts to try to justify actions they know to be wrong in order to further their economic and political interests. For example, claiming slaves were 'happy' being slaves or were not capable of caring for themselves so they 'needed' masters. Sometimes people justify seizing power by making false claims. For example, saying women are not capable of managing money, learning, or making decisions for themselves so they can be denied property rights, bank accounts, education, or voting rights, and be treated as the property of their fathers or husbands. Such denying of or altering of truth, can have long lasting effects and do untold damage to individuals and society as a whole.

When people are willing to hide or try to 'change' truth, they also claim that those who do tell the truth

or work to restore the truth are the ones in the wrong. They attack and vilify those who disagree with their created version of truth and spread misinformation and lies to discredit those who seek and speak the truth.

Among the most powerful tools for hiding truth are apathy and silence – that is: knowing the truth and not speaking up; hearing the lies and slander against others and not speaking out on their behalf. Engaging in such silence can turn an unfounded lie or misrepresentation of the truth into a nearly impenetrable wall that can destroy lives, and mislead whole societies stifling their humanity indefinitely. Such silence is evil and always brings overwhelming pain and suffering. When leaders get away with misleading people because no one speaks out, they are emboldened to even greater evil.

Detritch Bonhoeffer said: *“Silence in the face of evil is evil itself: God will not hold us guiltless.”* He also said: *“Not to speak is to speak. Not to act is to act.”* The longer we keep silent and do not seek and defend the truth, the longer we remain in a darkness from which only the truth can set us free.

Worship Resources

A Responsive Reading

Lord, why is it that so often when we feel threatened – times when we need to turn to You the most; we call upon Your name, but forget what You taught.

Lord, forgive us!

Oh, we cry out for Your help and protection. We claim Your presence and support as our own – but we forget Your message.

Lord, forgive us!

You taught us to depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. (Psalm 34:14)

You taught us to do to others what we would have them do to us. (Matthew 7:12)

You taught us: not to resist an evildoer – to love our enemies; do good to those who hate us; bless those who curse us; pray for those who abuse us. (Matthew 5:39; Luke 6:27-28)

You taught us to love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as our self. (Deuteronomy 6:5; Luke 10:27)

But we forget the power of Your love. When we face a threat, we chose how to respond; and then expect You to bless our actions.

Lord, forgive us!

Instead of heeding Your word, we yield to the temptation to respond in kind – violence for violence, hurt for hurt, as if might makes right and what we want is what God wants.

Lord, forgive us!

Forgive us! Transform our selfishness that makes us think our ways are best, and our desires more important than any others. Remind us we are not better than the rest of Your children and that we are called to love and care for each other, especially “the least of these” (Matthew 25:40).

Help us heed Your will. Whenever we can, let us choose to live in peace. Help us to reject vengeance and leave room for your judgment, for we are called to feed a hungry enemy not kill them; and quench their thirst with good water not try to wipe them off the earth. We are called to speak out when we see injustice and work for change. We are called not to be overcome by evil but to overcome evil with good.

Lord, be with us and open our hearts to Your leading. Amen

Is It A Weed Or What? A Reflection

Do you notice blooming dandelions? We look forward to spring flowers, but how many of us include the dandelions? Some folks do because they like to eat them (the whole plant is edible). They see not weeds but salad! For others dandelions are persistent pests. When people who want a weed-free lawn see them, they start their yearly summer ritual of trying to keep them at bay. For the environmentally concerned, pulling them, digging them up, or keeping them mowed off so the seeds do not mature (always a losing proposition) may be preferred. Others apply weed killers themselves, or have a lawn service regularly ‘treat’ the lawn in an effort to turn lawns into a mono-culture where only the ‘right kind of grass’ can grow.

When I was in seminary, all the professors lived in a row of houses on the edge of the campus. One summer day I noticed that not all of them agreed on what to do about these persistent plants. All the yards were green – some very green – but one. That one, was almost as yellow as the others were green! Anyone who has worked on the ‘dandelion problem’ knows what that means. Before long, all the yards were speckled with at least some yellow. The closer you were to the ‘yellow yard’, the more yellow you had - especially the yards on the downwind side!

What can we can learn from these persistent little plants? They are simply not deterred by what life throws at them. They send their tap-root deep into the earth for the nutrients they need and, even trying to pull them up, leaves a bit of root behind so that in no time, a new plant will appear. Their tap roots also bring up and share nutrients from down

deep that their shallow rooted neighbor plants need. Even weed killers do not always kill those deep roots. Then there are the seeds! One plant produces thousands in a season, the wind carries them far and wide, and the seeds can stay dormant until growing conditions are just right. One plant does not stay one plant for long!

Dandelions also have several claims to fame. They are one of the first flowers in the spring (I have even seen them in December during mild spells) and their nectar draws pollinators needed by other plants, though dandelions do not require pollinators themselves. They feed birds, bees, butterflies, and other animals. People use them as food, medicine, and to produce yellow dye for cloth, etc. Since they also secrete latex, scientists are even experimenting with making dandelion rubber for tires from them. Not all their attributes are laudable however. When they 'invade' crop fields or garden plots, they can be very destructive with their uncompromising behavior and dominating nature.

Next time you see this persistent little plant think of the lessons it can teach. We need to learn their persistence when we try to share the gospel or right a wrong. We can learn the importance of having deep roots in your source of nutrients, which for us is the Word and teachings of Jesus as we strive to be good disciples. We can also understand the importance of unselfishly helping others as dandelions do by sharing sustenance and drawing pollinators, they do not need for other plants that do. We must not forget the damage that they do when they are too zealous and try to take over and claim everything for themselves. We share with dandelions that we are capable of both goodness and destruction, but unlike the dandelion, we have a choice. Lord, help us choose wisely.

Who Are God's People?

Jesus, remind us that God's people come in different shapes, sizes, and colors. God's people do not all look alike, think alike, act alike or speak alike. They do not all share the same culture or the same history. They do not all call you by the same name. Even so, God created all people and loves all people. God gave all people the ability to love, learn and grow; solve problems, and make choices – both good ones and bad ones. God gave people the capacity for great good and incomprehensible evil. None of us is perfect; none of us is better than anyone else; none of us is entitled to special privileges or treatment. No one has the right to advance themselves at the expense of others. Just as God loves each of the people he created, God calls us

to love them too and share his love with them. When Jesus taught that we are to love our neighbors, he did not put any limits on who our neighbors are, and specifically made it clear that neighbors include both friends and enemies alike. Help us strive to love as God loves without conditions or prejudice.

Make Praying for Peace Part of Your Worship *Remember in prayer:*

1. **People dealing with COVID-19.** The number of vaccinated people is growing, & there is currently a decline in new cases in some places, but an increase in others. Even as many places rush to end safety measures & 'return to normal', other places face overwhelmed medical care systems, staggering infection rates & devastating death tolls. Understanding & dealing with the future of this virus is still a work in process.
2. **The conflict between Palestinians & Israelis.** May 14th marked the anniversary of the creation of the state of Israel by the U.N. with the end of British control of Palestine May 14, 1948. The original intention of the League of Nations, precursor to the U.N., was that a state for Palestinians would also be setup, & that the city of Jerusalem would remain in international control. These 2 things did not happen & the Palestinians were left a people without a country, with thousands forced from their homes permanently. May 15th marked the commemoration of Nakba Day, also known as the Palestinian Catastrophe; a remembrance of these losses & the start of this stateless situation for Palestinians. The treatment of Palestinians continues to include the forced seizure of their ancestral homes. Israel also refused COVID vaccination to Palestinians, who's lives they control, until the international community intervened. Both Israelis & Palestinians have been perpetrators & victims of violence over the last 73 years. A ceasefire was arranged by the Egyptians. It started May 22, & ended the latest outbreak of violence. Pray for all who continue to suffer, in the aftermath of the violence, especially those who have lost loved ones or been injured, been left homeless, had work places destroyed, or been left without basic utilities (power, water & sanitation services) & food. Pray that all parties will seek a workable nonviolent resolution to the issues involved. (Churches for Middle East Peace & more than 50 other church leaders call for the underlying issues in the conflict to be addressed including occupation, land dispossession, displacement, & the withholding of basic human rights.)
3. **People who live with racism, bigotry, or prejudice.** We see every day that we have not learned the lessons Jesus taught about how to treat each other, or the lessons from our past about the destructive power of fear & hate. Pray for those who live with the reality of racism & those who do not understand or acknowledge that they play a role in continuing it.

4. **Those consumed by hate & willing to use violence to get their way**
5. **The victims of gun violence & for those willing to commit such senseless acts.** The number of incidents of gun violence is growing.
6. **Refugees & those displaced by violence** especially during the pandemic, & especially children. Remember, people do not flee their homes unless forced or because conditions there are far worse than the difficult conditions, they know they will face when fleeing. Church World Service & other groups are calling on the government to 're-imagine' how the country relates to asylum seekers. They are calling for congress to create "an effective, humane, & just immigration system that upholds the dignity of all asylum seekers, unaccompanied children, & immigrants." "The proposal would provide case management services & legal representation for asylum seekers & offer humanitarian assistance at community-based border shelters & respite centers, shifting responsibility from ICE & immigration enforcement to the Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Department of Health & Human Services." (See resources on the issues at: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1CHDgJea26i5RoKeD-LcjTU2VWq_OIA3B0FDoySpl_B-E/edit#. An action alert is at <https://cwsqglobal.org/action-alerts/take-action-urge-your-senator-to-invest-in-capacity-to-welcome-asylum-seekers-unaccompanied-children>.)
7. **All people in this world who live with war.**
8. **Girls & Women** facing abuse & violence every day
9. **The people of Haiti.** Political unrest, kidnapping for ransom & human rights abuses are rampant there. Even so, since February more than 1,400 people seeking asylum in the U.S., have been deported back to Haiti. Most are families; hundreds are infants & children. There is real reason to be concerned for their safety in Haiti.
10. **Pray for Nigeria.** Kidnappings for ransom continues. May 30th 150 children were kidnapped from a school in north central Nigeria. Some are as young as 4. One report says some of the youngest were released because they were too young to walk. Another source says at least 100 of the kidnapped children are 5 or younger. More than 700 students from elementary to college age have been kidnapped for ransom in Nigeria since December. On May 29th the last of a group of college students, kidnapped in April, were released.



Peace Resources

See specific articles for related resource information.

Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders

"Seeking to proclaim Christ's good news – the gospel of peace and justice – and to be active in the sacred ministry of reconciliation wherever and whenever we can." Lombard Mennonite Peace Center (LMPC)



Online registration is now open for LMPC's **Mediation Skills Training Institute for Church Leaders**. This training will help you be prepared when there is a conflict in your church. It is a 5-day training session. The session will

be held in August, October, and November this year by zoom unless conditions with COVID change. LMPC offers other training as well. For more information, contact them at: 630-627-0507, or send an email to Ad-min@LMPeaceCenter.org. For further information we also invite you to check our website at <https://lmpeacecenter.org/>. Several in the Northern Ohio District have taken LMPC training. Contact the District Office for their recommendations. Phone: 419-281-3058. District Executive Minister, Kris Hawk e-mail: krishawk@nohcob.org

Look for Peace & Reconciliation Resources on the Northern Ohio District Website.

For access go to: www.nohcob.org

The Pandemic Has Not Brought the Best Out In All Of Us

Instances of domestic violence have doubled & tripled worldwide as women have been trapped at home with their abusers. On average, 137 women are killed by a family member somewhere in the world each day.

120 countries have strengthened services for female survivors during the pandemic. This is not the case in every country however. Russia has experienced more domestic violence too, but, as a country, has not officially reacted with help for victims. There has been a 40% increase in calls to a domestic violence hotline in Russia (called ANNA & run by women) from 2019 to 2020. At the same time, in Russia 74% of women but only 45% of men think domestic violence is a problem & the government does not see domestic violence as a problem or as a crime. In many incidents, the police will not come when a woman calls for help (*Time*, March 15/22, 2021, p. 100-102).

In the U.S. "an estimated 10 million people experience domestic violence every year." 20 people a minute are physically abused by an intimate partner.

1 in 4 women & 1 in 9 men experience severe intimate partner physical violence, intimate partner contact sexual violence, and/or intimate partner stalking with impacts such as injury, fearfulness, post-traumatic stress disorder, use of victim services, contraction of sexually transmitted diseases, etc.

The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500%. 19% of domestic violence involves a weapon.

1 in 15 children are exposed to intimate partner violence every year. 90% of these children are eyewitnesses to this violence. (National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) www.ncadv.org/statistics) see the NCADV for more statistics, printable fact sheets on domestic violence, & a list of additional sources of information. Recourses for victims are also given.

World Population Review [Domestic Violence by State 2021](http://www.worldpopulationreview.com) ([worldpopulationreview.com](http://www.worldpopulationreview.com))

A study in 14 U.S. cities show that the increase in domestic violence is occurring across the population and in every income group from low to high income. The increase in domestic violence is also not just among offenders who have done it before. There are many new offenders.

(phys.org/news/2020-08-domestic-violence-pandemic.html)



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