

Liberty University John W. Rawlings School of Divinity

Biblical Warrior Integration

Connecting Veterans and Civilians in Oakland Baptist Church

A Thesis Project Submitted to

the Faculty of Liberty University School of Divinity

in Candidacy for the Degree of

Doctor of Ministry

by

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THE DOCTOR OF MINISTRY THESIS PROJECT ABSTRACT

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As a small, less than a 150-member church, located close to Robins Air Force Base in Georgia, Oakland Baptist Church struggles to fully integrate veterans and civilians within the congregational setting. The author studied biblical postwar rituals and used them to design the Biblical Warrior Integration model to enhance the relational connectivity between veterans and civilians. It was congregation-based and relationship-focused. It helped to heal misunderstandings and neglect between veterans and civilians. Also, it was biblically based and reflected a modern application of biblical postwar rituals identified within the biblical text. Thirty of the 150 members of Oakland Baptist Church were veterans, COVID-19 restrictions limited the number of participants and the methods used. The author conducted a survey of the adult population of the church to determine the relational connectivity between the veterans and the civilians. Then, he interviewed fifteen veteran participants to help them express their warrior experiences. Next, some of the veteran participants volunteer to produce a short veteran testimony that the author posted on the church's Facebook page. The congregation members viewed the veteran testimonies to hear and better understand the warrior experiences of the veterans. Finally, the author captured the church's response to its veterans with an exit survey. Though the Biblical Warrior integration project only focused on one of the biblical postwar rituals, storytelling, the project enhanced the relational connectivity between veterans and civilians in Oakland Baptist Church.

Relational Connectivity, Veterans and Civilians in Congregational Setting, Veteran Integration, Biblical Postwar Rituals, Storytelling

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Abbreviations

DMIN	<i>Doctor of Ministry</i>
DSM	<i>Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder</i>
GWOT	<i>Global War on Terror</i>
LUSOD	<i>Liberty University School of Divinity</i>
PTSD	<i>Post Traumatic Stress Disorder</i>
NASB	<i>New American Standard Bible</i>
WW2	<i>World War 2</i>
TBI	<i>Traumatic Brain Injury</i>

Chapter 1

Introduction

In the last months of Moses' life, God directed Israel to "Take vengeance for the sons of Israel on the Midianites . . ." (Numbers 31:2, NASB).¹ After the battle, Moses and Eleazar went out to meet the returning warriors before they could enter the camp. They required the warriors to remain isolated outside the camp for seven days to purify themselves. The warriors performed the rituals of purification described in Numbers 19:11-22. They sterilized metal items with fire and washed all other items with water containing the ashes of a red heifer.² During this time, the leaders divided the spoils taken from the battle. They gave half the spoils to the warriors who participated in the conflict and half to the entire community. The leaders rewarded the warriors for their service, but the service of the warriors blessed the entire nation as well.³ Then, the warriors and the congregation gave a portion of the spoils to God as a tithe. After seven days and having completed all the tasks of integration, the warriors returned to the camp of Israel.

R. K. Harrison sees this passage as "one of the most complete sources of information about the way in which the Hebrews waged holy war."⁴ Numbers 31 is the only biblical passage that explicitly speaks about reintegration rituals for returning warriors.⁵ It may have provided a

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced are in the New American Standard Bible.

² R. K. Harrison, *Numbers*, The Wycliffe Exegetical Commentary, ed. Kenneth L. Barker (Chicago: Moody Bible Institute, 1990), 387.

³ *Ibid.*, 388.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 384.

⁵ Brad E. Kelle, "Postwar Rituals of Return and Reintegration," in *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritzel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 209, Kindle.

ritual standard that the Israelites used throughout their history to integrate their warriors after a conflict. It contains several ideas that ancient people felt were necessary to achieve the reintegration of warriors into the community. These ideas include isolation, purification, and restitution of the spoils of war to the community.⁶

Serving in the Armed Forces is a transformational journey. A person's service in the Armed Forces is always temporary. Some veterans serve only one tour of duty or enlistment. Others remain in the military for a full career of twenty years or more. After their time in the Armed Forces, all service members assimilate in some way back into civilian life. Modern society, however, lacks significant postwar rituals. "We have abandoned the rituals of cleansing and forgiveness and healing that welcomed returning combat veterans in past eras and other cultures."⁷ Frequently, the lack of postwar rituals and the transformation that veterans have experienced causes a relational disconnection between veterans and civilians. While most veterans blend into their communities, many feel isolated and misunderstood. This relational disconnection even happens in the church community.

Ministry Context

The author is a member and voluntary pastor of Oakland Baptist Church. Oakland Baptist Church is a small church of approximately 150 active members. Roughly twenty percent of its members are veterans. It is located outside The Robins Air Force base.

Oakland Baptist Church is located in Warner Robins, Georgia. Warner Robins is one of the fastest-growing communities in central Georgia. As of July 2018, Warner Robins had a

⁶ Edward Tick, *Warrior's Return: Restoring the Soul After War* (Boulder, CO: Sounds True, 2014), 215.

⁷ David Wood, *What Have We Done: The Moral Injury of our Longest War* (New York: Little, Brown, and Company, 2016), 261.

population of approximately 75,797 people, of whom 7,931 were veterans. The ethnic makeup of Warner Robins is forty-seven percent white, thirty-seven percent African American, seven percent Hispanic, and nine percent other.⁸

Warner Robins is part of Houston County, Georgia. Houston County has a population of 155,469 people, with about 17,516 veterans. The ethnic diversity of Houston County is fifty-five percent white, thirty-two percent African American, seven percent Hispanic, and six percent other.⁹ Houston County advertises itself as “Georgia’s Most Progressive County.”¹⁰ It has a higher median household income than the state and a diverse economy that includes agriculture, food processing and distribution, aerospace development, advanced manufacturing, and logistics.¹¹

Located next to Warner Robins is the Robins Air Force Base. Robins Air Force Base is the home of Warner Robins Air Logistics Complex and Robins Airfield. It is the largest industrial installation in Georgia. It employs approximately 22,000 people and provides about twenty-five percent of the jobs in Houston County. It has an estimated economic impact of almost \$2.9 billion in the state of Georgia annually. Also, the airbase includes the longest runway in Georgia and can land and support the largest airplanes in the world. The US Air Force has stationed approximately 5,938 military members at Robins Air Force Base.¹²

Oakland Baptist Church began as a mission of Hattie Baptist Church on February 1,

⁸ US Census Bureau, accessed October 31, 2019, <https://www.census.gov>.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ My Base Guide. Com, accessed November 1, 2019, https://www.mybaseguide.com/air_force/65-2960/robins_afb_employment_economy.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

1924. On January 3, 1943, its charter members dedicated the church and held monthly services in a one-room schoolhouse. The congregation purchased the school and one acre of ground from the Houston County Board of Education and, in 1947, added two Sunday School rooms. They began weekly services and Sunday School. The church continued to add and upgrade its property throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In 1987, they built a new education building. In the 1990s, under Dr. Larry Paulk, the church reached its maximum active membership of about 200 active members. After Dr. Paulk resigned as pastor, the church plateaued at about 100 active members. Though many people joined the church through the years, many also left, and the church has never grown beyond about 150 active members. Throughout its ninety-five-year history, eighteen pastors led Oakland Baptist Church.¹³

Since 2010 under the leadership of Pastor Mike Winfree, Oakland Baptist Church has seen growth in many areas. Active membership has increased to about 150 members. The congregation built a multi-purpose building to support fellowship and family activities. Also, they have completed several programs to reach the community and encourage new people to attend the church. Finally, the congregation has experienced a growth in its spiritual life as more of its members pursue the church's spiritual discipline program, including prayer, Bible reading, and service in the community.

The congregation of Oakland Baptist Church is composed of predominately white American citizens. There are small numbers of Asian and African Americans who attend or are on the role as members. Approximately sixty percent of the congregation are female. Thirty-three percent are sixty-five or older. Roughly sixteen percent are under age eighteen. Many of the working population of Oakland Baptist Church work on Robins Air Force Base. This

¹³ Oakland Baptist Church. Accessed October 31, 2019. www.oaklandwr.com.

workforce includes many who are not veterans.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Oakland Baptist Church conducted a full range of worship and educational services for its congregants. Regular services included a comprehensive age-graded Sunday School program, Sunday morning and evening worship services, and Wednesday night programs for adults, youth, and children. Since the government lifted some of the COVID-19 restriction, the church renewed its Sunday morning worship service and its Wednesday night program for adults and youth. Also, it has begun some children's programs as of the writing of this thesis.

The church acknowledges veterans and service members on patriotic holidays, but it uses ineffective rituals to recognize veterans. The congregation asks veterans to stand, and people say, "Thank you for your service." Still, there is no attempt to hear or understand the veterans' warrior experiences and how those experiences have impacted their veterans.

Oakland Baptist Church is a member of the Southern Baptist Convention and the Reboth Baptist Association. The majority of its congregation members are conservative, evangelical Christians. Under the leadership of Pastor Mike Winfree, the church is very biblically centered. The church emphasizes the need for regular Bible reading and devotional disciplines, as well as prayer and scripture reading. These disciplines help to shape the spiritual journey of the members of Oakland Baptist Church. While not all members participate in spiritual disciplines, the church has seen an increase in discipleship over the last couple of years.

Approximately twenty percent of Oakland Baptist Church's members are veterans. Many of the veterans serve as leaders in the church. More than fifty percent of the active deacon board members are veterans. Three out of eight adult Sunday School teachers are veterans. Many others are active and fully committed to the church. The majority of Oakland Baptist Church's

veterans are over sixty-five years old. Most of them retired with twenty or more years of service. Up to ninety percent of the veterans are male. Only a small percentage of Oakland Baptist Church veteran population is female. Most of the veterans did not receive significant medical disability support when they got out of the service. Now, many are dealing with increasing health issues. Some are now receiving or applying to receive medical disability benefits. Many of the Oakland Baptist Church veterans can trace their service as far back as the Korean War, but the majority served in Vietnam, the Cold War, or the Global War on Terror (GWOT). Some Oakland Baptist Church Veterans served in active war zones during their time in the military, but others did not.

Their military experiences changed each of the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church. Most of the veterans within the church have shared their military experiences with only a few church members. Those church members were mostly family members and other veteran members of the congregation. This lack of storytelling limits the number of congregation members who know the experiences of the veterans. Like most veterans, they experience some isolation and misunderstanding. These feelings make it harder to integrate into civilian life. Many of these veterans are active and fully committed to the church, but most of them have repressed their warrior experiences and the feelings of neglect and isolation.

While the church and community accept and respect the veterans who live among them, they expect the veterans to leave their warrior attitudes behind and fit in as normal participants. One of the veterans interviewed, Stephen, said, “The church thinks that we’re all secular backgrounds and being in the military is no different than the secular, but it is.” This attitude prevents veterans from fully sharing their warrior experiences with civilians in the congregation.

It also prevents veterans from experiencing healing from the internal wounds of their warrior experiences.

In America, the Global War on Terror has highlighted the disconnect between civilians and veterans as veterans returned to civilian life. Many GWOT veterans feel resentment toward civilians who lived in safety far from the dangers of the war. They feel civilians do not care to understand their warrior experiences.¹⁴ Many Vietnam veterans felt resentment toward civilians, as well.¹⁵ While most of Oakland Baptist Church's veterans would not say they feel resentment toward civilian congregation members, many have expressed to the author that they do not think their military experiences are understood.

Problem Presented

The problem this project addressed is the relational disconnect between civilians and veterans in the congregational life of Oakland Baptist Church. Since Oakland Baptist Church is part of a military community, and it has a large percentage of veterans within its congregation, its members assume that they understand veterans. While participating in church activities, the author found that most members only knew the stories and experiences of one or two veteran members of the congregation. This superficial knowledge allows the civilians to feel comfortable with their acceptance and respect for veterans but prevents them from having a deeper relationship with veterans. Veterans within the congregation are satisfied with the superficial information they have shared with the civilians. They feel that civilians do not care to understand

¹⁴ Nancy Sherman, *Afterwar: Healing the Moral Wounds of Our Soldiers* (New York: Oxford, 2015), 26.

¹⁵ Rita Nakashima Brock, and Gabriella Lettini, *Soul Repair: Recovering from Moral Injury after War* (Boston: Beacon Press, n.d.), 52-53, Kindle.

more about their warrior experiences. Veterans seldom have the opportunity to tell their stories within the congregational setting.

Oakland Baptist Church needs to examine biblical postwar ritual concepts to implement a model of warrior integration among its members. The congregation has used insufficient rituals that are part of American society to recognize its veteran population. While these rituals continue the superficial connection between veterans and civilians, the congregation members acknowledged in the Initial Congregational Survey that they did not have a strong relational connection to the veterans of the congregation. The Biblical Warrior Integration model found that biblical postwar rituals allow for a deeper relationship between veterans and civilians. Biblical postwar rituals allow veterans to purify themselves after their service, express their experience in a safe and accepted manner, and use their warrior experiences to benefit their community.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this Doctor of Ministry thesis project is to provide a model for Oakland Baptist Church to use to integrate its veterans into church life. First, the project provided a biblical and historical analysis of the role of warriors, their experiences within the community of faith, and their use of biblical postwar rituals. Next, using field research, the project identified relational disconnects between veterans and civilians in Oakland Baptist Church. Finally, the project developed a program that allowed Oakland Baptist Church to enhance the relational connection between veterans and civilians through using a modern application of biblical postwar rituals. This model helped reduce feelings of isolation and neglect among the veterans and promoted understanding among civilians. Veterans were able to connect with civilians who had a greater appreciation of the veteran's experiences.

Basic Assumptions

The author assumes military service transforms all persons who fully participate. Basic training is the initial transforming event. Some people enter military service but do not complete basic training. Others get out of their military contracts before they have completed their first enlistment or tour of duty. To fully experience the transformation into a warrior, one must complete basic training and serve honorably for at least one enlistment or a tour of duty. Other experiences common among many veterans include garrison duty in the United States, service overseas, separation from family members, deployment to a war zone, combat, redeployment, and release from service. While not all who serve experience all these events, all of these events shaped their lives and changed them. Veterans in every branch of the U. S. Armed Forces experience these events.

Though the author will work with a small population of veterans, he assumes that the experiences, thoughts, and feelings he addresses are common throughout the American veteran community. While the experiences and emotions of each veteran are different and unique to the individual, there is a commonality of experiences and feelings that extends across veteran populations, age differences, and military branches. All veterans experience basic training, the institutionalization of military service, and the quagmire of the American military bureaucracy. These experiences bind veterans together.

The author assumes that stories are a crucial element in relational connectedness. To know another person, one needs to know the experiences and stories of that person's life. The narrative of a person's life reveals their emotions, opens their worldview, and educates others about their personality. These insights increase the emotional and relational connectedness between individuals and help them to know each other more intimately. Stories also provide an

emotional release for the storyteller and help defuse inner stress within the person.¹⁶ The accounts of one's life shape one's identity. People do not tend to view their lives as random, isolated events but as experiences that occur in sequence and which together form a plot.¹⁷ Within a community or congregation, it is necessary to hear veterans' stories and experiences to enhance meaningful connectedness.

The church is a key location for veterans to express their warrior experiences and live out restitution within their community. Many veterans do not think that the church is a safe place for them to talk about their warrior experiences. They find other places to express those stories. Many civilians believe that veterans' warrior experiences do not belong in the church. The church should be an authentic community where anyone can show all of one's experiences and stories. The church should receive these experiences and stories with love and genuine care. Many institutions in modern society accept shallow connectedness. Psychologists teach that people need three intrinsic values to be healthy and well-balanced human beings. These values include the need to feel proficient at what they do, to feel true to themselves, and to feel connected to others.¹⁸

The church is one place in society where people can experience a genuine connection with others. The early Christians in Jerusalem spent time in public worship at the temple and in relational connectedness at each other's houses, "taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart..." (Acts 2:46). These actions established a strong bond among the early

¹⁶ Tick, *The Warrior's Return*, 211-12.

¹⁷ Philip Jamieson, "Narrative Therapy," In *The Popular Encyclopedia of Christian Counseling*, ed. Tim Clinton and Ron Hawkins (Eugene, OR: Harvest House, 2011), 460.

¹⁸ Sebastian Junger, *Tribes: On Homecoming and Belonging* (New York: Twelve Hachette Book Group, 2016), 22.

Christians that allowed them to endure persecution and hardships. “Knowing others and being known by others is the heart of a healthy church.”¹⁹ In healthy churches, veterans experience the opportunity to express their stories and experiences.

Definitions

First, the author used the terms “veterans,” “warriors,” and “service members” interchangeably to refer to all persons who have served in any branch of the United States military. The author only used the terms soldiers, sailors, Marines, and airmen when referring to individual veterans and the branch in which they served.

Next, the author used the terms “integration” and “reintegration” interchangeably to refer to the process during which a veteran leaves military service and returns to civilian life. This process involves emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical adjustments. Some veterans adjust quickly. Others experience emotional, mental, spiritual, and physical issues that delay or prevent adjustment to civilian life. Current literature refers to “reintegration” as the process of active duty service members returning to their active duty station after a deployment.²⁰ The author identified this distinction in the context, as necessary.

Next, the author discusses biblical postwar rituals. It is challenging to define specific rituals. Religious and societal rituals vary immensely, and each ceremony has different and specific meanings. J. G. Plavoet provided an operational definition of ritual. Rituals are an organized arrangement of stylized behavior that changes the focus of its audience. People participate in rituals at specific places and times, and rituals carry specific messages to their

¹⁹ Bill Wilson, “What Does a Healthy Church Look Like?” *Review & Expositor* 113, no. 3 (August 2016), 337, doi:10.1177/0034637316658582.

²⁰ Michael E. Doyle, and Kris A. Peterson, “Re-Entry and Reintegration: Returning Home After Combat,” *Psychiatric Quarterly*, Vol. 76, No. 4 (Winter 2005), 362, DOI: 10.1007/s11126-005-4972-z.

participants. They also use appropriate cultural symbols to convey meaning.²¹ For example, within the author's tradition, the Lord's Supper or Communion is an operational ritual. During the Lord's Supper, specifically designated persons – usually deacons or other leaders of the congregation – distribute the elements of Communion to the participants. The elements of Communion are culturally appropriate symbols that convey the ideas of Jesus' sacrificial death. The ritual carries the message of God's forgiveness through Jesus' sacrificial death. A ritual is a specific event that utilizes stylized words and behaviors and culturally appropriate symbols at a particular time and place to convey important spiritual messages and meanings. The author used this operational definition of ritual throughout his thesis.

Finally, it is necessary to define the warriors' internal wounds as addressed in the current literature. It was not the intent of this project to diagnose, treat, or cure the internal wounds warriors experience. Since the author is not a licensed clinical practitioner, he relied on the definitions of specific authors throughout his thesis project. Charles Hoge used the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorder* (DSM) to define posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). The DSM criterion to diagnose PTSD includes the following: first, the individual experience exposure to trauma; next, the person experiences several symptoms connected to the trauma; and finally, the individual's symptoms persist for more than thirty days and disrupts their lives.²² Though the author may refer to PTSD as something that many veterans experience, he did not connect PTSD with any of the participants in his study. The author referred to any participants dealing with PTSD to qualified mental health

²¹ M. J. Nel, "Matthean Atonement Rituals," *Acta Theologica* 37, no. 2 (01, 2017): 105-06, <http://ezproxy.liberty.edu/login?url=https://search-proquest-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/docview/2173772950?accountid=12085>.

²² Charles W. Hoge, *Once a Warrior – Always a Warrior: Navigating the Transition from Combat to Home Including Combat Stress, PTSD, and mTBI* (Guilford, CT: Lyons Press, 2010), 12-15.

practitioners. Most current literature follows Jonathan Shay's definition of "moral injury." Shay defined moral injury as a violation of an individual's understanding of right and wrong.²³ Edward Tick used the term "soul wound" when discussing the warrior's internal wounds. The soul wound impacts the mind, will, and emotions and the warrior's identity.²⁴ The author used these concepts when discussing the warrior's internal wounds.

Limitations

First, the author is not a clinical licensed mental health professional or counselor; therefore, the author and this project did not attempt to diagnose, treat, or cure any mental, emotional, or psychological issues that may surface during this project. The author referred participants to mental health professions as needed.

Next, the author used self-reporting surveys to collect information and ideas from the veterans and civilians of Oakland Baptist Church. Sometimes, people may give inaccurate answers on self-reporting surveys. These surveys provided general information that the author used to gauge the relational disconnect between veterans and civilians and to measure possible changes in the relationships between veterans and civilians.

Also, the author used the congregation of Oakland Baptist Church to address the issue of the integration of veterans into civilian life. The congregation members of Oakland Baptist Church are predominantly white Protestants, though the congregation includes a small percentage of other ethnic groups. The majority of Oakland Baptist Church veterans served in the Air Force during the Vietnam War and the Cold War. A small portion of the veterans served

²³ Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* (New York: Scribner, 1994), 19-20, Kindle.

²⁴ Edward Tick, *War in the Soul: Healing Our Nation's Veterans from Post-traumatic Stress Disorder* (Wheaton, IL: Quest Books, 2005), 105.

during the Korean Conflict or GWOT. Only a small number of veterans represented military branches other than the Air Force.

Finally, though stories are a vital element of relational connectedness, frequently, people remember or recount their experiences, especially narrative remembrances of traumatic events, in fragmented forms. People need to explore the story or narrative memory to restore it to full form. Glenn Schiraldi called these memories “Dissociated traumatic memory material.” A person may split this material off from the rest of one’s memories and may not integrate it with their present awareness.²⁵ While a person may not remember every detail of an event in their life, the event shaped and impacted how they identify themselves. It is essential to allow people to express their stories as they remember them. Sometimes, as people recall and retell their experiences, they integrate previously fragmented elements from the event. This reintegration of fragmented parts helps with the healing process and allows individuals to reassess their identity as they rebuild the stories of their life.²⁶ The focus of this project was to help veterans express the stories of their military experiences that help shape their identities. The project did not seek to reveal dissociated traumatic memory material. The memories connected to the experiences may be fragmented. Yet, the stories still have a key function in linking the veterans and their experiences to the civilian members of the congregation.

Before the author began his thesis project, COVID-19 pandemic restrictions limited the activities of Oakland Baptist Church. The author was not able to conduct group meetings in person and relied on internet resources like Zoom and Facebook to conduct focus group meetings. The author was unable to perform a training session with all the veterans available,

²⁵ Glenn R. Schiraldi, *The Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder Sourcebook: A Guide to Healing, Recovery, and Growth* (New York: McGraw Hill Education, 2016), loc. 579, Kindle.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, loc. 1164, Kindle.

and the veterans could not host a dinner for the civilian congregation members of Oakland Baptist Church. COVID-19 restrictions limited the impact of the author's project.

Delimitations

The author's project worked with the veterans and civilians of Oakland Baptist Church. The goal was to increase the emotional connection between veterans and civilians. The project did not explore the experiences of the veterans' dependents and families. The author understands that veterans' dependents and families have unique experiences that frequently parallel those of the veterans; however, he did not have sufficient time to deal with the transformation dependents experienced while their veteran served. For this project, the author treated family members and dependents as civilians.

The author excluded participants under the age of eighteen. Some of the warrior experiences veterans needed to convey to civilians were not appropriate for children. The author informed the parents of this and provided childcare when necessary.

Veterans' issues include suicide, accidental deaths, homelessness, unemployment, family difficulties, divorce, and health issues. This thesis project focused on the area of integration of veterans into the congregational life of a local church. To be mentally and emotionally healthy, veterans need to be part of a community. The purpose of this project was to help increase the relational connection between veterans and civilians. It only dealt with issues that caused relational disconnect and programs that may enhance the relationship between veterans and civilians.

Thesis Statement

If Oakland Baptist Church implements the Biblical Warrior Integration model, the church will enhance the relational connections between veterans and civilians, resulting in healing for all.

The problem is that the warrior experiences of veterans are not integrated into the congregational life of Oakland Baptist Church, leading to a relational disconnect between civilians and veterans. The civilian members do not understand the warrior experiences of the veteran members, Most of the congregation members have not heard the veterans' stories, and many of the veterans do not identify how their veteran experiences have shaped their lives. The research gave the veterans an opportunity to share their stories with the researcher and other veterans. After the veterans identified some of the events which shaped their lives, they shared them with other congregants through video testimonies posted on the church's Facebook page. These testimonies helped the civilian members to understand how the veterans' experiences shaped their lives. This understanding enhanced the relational connectivity between veterans and civilians.

Also, the Biblical Warrior Integration model researched five biblical postwar rituals and sought to apply them in modern culture. The first ritual was purification. Numbers 31: 19-24 describes the ancient Israelite practice of ritual washing to purify warriors as they returned from battle. The Biblical Warrior Integration model can assist modern warriors as they seek inner purification through meditation on God, a reflection of their time of service, and the confession of sins and failures, as necessary. The next ritual was storytelling. Isaiah 2:2-4 describes all people processing to the house of God. During this time, the word of the Lord will go out to all nations. The word of the Lord is the war song of God's victory in the world. The Biblical

Warrior Integration model can help warriors develop and tell the story of how God sustained them through their time of service. Though some of them were not Christians while they served, God worked throughout their lives to bring them into His people. Some of the warriors' stories reflected God's conviction or blessings. Another Biblical postwar ritual was celebrations and processions. Churches and communities need to help veterans celebrate their service to God and country. A fourth Biblical postwar ritual was memorials and monuments. The veterans can learn to establish memorials to remind them of God's work during their service. The final ritual was restitution. Numbers 31:25-47 tells how the ancient Israelites distributed the booty that the warriors collected from their battle. The leaders distributed booty to the warriors who fought in the conflict and the people who remained in the camp. The distribution of the booty restored the warriors to their community. The model can help warriors to "hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks" (Isaiah 2:4). The Biblical Warrior Integration model encouraged warriors to take their warrior experiences and use them for their community and church; thus, warriors experienced restitution in their community.

Next, the Biblical Warrior Integration model set aside time for the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church to engage the civilians. Civilians were able to hear the veterans tell their stories and experiences through the video testimonies. This process helped the civilians understand the warrior's experiences and enabled the warriors to connect with other members of their community.

Finally, the Biblical Warrior Integration model helped the veterans find ways to seek restitution in their community. The program encouraged veterans to identify community and church projects in which to apply their warrior experiences.

Chapter 2

Conceptual Framework

It is necessary to consider the foundational concepts of warriors and integration to provide a valid model that will have a positive impact on the veterans and civilians of Oakland Baptist Church. First, the author presents a review of the precedent literature to examine how other authors have addressed these issues. Next, he establishes a theological framework that will give examples of how biblical people viewed warriors and postwar rituals. Finally, he reviews theoretical models of integration that sources recommend to help warriors integrate into civilian life.

Literature Review

The sources that discuss the reintegration of troops returning from duty do not deal with the church directly. Only Edward Tick addresses faith communities and churches directly.²⁷ The other authors deal with spirituality on an individual basis. Hoge recommends that service members find solace from their faith tradition if they have one.²⁸ Wood also encourages the warrior to be part of their community, including religious gatherings.²⁹ The connection between the sources and the church are the author's conclusions. His research in the literature has provided insights and principles that are applicable within the church setting.

The review of literature surveys prominent sources that deal with reintegration and the return of service members from deployment. First, the literature review looks at warriors who are

²⁷ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 158-60.

²⁸ Hoge, 234.

²⁹ Wood, *What Have We Done*, 270.

part of the church and distinguishes them from civilians. Next, it explores the warrior experiences that veterans bring to the church. Then, the review examines the issues that disconnect the civilian population from the veterans. Finally, it considers models of integration that are present in some of the sources.

Warriors and Civilians

Many members of Oakland Baptist Church are veterans. Charles Hoge wrote his book to GWOT veterans who were returning from a war zone and their families.³⁰ Most current literature sources address “combat veterans.”³¹ David Wood specifically addressed the recent wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.³² War is a transformative experience that impacts all who participate in the conflict.³³ The changes experienced in war become a permanent part of a veteran’s life and character.³⁴ Many veterans are combat veterans who deployed to a war zone, and their experiences in a war zone have impacted their lives.

A definition of veterans as only those with combat experience does not include all veterans within a church. From the end of World War 2 to the terrorist attack on September 11, 2001, millions of Americans served in the Armed Forces. A large percentage of these veterans did not experience combat or deployment to a war zone. Is it possible that service in the Armed Forces did not change veterans who were not deployed in a war zone? Nancy Sherman pointed out that transformation from civilian to soldier began during the intense basic training that all

³⁰ Hoge, x.

³¹ Nancy Sherman, *The Untold War: Inside the Hearts, Minds, and Souls of our Soldiers* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 2010), 50.

³² Wood, *What Have We Done*, 8.

³³ Hoge, 10.

³⁴ Tick, *War in the Soul*, 6.

service members experience.³⁵ This transformation is both physical and psychological.³⁶ Edward Tick emphasized that service members develop a warrior spirit that transforms both their state of mind and their professional skills.³⁷ A veteran who serves honorably has no choice but to refine his warrior spirit with distinction. Hoge's emphasis on combat veterans who have served in a war zone missed a large number of veterans who are present in the congregation. Often the congregation is unaware of the contributions veterans who have served honorably, without being in war zones, can bring to the table, enabling their experiences as veterans to benefit the congregation.

Warriors' Experiences

Veterans within the church have unique warrior experiences that can benefit the church. As stated above, service in the Armed Forces is a life-transforming event. Edward Tick charted this transformation as a journey. He used Joseph Campbell's model of a mythical "hero's journey" to define the transformational aspects of a warrior's life.³⁸ Tick further expanded the model to include specific details of a modern warrior's transformation from civilian to warrior. These details include basic training, advanced training, deployments, emotional impacts of the experiences, homecoming, seeking meaning from the experiences, restoration, and warrior/veteran's role in the community.³⁹ Tick called this cycle "the Soldier's Heart Transformation Model" and saw all service members as progressing through a warrior's journey.⁴⁰

³⁵ Sherman, *The Untold War*, 12.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 20.

³⁷ Edward Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 11.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 170.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 172.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

Nancy Sherman discussed the warrior's transformation journey in similar terms to Tick. Tick's initial work was available when Sherman wrote her book, but she did not reference it. In different chapters of her book, Sherman investigated the process of becoming a warrior, the impacts of war on the warrior, and the difficulties of transitioning back to civilian life.⁴¹ Though she did not lay out the specific details and tasks as Tick did, she narrated the transformation using soldiers' stories and firsthand accounts.⁴²

Hoge took a more individualistic approach. He focused on the individual warrior's transformation and helped them as they transition from the war zone to home.⁴³ He did not deal with the beginning tasks of a warrior's journey, such as basic training and advanced individual training. He addressed reintegration tasks from a cognitive-behavioral perspective. While Hoge talked about emotions, his emphasis was on behavioral and cognitive reactions.⁴⁴ Hoge's cognitive tasks reflected the warrior's spirit and their role within a community. Hoge's work helped warriors work through the ending tasks of Tick's model.

Many scholars illustrated the warrior's transformational journey. In her second book, Nancy Sherman narrated the transformation of eight veterans.⁴⁵ She wove their stories throughout her book. Her purpose was to show some of the conflicts that arise as transformed warriors integrate into civilian life.⁴⁶ David Wood was a journalist. He narrated the stories of several soldiers and Marines with whom he served. His words reflected the warrior's

⁴¹ Sherman, *The Untold War*, 4.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 7.

⁴³ Hoge, 48.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁴⁵ Sherman, *Afterwar*, 163-68.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 160-61.

transformation during wartime. He expressed how “each soldier has been forever changed by war.”⁴⁷ He saw much of the war’s negative transformation on veterans as moral injury.⁴⁸

Many warriors have written memoirs of their experiences in the military and combat. The video series, “The Band of Brothers,” gave Dick Winters public recognition for his leadership during World War 2. His personal memoir described his warrior transformation. He grew up in a conservative, religious family and community, and he volunteered to serve in the US Army after college in June 1941. He intended to serve his time and leave the military as soon as possible.⁴⁹ The attack on Pearl Harbor, December 7, 1941, changed his trajectory.⁵⁰ Winter’s warrior experiences transformed him. His initial integration into civilian life seemed smooth. He started a job and married Ethel Estoppey within two years of discharge from the Army.⁵¹ His experiences continued to haunt him. He experienced flashbacks and other issues from his time in combat.⁵²

Many scholars have called World War 2 as “The Good War.”⁵³ Sometimes these scholars gloss over the horrors of combat, and many overlook issues of PTSD that many WW2 veterans experienced. Anger often consumed Dale Maharidge’s father, Steve. Steve Maharidge was a veteran Marine who fought in the Pacific during the war. Steve never talked about his combat

⁴⁷ Wood, *What Have We Done*, 221.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 261.

⁴⁹ Dick Winters, *Beyond the Band of Brothers: The War Memoirs of Major Dick Winters* (New York: Berkley Caliber, 2006), 6.

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 7

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 256.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 3

⁵³ Studs Terkel, “*The Good War:*” *An Oral History of World War Two* (New York: The New Press, 2018), loc. 138, Kindle.

experiences, but he frequently broke out into bouts of anger that led to domestic abuse within his home. After Steve died, Dale Maharidge sought to find answers to his father's rage and behavior.⁵⁴ The loss of a close friend, Herman Mulligan, on Okinawa, caused much of Steve Maharidge's PTSD. While Dale Maharidge never found Herman Mulligan's family or gravesite, Maharidge conducted a personal ritual on Mount Jokagu where Mulligan died. Maharidge took incense, water, flowers, and other symbolic elements to establish a temporary shrine for Mulligan. Then, he and an elderly Japanese man prayed for Mulligan at the shrine. He remembered Mulligan as his father had. This ritual helped bring closure to Dale Maharidge in memory of his father.⁵⁵

Karl Marlantes deployed to Vietnam as a twenty-three-year-old lieutenant in the Marines. He described the dichotomy that many combat veterans experience when they return home. One's mind and heart are split from the intense grief and fear veterans experience. After living with this intensity, the veteran often returns to a mundane life.⁵⁶ Marlantes experienced some of the events that have come to typify Vietnam veterans' reintegration with civilian society. The populace jeered at him, spat on him, and insulted him in public. His community and extended family ignored him, and he felt isolated from those who sent him to Vietnam.⁵⁷ These negative reintegration experiences led Marlantes to hide his warrior experiences from civilians. He felt empty and haunted. He experienced divorces, job loss, and alienation from society.⁵⁸ Marlantes'

⁵⁴ Dale Maharidge, *Bringing Mulligan Home: The Other Side of the Good War* (New York: Perseus Books, 2013), xii-xv.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 295-303.

⁵⁶ Karl Marlantes, *What it is Like to Go to War* (New York: Atlantic Monthly, 2011), 176.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 176-90.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 206.

closest friends walked with him through his difficulties and helped him regain his balance. He was able to express his warrior experiences in ways that allowed him to live out restitution within his community.⁵⁹

Veterans of the GWOT are beginning to write memories of warrior experiences. Kayla Williams served as an Arabic interpreter for the US Army in Iraq. While there, she met her husband, Brian McGough. An Improvised Explosive Device (IED) wounded Brian in the head in October 2003.⁶⁰ After returning from Iraq, Williams issues with combat stress symptoms decreased, and her emotional and behavioral responses balanced out. McGough's symptoms increased, and he fluctuated between rage and indifference. He drank heavily and experienced short-term memory loss.⁶¹ The Army sent McGough to Walter Reed Hospital in Washington, DC. He and Williams married, and Williams left the Army.⁶² McGough made slow progress on his recovery from his brain injury and PTSD. The Army discharged McGough in 2005 with a thirty percent medical disability rating and on the Army's temporary disability retired list. On the temporary disability retired list, McGough received fifty percent of his basic military pay until the military decided that his injuries were healed or that his injuries were permanent. Without full benefits, McGough and Williams began to have financial problems. McGough's PTSD and Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) symptoms returned.⁶³ McGough found balance when he started to volunteer with veteran organizations. Though PTSD symptoms continue in McGough's life, he

⁵⁹ Marlantes, 206-07.

⁶⁰ Kayla Williams, *Plenty of Time When We Get Home: Love and Recover in the Aftermath of War* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2014), 1-8.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*, 72-73.

⁶² *Ibid.*, 81-89.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 119-126.

and Williams continue their life together, raising two children and volunteering in their community.⁶⁴ Williams' memoir provided a firsthand account of how the GWOT impacts the lives of many American veterans.

Joe Klein wrote the stories of "The Mission Continues" and "Team Rubicon." The Mission Continues is a non-profit organization that provides fellowship grants to help wounded veterans. Founded by veterans, Team Rubicon is a non-government disaster relief organization that The Mission Continues funded. Both of these organizations help veterans use their warrior experiences to serve other people. Serving other people is a form of restitution within the community. Service helps bring positive change.⁶⁵ Though not a traditional war memoir, Klein's book showed how focusing on service helped veterans recover from combat and military stress.

The warrior's transformational journey reflects the Christian's journey of salvation and sanctification. Paul said, "Therefore, I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:1-2). Since service in the U.S. Armed Forces is voluntary, all service members present themselves for military service. While preparing trainees for service, the military transforms them through intensive training. This training begins with basic training but continues throughout a service member's time in service. The transformation seeks to remove civilian traits that are incompatible with military service and to instill into the service member military values

⁶⁴ Williams, 238-40.

⁶⁵ Joe Klein, *Charlie Mike: A True Story of Heroes Who Brought Their Mission Home* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2015), 287.

that enable them to be part of a collective team.⁶⁶ The transformation from civilian to service member to veteran is life-changing, as the change from sinner to saint through salvation and sanctification is life-changing. Understanding the warrior's transformational journey can help congregation members through their journey in life.

Civilian Disconnect

Three things disconnect warriors from the civilian population: the warrior's role, the warrior's wounds, and the warrior's isolation.

Warrior's Role

The concepts of roles and identity divide civilians and warriors. Before the Global War on Terror, scholars reflected on the role of warriors within a relatively peaceful society. John Keegan and Richard Holmes were two of the leading scholars in this area. Keegan and Holmes identified the primary role of warriors is "to protect family, territory, and possessions against the greed and envy of neighbors [*sic*]."⁶⁷ Holmes also said, ". . . the soldier's primary function, the use – or threatened use – of force, sets him apart from civilians."⁶⁸ Present-day soldier's training and modern military codes like the Soldier's Creed reflect these concepts.⁶⁹ Dave Grossman described warriors as sheepdogs, whose role is to protect the flock.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Dennis McGurck et al, "Joining the Ranks: The Role of Indoctrination in Transforming Civilians to Service Members," In *Operational Stress, Volume 2, Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat*, ed. Amy B. Adler, Carl Andrew Castro, and Thomas W. Britt (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 14.

⁶⁷ John Keegan, and Richard Holmes, *Soldiers: A History of Men in Battle* (New York: Viking, 1986), 11.

⁶⁸ Richard Holms, *Acts of War: The Behavior of Men in Battle* (New York: The Free Press, 1985), 31.

⁶⁹ Wood, *What Have We Done*, 56.

⁷⁰ Dave Grossman, *On Combat: The Psychology and Physiology of Deadly Conflict in War and in Peace* (n.p.: PPCT Research Publications, 2004), 173.

The military uses basic training to indoctrinate standards of conduct and specific values into service members, thus developing the warrior's role and identity. Service members prepare to function in complex environments where they must quickly respond to life or death situations. To accomplish these missions, service members rely on individual military values and standards of conduct developed during training.⁷¹ These values and standards are part of the warrior's role that divides warriors and civilians. Shannon French called these standards and values a warrior's code. Living by a code protected the warrior from serious psychological damage, protected society from the warrior who might seek to abuse their power, and protected the warrior from the community, which might try to take advantage of the warrior's skills.⁷² The warrior's role is to use violence when necessary and to live by a code that guides how to use force. These actions set warriors apart from most civilians.

Warrior's Wounds

The warrior's invisible wounds disconnect them from civilians who can be confused by varying definitions and symptoms. While people may observe a warrior's physical wounds, many warriors suffer from internal wounds that are not seen and sometimes not recognized. Hoge used the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (DSM) definition for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to identify the invisible wounds warriors suffer.⁷³ He also addressed concussions or mild traumatic brain injury.⁷⁴ Hoge cared for soldiers who experienced psychological injuries during wartime. While focusing on psychological recovery, Hoge

⁷¹ Dennis McGurck et al, 15.

⁷² Shannon E. French, *The Code of the Warrior: Exploring Warrior Values Past and Present* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2003), 4-11.

⁷³ Hoge, 5-6.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 37-43.

acknowledged that these injuries impact the body and mind together.⁷⁵ Wood recognized PTSD as a psychological wound but extended the definition of the invisible wound to a moral injury.⁷⁶ He based his description of a moral injury on Jonathan Shay's definition. Shay described moral injury as a violation of a person's moral definition of right and wrong.⁷⁷ Edward Tick gave the most comprehensive explanation of the invisible wound. He acknowledged that some warriors experience PTSD.⁷⁸ In his first book, Tick expanded the invisible wound of PTSD to include an identity disorder and a soul wound.⁷⁹ The invisible wound is a wound to the soul because it impacts areas of the mind, will, and emotion.⁸⁰ It is an identity disorder because it can cause an identity crisis for the individuals affected.⁸¹

The dark side of a warrior's experience causes the warrior's invisible wounds. The dark side of a warrior's experience includes pain, fear, the possibility of being wounded, and the threat of killing or being killed.⁸² Beth Stallinga quoted John Shay, who said, "... what spills blood wounds spirit."⁸³ Guilt from killing, seeing others killed, and working with dead and injured people can cause internal injuries. The possibility of internal injury increases when

⁷⁵ Hoge, 47.

⁷⁶ Wood, *What Have We Done*, 18.

⁷⁷ Jonathan Shay, *Achilles in Vietnam*, 19-20, Kindle.

⁷⁸ Edward Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 147.

⁷⁹ Edward Tick, *War in the Soul*, 5.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, 109.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 105.

⁸² Larry Dewey, *War and Redemption: Treatment and Recovery in Combat-related Posttraumatic Stress Disorder* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2004), 7.

⁸³ Beth A Stallinga, "What Spills Blood Wounds Spirit: Chaplains, Spiritual Care, and Operational Stress Injury," *Reflective Practice: Formation and Supervision in Ministry* 33 (2013), 14, Accessed April 15, 2019. <http://journals.sfu.ca/rpfs/index.php/rpfs/article/view/258>.

warriors participate in killing civilians, battlefield vengeance, and “killing while filled with hate, rage, or something like elation.”⁸⁴ While fear complicated the warrior’s internal injuries, warriors who experience close personal loss are more likely to experience internal injuries.⁸⁵ Civilians need to hear the veterans’ warrior experiences so that they can begin to understand the warrior’s internal injuries.

Warrior’s Isolation

The warrior’s isolation causes a disconnect between veterans and civilians. Since the adoption of all-volunteer armed forces, fewer and fewer Americans have a direct connection to service members and their families. The sources reflected this disconnect. Hoge encouraged individual warriors to connect to their community.⁸⁶ Sherman described society as unaware of the injuries and experiences of service members.⁸⁷ Wood described the disconnect between warriors and civilians as part of collective amnesia that refused to look at the impact of war on individuals and the nation.⁸⁸ Tick asserted that when the society did not tend to veterans during and after a conflict, it broke the social contract between veterans and civilians. The broken social contract increased the invisible wounds.⁸⁹

Many veterans feel resentment toward civilians. Many civilians do not understand what veterans endured to serve their country, but also many civilians are uninterested in veterans’ sacrifices. While most GWOT veterans have not had to endure civilians spitting on them or

⁸⁴ Dewey, 74.

⁸⁵ Ibid., 97-112.

⁸⁶ Hoge, 274-75.

⁸⁷ Sherman, *The Untold War*, 198.

⁸⁸ Wood, *What Have We Done*, 35.

⁸⁹ Edward Tick, *Warrior’s Return*, 120-21.

insulting them in public, GWOT veterans see civilian disinterest as uncaring and impersonal. With less than one percent of the American population serving in the Armed Forces, and since there is no universal obligation to serve the nation, the military has become a special group that sacrifices and serves. This concept highlights the isolation of veterans from civilians.⁹⁰ The lack of a venue or public setting in which veterans can express the joys and pains of their service to the country leaves veterans isolated from civilians.

Models of Integration

The transition from war to peace is an essential element in considering the integration of veterans into civilian life; however, Martin van Creveld pointed out that most military authors do not address end of war procedures and practices. He listed four critical tasks necessary to end a war. First, the culture must provide for friendly and enemy casualties. Next, society must distribute the spoils of war. Third, it needed to celebrate the triumph marking the transition from war to peace. Finally, the culture needed to establish a formal agreement of peace between the warring parties.⁹¹ These tasks were national tasks necessary to integrate warriors into society.

Many authors described the need for postwar integration rituals but did not offer an integration model. David Wood acknowledged the lack of rituals in modern society.⁹² Also, he gave some guidelines that can help frame integration models. First, he called for a balanced, compassionate view of returning veterans. Then, he encouraged society to accept responsibility not only for injured veterans but also for the war itself. Third, he asked all parties to set aside political differences and acknowledge the harsh reality of war. Next, he acknowledged that war

⁹⁰ Sherman, *Afterwar*, 26-31.

⁹¹ Martin Van Creveld, *The Culture of War* (New York: Ballantine, 2008), 148.

⁹² Wood, *What Have We Done*, 261.

might be necessary. Finally, he encouraged society to give veterans a voice to express their war experiences.⁹³

In her first book, Nancy Sherman described the veteran's need for a “secure base.”⁹⁴ Also, she explained the bond of mutual care and affection that can support veterans as they adjust.⁹⁵ In her second book, she dealt more directly with postwar issues. She encouraged society members to engage in personally helping veterans reintegrate into civilian life.⁹⁶ She used the stories of veterans to help establish guidelines and attitudes that support reintegration.

In his second book, Jonathan Shay paralleled the returning journey of Odysseus with the homecoming and reintegration of veterans. This comparison provided a warning of many missteps that service members suffer when not prepared for integration.⁹⁷ Toward the end of his book, he offered some ideas for a model of integration. He used Judith Herman’s three stages of trauma recovery: self-care, trauma-center work, and reconnecting with people and community.⁹⁸ Also, he advised the military and society on the prevention of moral injury.⁹⁹ He concluded with several concepts that reflected some of the ancient postwar rituals: storytelling, purification, and initiation.¹⁰⁰ Jonathan Shay’s works provided foundational concepts for most authors in the field of warrior’s integration.

⁹³ Wood, *What Have We Done*, 265-70.

⁹⁴ Sherman, *The Untold War*, 216.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, 229.

⁹⁶ Sherman, *Afterwar*, 1.

⁹⁷ Jonathan Shay, *Odysseus in America: Combat Trauma and the Trials of Homecoming* (New York: Scribner, 2002), 144.

⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 168.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 208-230.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 243-46.

Since the beginning of the GWOT, the U. S. Armed Forces have studied and utilized several integration models and tools. The U. S. Army Mental Health Services evaluated and oversaw the implementation of most of these integration tools. The military developed the deployment cycle for individuals and units as they transitioned into a theater of operation and back to their home station. The deployment cycle had seven phases: preparation, mobilization, deployment, employment, redeployment, post-deployment, and reconstitution. The last three phases of the deployment cycle dealt with the transition home.¹⁰¹ Evaluation of the deployment cycle model showed that the military needed to focus on the service member's transition as a whole rather than just on post-deployment mental health. This focus allowed the military to emphasize the positive and reduce the negative aspects of the post-deployment transition.¹⁰² The deployment cycle model is an individual and unit-based model. It provides a practical framework on which to place integration training and task. Still, it is only valid within the military community and does not help integrate veterans with civilians in the nation at large.

The U. S. military used preventive mental health screening to assess the individual service member's risk for behavioral and mental health issues. Initially, military mental health services used selection-based screening to identify a service member with psychological vulnerabilities. The selection-based testing proved ineffective as the military found a significant percentage of persons who passed the screening subsequently developed psychological issues that led to their discharge from service.¹⁰³ During the GWOT, the military changed to a care-

¹⁰¹ Amy B. Adler, Mark Zamorski, and Thomas W. Britt, "The Psychology of Transition: Adapting to Home After Deployment," In *Deployment Psychology: Evidence-Based Strategies to Promote Mental Health in the Military*, ed. Amy B. Adler, Paul D. Bliese, and Carl Andrew Castro (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2011), 154.

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 170-71.

¹⁰³ Paul D. Bliese, Kathleen M. Wright, and Charles W. Hoge, "Preventive Mental Health Screening in the Military," In *Deployment Psychology: Evidence-Based Strategies to Promote Mental Health in the Military*, ed.

based screening process. The care-based screening sought to identify areas in which redeploying service members needed to receive mental and behavioral care support. Early detection of mental health problems allowed military behavioral health specialists to intervene and prevent an increase in mental health issues.¹⁰⁴ The military continues to use behavioral health screening programs as military psychologists see them as a tool that allowed the military to help the individual service member without overwhelming the military behavioral health service infrastructure.¹⁰⁵ The use of a behavioral health screening program is an individual-based model that helps service members access military mental health services. It does not help veterans integrate with civilians or their communities.

Two sources that gave clear and compelling models of integration are Charles Hoge and Edward Tick. Charles Hoge provided an individual model based on cognitive-behavioral techniques. He used the acronym “LANDNAV” to frame his advice to warriors.¹⁰⁶ He recommended that warriors apply and practice their life skills as part of their daily life. His purpose was to provide coping strategies that help reset the inner workings of the mind.¹⁰⁷ LANDNAV stood for “Life survival skills,” “Attend to your reactions,” “Narrate your story,” “Deal with stressful situations,” “Navigate the mental health care system,” “Acceptance,” and “The V’s – vision, voice, village, Joie de Vivre, victory.”¹⁰⁸

Amy B. Adler, Paul D. Bliese, and Carl Andrew Castro (Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, 2011), 175-79.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., 179.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 189-90.

¹⁰⁶ Hoge, 48.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 48-49.

¹⁰⁸ Hoge, v-vi.

Edward Tick advanced a model of integration that was community assisted and postwar ritual focused. His study of ancient and world warrior traditions revealed six steps that can help warriors returning to civilian life.¹⁰⁹ These six steps “address the moral, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of their invisible wounds.”¹¹⁰ Tick’s six steps are isolation, affirmation, purification, storytelling, restitution, and initiation.¹¹¹

There are many veterans in the church. Their experiences and transformational journey can help the church in many ways; however, the warrior’s role, wounds, and isolation keep them disconnected from civilians within the church. The church needs a model to help integrate veterans within the church.

Theological Foundations

Warfare is a prevalent issue in the Bible. When four kings from the Mesopotamian valley attacked Sodom and Gomorrah, they took Lot, Abram’s nephew, captive. Abram led three hundred and eighteen men from his household to pursue and defeat the kings and their troops and rescue Lot (Genesis 14:1-16). Genesis 14:14 says, “When Abram heard that his relative had been taken captive, he led out his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.” Abram was ready for conflict because he trained his men for battle. From Abraham to the return of the Israelite exiles, most of the key characters witnessed war, participated in a battle, or dealt with the results of conflicts. In the New Testament, the military presence of the Roman Empire crucified Jesus Christ, influenced Paul’s ministry, and imprisoned John on the Isle of Patmos, where he wrote Revelation. “Wars and warfare shaped

¹⁰⁹ Tick, *Warrior’s Return*, 206.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid., 215.

the historical development and religious traditions of ancient Israel.”¹¹² Warfare was so prevalent in the lives of biblical people that they often viewed God as the divine warrior. “One important and pervasive metaphor of relationship is the picture of God as a warrior, commonly referred to in secondary literature as the divine-warrior theme.”¹¹³

Studying the prevalence of warfare in the Bible, one can see glimpses of how biblical people interacted with their warriors and how they helped warriors to transition from war to peace. First, the author discussed ancient and biblical postwar rituals that helped warriors returning from battle to integrate with their community. Next, he examined biblical warriors, their role in the people of God, and their participation in biblical postwar rituals, if any. Finally, he posited a biblical model of integration from Isaiah 2:1-5.

Biblical Postwar Rituals

While modern society has overlooked the end of war concepts, biblical culture and ancient communities used several postwar rituals to help warriors and civilians move from war to peace.¹¹⁴ Brad Kelle identified five ancient postwar rituals, including purification of warriors, distribution of booty and spoils of war, establishing memorials, public celebrations and processions, and public lament.¹¹⁵ Mark Smith identified war songs and laments as postwar rituals.¹¹⁶ The biblical texts do not give any detailed reflection on the significance of the postwar

¹¹² Jacob L. Wright, “Introduction,” In *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritzel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 2, Kindle.

¹¹³ Tremper Longman, III, and Daniel G. Reid, *God is a Warrior*, (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), 16.

¹¹⁴ Van Creveld, 148.

¹¹⁵ Kelle, 210, Kindle.

¹¹⁶ Mark S. Smith, “Warfare Song as Warrior Ritual,” In *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritzel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 168, Kindle.

rituals described. The documents do not discuss the impact postwar rituals had on the individuals or communities who participated nor elucidate on the meaning or thoughts behind the rituals. While important postwar rituals are present, the texts are not clear enough to establish a standard practice throughout biblical history.¹¹⁷

Many ancient and modern tribal cultures utilized postwar rituals to reintegrate their warriors after a battle.¹¹⁸ Native American tribes used isolation and purification rituals to help integrate warriors returning from the warpath.¹¹⁹ Ancient Mesopotamian cultures purified their returning warriors through washing rituals.¹²⁰ These cultures also used victory celebrations, memorials, and laments as postwar rituals.¹²¹ These rituals constituted a form of storytelling that allowed the warriors to release emotions and transform their warrior experiences in a communal setting.¹²²

The postwar ritual of the purification of warriors, captives, and objects is part of a process for returning and reintegrating warriors into the community. Numbers 31:19-24 describes the procedures and actions the warriors are to use to cleanse themselves and prepare them to return to their community. All the warriors were to wash themselves, their captives, garments, and other tactile items on the third and seventh days. They were also to purify all nonflammable objects with fire.¹²³ This purification process reflects the legal protocol in

¹¹⁷ Kelle, 208-09, Kindle.

¹¹⁸ Ibid., 221, Kindle.

¹¹⁹ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 205-06.

¹²⁰ Kelle, 222, Kindle.

¹²¹ Ibid., 229-30, Kindle.

¹²² Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 221.

¹²³ Kelle, 211, Kindle.

Numbers 19:1-22 used to cleanse anyone who comes into contact with a corpse.¹²⁴ Shedding blood and physical contact with a corpse caused physical defilement that represented estrangement from the divine presence.¹²⁵ The warrior needed to cleanse the defilement to renew their relationship with God and God's community.

The people of Israel used the purification rituals described in Numbers chapter 19 and chapter 31 to set apart priests in Exodus 29:35-37. David alluded to purification rituals as he confessed his sin with Bathsheba and sought God's forgiveness in Psalm 51:7-10. The community set apart its warriors to participate in war, yet ancient societies recognized that warfare carried with it a toxic nature that defiled warriors. Direct contact with death caused the toxic nature of warfare. Defilement isolated warriors from God and the community, disrupting healthy relationships between the warrior, God, and the community.¹²⁶ The purification ritual provided forgiveness for any sin the warrior may have committed and cleansing from the defilement, which separated the warrior from God and the community.

One of the results of a victorious battle in ancient warfare was the collection of spoils and booty. While in many cultures, a warrior kept whatever loot he collected for himself, the ancient Israelite gathered all the booty together and divided it among God, the participants, and the community. The disbursement of the war booty was a postwar ritual. Numbers 31:25-47 gives detailed directions on how the community was to divide the plunder taken from battle. Half of the booty went to the warriors to reward them for their service to the community. The remaining half went to all the congregation as restitution to the community from the warriors. Then, the

¹²⁴ Harrison, 387.

¹²⁵ Kelle, 213, Kindle.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 213-14, Kindle.

warriors and the congregation gave a portion of their booty to God and his servants, the priests, and Levites. David followed the example of Numbers 31 when he distributed booty to combatants and non-combatants after one of his battles (1 Samuel 30:21-31). This division became standard practice in Israel.¹²⁷

The division of spoils and booty between warriors and civilians in the community represented restitution of the warriors to the community. When David continued the ritual started in Numbers 31, he distributed the spoils to his warriors and non-combatants. Some of the non-combatant included the city of Ziklag and several Judean communities in the southern area of Israel. The Amalekites had destroyed Ziklag and burned it with fire. They also took the wives and children of Ziklag captive along with the wives and children of David's warriors (1 Samuel 30:1-6). David returned the wives and children to Ziklag. He gave the city additional support from the spoils taken from the Amalekites so that the people could restore the damage the Amalekites caused to Ziklag. When David distributed spoils to the communities of Judah, he took the role of a king who wanted to protect and support his people. Three of the Judean cities that David blessed with the spoils belonged to the Levites; thus, David also gave part of his spoils to God and the servants of God.¹²⁸ Biblical cultures distributed the spoils of battle to restore communities devastated by war.

After a battle, ancient cultures often constructed memorials and monuments to commemorate the war. Numbers 31:48-54 provides a clear picture of a memorial dedication. The officers and leaders of the Israelite army collected gold and silver items and dedicated them to the tabernacle. The officers wanted to express their praise to God because the Israelites suffered

¹²⁷ Kelle., 214-15., Kindle.

¹²⁸ Robert D. Bergen, *1, 2 Samuel: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 1996), 271-72, accessed February 21, 2020, ProQuest Ebook Central.

no casualties during the battle. This gift was an atonement offering given beyond the portion of the booty distributed to God and his servants.¹²⁹ After the Israelite people defeated an Amalekite army in the wilderness, Moses recorded the account in a book as a memorial, and he built an altar on which to praise God (Exodus 17:14-15). Memorials and monuments provided an opportunity to remember the battle and to worship God for his support in the battle.

Memorials and monuments were a means of conveying the story of the battle to the community. They provided public testimony to the community of God's victory in war. They reminded the community of God's provision for them, and they offered an opportunity to teach the following generations of God's faithfulness. Joshua built a memorial for these reasons in Joshua 4:19-24.

The postwar ritual of celebration and procession provided the ancient Israelites an opportunity to tell the story of their battle. The women of the community met the returning warriors with dancing and singing. In 1 Samuel 18:6-9, the women sang a song of praise for Saul and David. Though this seems a spontaneous response to Israel's victory over the Philistines, it is more likely that some type of triumphal procession followed many of Israel's victories.¹³⁰ The procession in 1 Samuel 18 may have initiated David as a heroic warrior of Israel.

The final postwar ritual found in biblical texts is the war song and lament. War songs and laments gave ancient warriors and their communities the opportunity to tell the story of their warrior experiences. Sometimes the community used war songs in connection with victory processions, as in the case of the women's praise for David in 1 Samuel 18. Representatives of the people composed the songs to spread the warrior's story in the community. Other times, the

¹²⁹ Kelle, 217, Kindle.

¹³⁰ Ibid., 218, Kindle.

warriors related their war experiences to the community through song. Deborah and Barak presented a war song after they defeated the Canaanites in Judges 5. This song tells the story of God's help in their victory over their enemy and the final demise of the enemy's general, Sisera, whom Jael slew with a hammer and a tent peg. The song gives specific details of who participated in the battle and spread the news of the victory throughout the community.¹³¹ Second Samuel 22 is an example of one of David's songs. He recounts his encounters with Saul and other enemies who were trying to kill him. David credits God for protecting him during the difficult conflict. Finally, ancient Israelites used public and private laments "to create a community of shared mourners."¹³² War songs provided individual warriors an opportunity to give a personal testimony of God's support and victory in their warrior experiences.

Laments provide communal and ceremonial expressions of grief in response to a tragic loss. David mourned the death of Saul and Jonathan in battle (2 Samuel 1:17-27). The song was his expression of public and private grief – the public loss of the anointed king of Israel, Saul, and the personal loss of his close friend, Jonathan.¹³³ Most of the time, warfare caused warriors to experience the loss of close comrades. While warriors may celebrate a victory, they also feel grief from the loss of comrades. War songs and laments provided warriors opportunities to grieve lost comrades and celebrate victories simultaneously. Ancient Israel used several postwar rituals to integrate returning warriors into their communities.

¹³¹ Mark S. Smith, 169, Kindle.

¹³² Ibid., 168, Kinde.

¹³³ Kelle, 219-20, Kindle.

Warriors and the People of God

Many of the characters in the Bible were warriors and participated in combat operations. Studying the lives of Saul and David provided examples of how warriors and the people of God interacted. While Saul and David were also kings and functioned in a political role, reviewing the warrior experiences of Saul and David showed the impact these experiences had on their lives and those around them. First, the study examined the transformation that Saul and David experienced as they participated in battles and served their people in war. Next, it considered the internal wounds that Saul and David may have developed based on the biblical description of their recorded actions. Finally, the examination focused on biblical and ancient postwar rituals in which Saul and David may have participated in their lives.

The warrior experiences of Saul and David transformed them from humble beginnings into kings for their people. When he first met Samuel, Saul said of himself, “Am I not a Benjamite, of the smallest of the tribes of Israel, and my family the least of all the families of the tribe of Benjamin?” (1 Samuel 9:21). When Samuel presented Saul to the people of Israel as their future king, Saul hid among the baggage because he was shy (1 Samuel 10:20-23). Soon afterward, when the Ammonites besieged an Israelite town, Saul found that many Israelites refused to follow him into battle. He cut up a yoke of oxen and threatened to punish all who did not join him. After the battle, Saul realized that unity was more important than revenge and showed mercy on those who did not participate (1 Samuel 11). This battle was Saul’s first recorded experience with combat. Saul’s experience of leading a united Israel against the Ammonites may have changed his view of those who choose not to support him in the battle.

When “the Spirit of the Lord departed from Saul” (1 Samuel 16:14), Samuel went to the house of Jesse to anoint a new king to replace Saul. The oldest and strongest sons of Jesse

impressed Samuel, but God refused to choose them. Instead, God chose the youngest and weakest among them. Samuel anointed David to kingship (1 Samuel 16:1-13). David's initial experience with battle was his confrontation with Goliath. After killing Goliath, David joined the Israelite army as they pursued the Philistines (1 Samuel 17:55-58). In the victory procession after the battle, the songs of the women elevated David over Saul. The triumphal procession initiated David as a heroic warrior for the people of Israel. Saul's jealousy and suspicion of David began that day (1 Samuel 18:6-9). David's experience of killing Goliath and fighting against the Philistines thrust him into the public limelight and put him at odds with King Saul for the rest of Saul's life.

After their initial experiences in battle, both Saul and David continued to serve as warriors. The wars and conflicts they experienced continue to transform and change them. Saul's combat experiences lead him to disobey God (1 Samuel 15:10-12). In fits of rage, he turned on David (1 Samuel 19:10-16) and his son, Jonathan (1 Samuel 20:30-34). After a major defeat at the hands of the Philistines, Saul committed suicide. In conflict with Saul, David obeyed God by sparing Saul's life (1 Samuel 24:1-22). He expressed his grief when Saul and Jonathan died (2 Samuel 1:17-27). He also spared Jonathan's son, Mephibosheth, and treated him with dignity and respect (2 Samuel 9:1-13). David's combat experiences may have influenced his sin against Bathsheba. Then he had her husband, Uriah, killed in battle to cover up his sin (2 Samuel 11). David mixed obedience and disobedience to God throughout his life, but in his transgression, David confessed his sins to God. God forgave and purified David (Psalm 51). David died of old age and passed his kingdom on to Solomon, his son.

Based on the recorded behaviors of Saul and David, both may have experienced internal wounds caused by their warrior experiences. Jan Grimell read the stories of Saul and David in

light of modern conceptions of moral injury and PTSD.¹³⁴ Grimell's assessment of Saul is that readers could see his recorded actions and behaviors as symptoms of PTSD. The struggles that developed from his military experiences impacted his civilian life and his relationships with other people. Saul falls into depression, has fits of rage, and engages in reckless behavior. Finally, Saul commits suicide when failing in battle.¹³⁵ Grimell compared Saul with a modern soldier who has developed PTSD because of his military service and who struggles to readjust to civilian life.¹³⁶ Grimell assessed David as a warrior who develops resilience in war and postwar. David was able to express his emotions and offer forgiveness to those who offended him. He was able to create deep friendships with others, but he also gave in to the extreme temptation of adultery and murder. Though David experienced negative impacts from his warrior experiences, he was able to balance his experiences, bounce back from adverse events, and help his country and community through positive leadership and spirituality.¹³⁷ Grimell compared David with a modern soldier who developed sufficient resilience to grow through the experiences of war.¹³⁸

Both Saul and David participated in postwar rituals. One of the rituals in which Saul and David participated was the distribution of war booty.¹³⁹ Saul's disobeyed God over this postwar

¹³⁴ Jan Grimell, "Contemporary Insights from Biblical Combat Veterans through the Lenses of Moral Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 72, no. 4 (December 2018): 242-43, accessed April 15, 2019, DOI:[10.1177/1542305018790218](https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305018790218).

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*, 244.

¹³⁶ Jan Grimell, "To Understand and Support Contemporary Veterans Utilizing Biblical Combat Veteran Types," *Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling* 72, no. 4 (December 2018), 233, accessed April 15, 2019, DOI:[10.1177/1542305018815691](https://doi.org/10.1177/1542305018815691).

¹³⁷ Grimell, "Contemporary Insights from Biblical Combat Veterans through the Lenses of Moral Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," 246.

¹³⁸ Grimell, "To Understand and Support Contemporary Veterans Utilizing Biblical Combat Veteran Types," 233.

¹³⁹ Kelle, 210, Kindle.

ritual. In the war against Amalekites, Samuel put all people and livestock under the ban (1 Samuel 15:3). After the battle, Saul and his troops spared Agag, the king of the Amalekites, the best of the livestock, and all that they deemed was good (1 Samuel 15:9). While Saul tried to blame the people and said that the animals were for sacrifice to God, Samuel refused to accept his excuses. God rejected Saul as king (1 Samuel 15:21-23). As the king, Saul was responsible for overseeing the proper distribution of the war booty. In this case, the king and army were to destroy all Amalekite loot in honor of God. Because of this transgression, God rejected Saul as king of Israel.¹⁴⁰ Before he became king, David and his men confronted the Amalekites, who raided his base camp and captured their families and possessions. David and his men pursued and defeated these Amalekites. They retrieved their families and belongings and captured more Amalekite war booty. David distributed the war booty equally between those who fought in the battle and those who stayed with the baggage (1 Samuel 30:1-25). David followed the practice established in Numbers 31 to distribute of booty after his battle, and it became the practice that David used when he became king.¹⁴¹

Another postwar ritual was participation in celebrations and processions.¹⁴² After Saul's first battle with the Ammonites, Samuel leads Israel in a post-battle triumph that confirmed Saul as king of Israel and ensured Israel's commitment to Saul (1 Sam 12). After David's first battle with Goliath and the Philistines, he participated in the victory procession through the Israelite cities. The women celebrated David as a great war hero (1 Samuel 18:6-7). Saul and Jonathan were also part of this procession. While the initial reading of the text may seem like this was a

¹⁴⁰ Bergen, 178-80, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁴¹ Kelle, 215, Kindle.

¹⁴² Ibid, 210, Kindle.

spontaneous event, victory processions were a ritual celebration that involves the whole community.¹⁴³

The next postwar ritual was singing war songs and laments.¹⁴⁴ There are no recorded postwar songs or laments attributed to Saul. The Bible does not describe Saul as a musician; however, in 1 Samuel 18:7, the women sing, “Saul has slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands.” This postwar song elevates David over Saul, but it also illustrates that the women sang songs praising Saul’s previous battles and victories. “In accordance with an ancient Israelite custom (cf. Exodus 15:21; Judges 5:1-31), the women composed songs with lyrics that memorialized the men’s military successes.”¹⁴⁵ The Bible attributes many postwar songs to David. Second Samuel 22 is a crucial example. Here, David glorifies God for deliverance from Saul and other enemies and for giving him victories in combat. Also, David sang a song of lament and mourning after the fall of Saul and Jonathan in the battle against the Philistines (2 Samuel 1:17-27). Songs and laments were part of storytelling after the battle.

The biblical account of Saul’s life does not indicate that he participated in purification or cleansing rituals similar to those described in Numbers 31. Saul continuously fought wars against the enemies of the Israelites, and his reign knew no peace (1 Samuel 14:47-48). Continuous warfare may have prohibited Saul from participating in purification rituals. Saul achieved much success, but he also experienced rejection from his people and God.¹⁴⁶ After the campaign against the Philistines in which David slew Goliath and the victory procession that followed in

¹⁴³ Kelle, 218, Kindle.

¹⁴⁴ Mark S. Smith, 168, Kindle.

¹⁴⁵ Bergen, 202, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁴⁶ David H. Jensen, *1 & 2 Samuel: A Theological Commentary on the Bible* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2015), 90, accessed February 21, 2020. ProQuest Ebook Central.

which the people elevated David over Saul (1 Samuel 18:6-9), Saul exhibited great rage against David. Anger, emotional mood swings, panic attacks, and psychological isolation became ever-increasing elements of Saul's life.¹⁴⁷ Saul lived with defilement and found no way to experience purification or forgiveness for his actions.

While there is no direct mention of purification rituals described in Numbers 31 anywhere else in the Bible, 1 Samuel 21:7 presents an interesting question, which modern interpreters do not understand. "Now one of the servants of Saul was there that day, detained before the Lord: and his name was Doeg the Edomite, the chief of Saul's shepherds" (vs. 7). This verse is the only use of the phrase "detained before the Lord."¹⁴⁸ Modern interpreters have no clear understanding of the phrase.¹⁴⁹ One scholar referenced the various physical conditions mentioned in Leviticus that required Israelite priests to quarantine people for seven days or more.¹⁵⁰ This scholar overlooked the social/military requirement for the purification of returning warriors found on Numbers 31. Jensen indicated that Doeg was before the Lord as part of a ritual.¹⁵¹ While given the title, "the chief of Saul's shepherds," Doeg may have served Saul in a military capacity. First Samuel 14:52 indicates that during his military campaigns, Saul bought "any mighty man or any valiant man" into his service. These men were warriors whom Saul integrated into his military units or enlisted as independent mercenaries. Many ancient kingdoms

¹⁴⁷ Grimell, "Contemporary Insights from Biblical Combat Veterans through the Lenses of Moral Injury and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder," 244.

¹⁴⁸ Jensen, 134.

¹⁴⁹ Bergen, 222, ProQuest Ebook Central.

¹⁵⁰ Pamela Tamarkin Reis, "Collusion at Nob: A New Reading of 1 Samuel 21-22," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 19, no. 61 (March 1994), 61, <https://search-ebscohost-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/login.aspx?direct=true&db=lsdar&AN=ATLA0000878677&site=ehost-live&scope=site>.

¹⁵¹ Jensen, 134.

used titles like “the chief of shepherds” to honor military champions or leaders.¹⁵² “He was master of the herds, which perhaps was then a place of as much honour (sic) as master of the horse is now.”¹⁵³ If Doeg was before the Lord as part of a ritual, and if he was a warrior, his presence may indicate a continuation of the postwar ritual of purification into the time of the kings of Israel.

In the war song he composed toward the end of his life, David claimed, “I was also blameless toward Him, and I kept myself from my iniquity; therefore, the Lord has recompensed me according to my righteousness, according to my cleanness before His eyes” (2 Samuel 22:24-25). The Bible describes several times when David transgressed against God. His life was a mixture of obedience and disobedience, yet David could make this claim because he sought and received forgiveness, purification, and cleansing for his iniquity (Psalm 51). “... We must assume that genuine God-centered faith was the wellspring of David’s scrupulous attention to God’s law and his conduct.”¹⁵⁴ Participation in purification rituals like the one described in Numbers 31 may have given David the peace he needed to face life and God with confidence.

Finally, ancient kings and societies established memorials and monuments to commemorate significant victories over their enemies. After defeating the Amalekites, Saul “set up a memorial to himself” on Mount Carmel (1 Samuel 15:12). This memorial was an example of Saul seeking to service himself, not God. After David became king, he initiated an extensive building program. He built a palace and other royal buildings in Jerusalem. Also, he gathered the

¹⁵² Shawn Zelig Aster, "What Was Doeg the Edomite's Title? Textual Emendation versus a Comparative Approach to 1 Samuel 21:8," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 122, no. 2 (2003), 361, accessed February 24, 2020. doi:10.2307/3268449.

¹⁵³ M. Henry, "Commentary on 1 Samuel 21 by Matthew Henry," Blue Letter Bible. Last Modified March 1, 1996, https://www.blueletterbible.org/Comm/mhc/1Sa/1Sa_021.cfm

¹⁵⁴ Bergen, 461, ProQuest Ebook Central.

supplies and developed some of the plans to build a new temple. The Bible does not mention that David built any war memorials or constructed any monuments to any military campaign or conflict.

Biblical Model of Integration

The author sees Isaiah 2:2-5 as a possible biblical model of integration that utilizes all five biblical postwar rituals discussed. Isaiah lived through many wars. As a priest, Isaiah was familiar with the laws of the Pentateuch and their directions on war and postwar rituals. Also, as a priest, he would have felt compassion for those who lived through the wars and the suffering that they caused in Israel and Judah. As a prophet to the kings of Judah, he would have known soldiers and leaders of the army of Judah, who also ministered to the king.¹⁵⁵ The phraseology of Isaiah 2:2-5 contains allusions to biblical postwar rituals.

During Isaiah's life, he saw many conflicts and wars. Isaiah ministered from 739-701 B.C. While his ministry began at a time of peace and prosperity, the atmosphere started to change with the death of King Uzziah and the resurgence of Assyria. King Ahaz sought to align himself with Assyria. The kings of Israel and Syria opposed Assyria. To force Judah and King Ahaz into their anti-Assyrian alliance, Syria and Israel attacked Judah. The Syro-Ephraimite war lasted three years (735-732 B.C.) and only ended when Assyria responded to King Ahaz's request for support.¹⁵⁶ Israel and Syria continued to oppose Assyrian influence in the region. The Assyrian King Shalmaneser returned to the area and defeated Damascus and Samaria. Syria fell to Assyrian control, and Israel submitted to Assyrian domination. Ten years later, Israel rebelled against Assyrian rule, and Samaria fell after a three-year siege (724-722 B.C.).

¹⁵⁵ Leon J. Wood, *The Prophets of Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1979), 303-305.

¹⁵⁶ Gary V. Smith, *Isaiah 1-39: An Exegetical and Theological Exposition of Holy Scripture*, (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2007), 23 and 122, accessed February 22, 2020, ProQuest Ebook Central.

While Isaiah was safe in Judah, he was fully aware of the trauma and suffering involved in the siege of Samaria (Isaiah 8:1-8). Assyria returned within ten years between 715-713 B.C. Assyria did not target Judah, but the entire region felt the effects of the campaign (Isaiah 14:28-32). Hezekiah, the new king in Judah, took a more anti-Assyrian stance. He led a war against the Philistines to force them into an anti-Assyrian coalition. The Assyrian King Sennacherib led another campaign into the region. He defeated the nations who were part of the anti-Assyrian coalition and laid siege to the city of Lachish. Though Egypt tried to intervene, the Assyrian army defeated them and conquered Lachish. The Assyrians threatened Jerusalem and King Hezekiah, but Hezekiah repented and put his trust in God. A plague ravaged the Assyrian army, and while Sennacherib forced Hezekiah to pay tribute, he returned to Assyria, leaving Judah a free nation.¹⁵⁷

In Isaiah 2:2-5, Isaiah prophetically describes a great victory celebration for God's triumph in the world. The victory celebration contains allusions to the five biblical postwar rituals described above.

First, the passage begins with the acknowledgment of God's victory (Isaiah 2:2). "The mountain of the house of the Lord will be established as the chief of the mountains. . ." (verse 2). John Oswalt says that Isaiah is stating that the final days will make it clear that the religion of Israel is the only true religion and that the God of Israel is the only true God.¹⁵⁸ In Isaiah's day, many cultures and their gods clashed for supremacy over their world. Isaiah is looking forward to the time when God will triumph over all others. He will win the victory over all others

¹⁵⁷ John N. Oswalt, *The Book of Isaiah Chapters 1-39*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, ed. R. K. Harrison (Grand Rapids, MI: W. B. Eerdmans, 1986), 5-13.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, 117.

militarily, politically, culturally, and spiritually. As part of ending a war, the victor needs to celebrate his victory.¹⁵⁹ The opening phrases of Isaiah 2 represent God celebrating his victory.

Next, Isaiah alludes to the postwar ritual of the procession. At the end of verse two and the beginning of verse three, all the nations join in a victory procession going up to the house of God. Celebrations and processions were biblical postwar rituals. Victory processions in ancient times honored the triumphant military leader and included victorious troops, captured people, and spoil.¹⁶⁰ In Isaiah 2:2-3, all the nations process to the mountain of God. Isaiah envisions “an endless stream of people from all over the world who encourage others to join them as they go up.”¹⁶¹ The procession includes God’s people, those who submitted to him, and those he defeated. The procession encourages all people, even the defeated, to join in praise to God, who is the victor. Martin Van Creveld listed three key elements that were part of ancient victory processions and celebrations: joy, gratitude, and humility.¹⁶² The people who are part of the victory procession reflect joy, gratitude, and humility to God for His blessings to them.

Also, the procession includes a war song, which is another form of postwar ritual. In verse three, the people who are part of the procession sing a song of submission to God and encourage others to participate. “Come, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; That He may teach us concerning His ways and that we may walk in His paths” (vs. 3). This passage represents a war song that praises God for his victory. The people submit to the victor and desire to learn his ways. They see God’s teachings and His paths as superior to the instructions and guidance of the false gods of the surrounding cultures. The

¹⁵⁹ Van Creveld, 160.

¹⁶⁰ Kelle, 229, Kindle.

¹⁶¹ Gary V. Smith, 129, ProQuest Ebook Central

¹⁶² Van Creveld, 161.

victory celebration established God as the one true God of the universe.¹⁶³ As in 1 Samuel 18, when the women who are part of the victory procession sing a war song that initiated David as a heroic warrior and veteran, the people who are part of God's victory procession sing a war song that identifies God as the victor of heaven.

Then, the war song leads to the establishment of a memorial to tell the story of God's victory. The end of verse three says, "For the law will go forth from Zion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." Ancient people established monuments and memorials to legitimize the rule of a new king.¹⁶⁴ As the word of the Lord spread across the world, all people will see God as the only and true deity. Also, memorials tell the story of the victory to the community. God's word goes forth to tell of his victory and love.

The next postwar ritual reflected in Isaiah 2 is the distribution of booty. Van Creveld divides war booty into two categories. First, movable booty includes people and things that warriors remove from the battlefield. Next, immovable property consists of land, natural resources, and buildings. A victorious commander divided the movable booty between God, himself, his leaders, and his troops. The victor possessed the immovable property to own and rule as he chose.¹⁶⁵ Numbers 31 required Israel to provide some of the booty to the congregation in restitution for the suffering of war and to benefit the community.¹⁶⁶ Isaiah 2:4 provides a picture of the restitution aspect of the distribution of booty. God will settle disputes between

¹⁶³ Oswalt, 117.

¹⁶⁴ Kelle, 228, Kindle.

¹⁶⁵ Van Creveld, 159.

¹⁶⁶ Kelle, 234, Kindle.

nations.¹⁶⁷ God's judgments represent His control over the immovable plunder of land, buildings, and natural resources. Warriors will "hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks." Ancient weapons of war were expensive. Made from high-quality metal, they represented a considerable expense dedicated to warfare. Weapons of war represent movable booty that warriors changed into implements that bless society. In an agricultural community, the act of turning expensive weapons of war into agricultural tools signified a significant transition in mentality and attitude. God's actions in distributing the spoils of His victory help to restore the world to peace.¹⁶⁸

The final ritual of purification is not evident in Isaiah 2:2-5. Oswalt suggested that the only way Israel can experience the fulfillment of Isaiah 2:2-5 is to go through the purification described in Isaiah 4:2-6.¹⁶⁹ "When the Lord has washed away the filth of the daughters of Zion and purged the bloodshed of Jerusalem from her midst, by the spirit of judgment and the spirit of burning, then the Lord will create . . . a shelter." (Isaiah 4:4-6). This passage contains many of the elements found in Numbers 31. These elements include washing with water, purging the blood, and a burning fire. Isaiah 2:5 is an appeal for the people of God to "walk in the light of the Lord." Assuming that God's people can only walk in the light of the Lord after they have experienced cleansing, one can see an element of purification in Isaiah 2.

Ancient Israel used several postwar rituals to help their warriors integrate with their civilian community. The exact purposes and procedures of these postwar rituals remain unknown to modern scholars, yet the Bible alludes to at least five rituals used in Ancient Israel. Also, these

¹⁶⁷ R. E. Clements, *Isaiah 1-39*, New Century Bible Commentary, ed. Ronald E. Clements (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1980), 41.

¹⁶⁸ Oswalt, 118.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 113.

rituals had a significant influence on the lives of individual warriors, like Saul and David. While anticipating the exalted future of God's universal reign, Isaiah used postwar rituals to prepare the people for God's victory.

Theoretical Foundations

Since the Revolutionary War, the United States has maintained standing armed forces. American service members have fought ten wars and numerous small-scale military actions. After their time in service, most service members returned home and integrated into civilian society. Each generation dealt with difficulties in integration. America has not developed any postwar rituals or standard practices for integration. While some specific programs like the Military Job Assistance Program for Transitioning Service members seeks to help veterans with employment, medical care, and housing issues, these programs do not help the community receive veterans. In the theoretical foundations, the author explored America's recent history of integration to see society's responses to returning veterans, then investigated modern rituals and the lack or insufficient use of integration rituals in American society. Finally, the author reviewed four models of integration that are present in reintegration literature today.

Recent History of Integration

Somewhere between the end of the Middle Ages and the Post-Modern Age, most societies forgot postwar rituals and their significance. "We have abandoned the rituals of cleansing and forgiveness and healing that welcomed returning combat veterans in past eras and other cultures."¹⁷⁰

The G. I. Bill of Rights provided World War 2 veterans with many benefits that helped them provide restitution to their community. Anticipating the end of World War 2, America's

¹⁷⁰ Wood, *What Have We Done*, 261.

civilian population grew worried and concerned about how to integrate the millions of service members who were affected by the war. To ease the impact of the veteran's return from war, the U. S. Congress passed the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, commonly known as the "G. I. Bill of Rights." This legislation provided the veterans with benefits to help with job training, securing housing loans, and pursuing higher education.¹⁷¹ The G. I. Bill helped to ease the veterans' transition into civilian society. Initially, the G. I. Bill targeted white males; however, achievements in civil rights and the feminist movement ensured that the G. I. Bill benefited all service members and veterans.¹⁷²

The Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 and other legislation that provided for veterans' benefits and pensions are modern reflections of the biblical postwar ritual of distribution of spoils. In ancient times, a significant part of the warriors' payment for their service came from the booty and spoils that they collected after a battle. Warriors gained booty and spoils "by right of the spear."¹⁷³ The modern warrior does not collect booty or spoils from their campaigns. The government pays warriors for their service. Payment of wages, benefits, and pensions is the modern equivalent to distributing spoils to warriors as payment for their service to their community. These benefits allow the community to provide some restitution to the warriors who serve it.

After World War 2, some communities also greeted their returning veterans with public processions and celebrations that helped identify them as citizen-soldiers. World War 2 veterans

¹⁷¹ Suzanne Mettler, "The Creation of the G.I. Bill of Rights of 1944: Melding Social and Participatory Citizenship Ideals," *Journal of Policy History* 17, no. 4 (2005): 345-46, Accessed October 22, 2019, <https://www.muse.jhu.edu/article/189745>.

¹⁷² Suzanne Mettler, *Soldiers to Citizens: The G. I. Bill and the Making of the Greatest Generation* (Oxford: Oxford University, 2005), 163-64.

¹⁷³ Van Creveld, 157.

were reluctant to talk or write about their experiences or motivations.¹⁷⁴ Though individual communities in the United States established World War 2 memorials, the nation did not open a national World War 2 memorial until 2004. The country neglected the postwar ritual of storytelling and memorialization for World War 2 veterans. The culture at the time provided no rituals for purification or cleansing of its citizen-soldiers.

Vietnam veterans received even fewer postwar rituals. They flew back to the United States one or two at a time. Many left the combat theater, and within twenty-four hours, they were “home.” There were no welcome home ceremonies. Many received public abuse. Some eventually received psychological treatment, but society disowned and ignored a large majority of Vietnam veteran. Many churches followed society’s direction. Churches ignored the warrior experiences of Vietnam veterans, or they tried to provide treatment for the veterans’ adjustment problems.¹⁷⁵ Vietnam veterans did receive benefits from the G. I. Bill. A portion of Vietnam veterans sought to serve others within their communities; thus, experiencing some restitution with their communities. Aside from this restitution, Vietnam veterans did not experience any of the postwar rituals available to ancient warriors.

More than 2.6 million Americans have served in the Armed Forces during the Global War on Terror (GWOT).¹⁷⁶ After World War 2, the military released large numbers of servicemen and women from active duty in a relatively short period. Since the GWOT has continued for eighteen or more years, the society has seen a gradual but continuous release of

¹⁷⁴ Stephen E. Ambrose, *Citizen Soldiers: The U.S. Army from the Normandy Beaches to the Bulge to the Surrender of Germany* (New York: Touchstone, 1997), 473.

¹⁷⁵ Bernard J. Verkamp, “Moral Treatment of Returning Warriors in the Early Middle Ages,” *The Journal of Religious Ethics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (Fall, 1988), 223-24, accessed October 24, 2019, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40015094>.

¹⁷⁶ Nancy Sherman, *Afterwar*, 1.

service members back to civilian life. Statistics show that 15%-17% experience post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or some other psychiatric anxiety. Also, about 33% of GWOT veterans abuse alcohol and other drugs.¹⁷⁷ These and other statistics have motivated society to focus on the postwar issues many veterans experience. Many researchers have concentrated on the psychological needs of returning service members. Others have investigated the moral and ethical impacts warriors experienced. Some of these researchers have looked into ancient postwar rituals for ideas to help veterans integrate into civilian life. As society seeks to provide the best care for GWOT veterans, there is dissent within the psychology and clinical literature between those who concentrate on psychological needs and those who emphasize moral impacts.¹⁷⁸ Postwar ritual concepts of purification, storytelling, restitution, and initiation may help modern warriors reintegrate within their community.

While American society is attempting to address postwar issues for veterans of the GWOT, many problems remain unresolved for Vietnam veterans. Most of the current literature also overlooks Cold War veterans and Desert Storm/Shield veterans. It is necessary to address the postwar need for all veterans, even those from past wars. Because the country has not addressed the postwar needs of veterans, many veterans feel isolated, misunderstood, and neglected by their communities.

Integration Rituals

Throughout history, many societies have used postwar rituals to integrate warriors into civilian life. Rituals support innate human spirituality or religiosity. They secure human

¹⁷⁷ U. B. Bowling, and M. D. Sherman, "Welcoming them home: Supporting service members and their families in navigating the tasks of reintegration," *Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*, 39(4), (2008), 451, accessed September 20, 2019, <http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.liberty.edu/10.1037/0735-7028.39.4.451>.

¹⁷⁸ Kelle, 232-33, Kindle.

connectivity to God and facilitate connectivity in human relationships.¹⁷⁹ Spiritual rituals have power and purpose for modern humanity; however, American society lacks many of the postwar rituals which ancient and biblical cultures used. Also, the modern rituals used in the community do not integrate warriors into civilian life sufficiently.

Power and Purpose of Rituals

The power and purpose of spiritual rituals is connectivity. Rituals connect people to God. They help people find balance within themselves, connecting the body, soul, and spirit. They allow people to connect to their community. The stylized words and behaviors of a ritual using culturally appropriate symbols allow people to enhance their relationship with God when they encounter the spiritual meanings that are part of the ritual.¹⁸⁰ Also, rituals enable the physical body to link with the soul and spirit. Ritual behavior provides a structure that adds spiritual meaning and purpose to a person's life experiences and situations.¹⁸¹ Finally, while some rituals are private events, public rituals connect individuals to their communities. Public rituals provide the opportunity for all members of the community to participate or witness the event, which conveys meaning and significance for the community.¹⁸²

Three factors need to be present for a ritual to convey spiritual messages or meanings. First, for a ritual to having the appropriate impact, the participants need a common understanding of the

¹⁷⁹ Thomas C. Waynick et al, "Human Spirituality, Resilience, and the Role of Military Chaplains," In *Operational Stress. Volume 2, Military Life: The Psychology of Serving in Peace and Combat*, ed. Amy B. Adler, Carl Andrew Castro, and Thomas W. Britt (Westport, CT: Praeger Security International, 2006), 179.

¹⁸⁰ Waynick et al, 179.

¹⁸¹ Zara Renander, *Labyrinths: Journeys of Healing, Stories of Grace* (Sarasota, FL: Bardolf and Company, 2011), 69.

¹⁸² Peter A. Levine, *Waking the Tiger: Healing Trauma* (Berkeley, CA: North Atlantic Books, 1997), 57-58.

meaning and intent of the ritual. A person watching a ritual who does not understand the purpose or intent of the ritual may appreciate the actions, but he will not gain the full meaning of the messages of the ritual. Also, the participants need to understand and share the significance of a ritual. Some cultural rituals are artistic and visually expressive, but if one does not share an understanding of the importance of the ritual, the message has no impact. Finally, rituals need a balance between private and public displays. Private rituals can keep a person balanced and help them connect to God and their spiritual consciousness. Public rituals can benefit the individual and the community.¹⁸³

Insufficient Modern Rituals

A commonplace ritual that has become an automatic reaction within modern American society is “Thank you for your service.” As soon as a person identified an active duty service member or veteran, the civilian says, “Thank you for your service.” While most civilians feel thankful for the military service of others, often, the ritual feels hollow and superficial to veterans. Both veterans and civilians suspect “that more needs to be said – just not here and just not now.”¹⁸⁴ Modern American society does not have a venue, a place, or a time for veterans to express their stories and experiences. Many veterans do not trust civilians with their stories and experiences. Many civilians are sensitive and do not want to intrude into veterans’ experiences. Some civilians do not care to understand veterans’ experiences. The “Thank you for your service” ritual has limited depth. It acknowledges the service of veterans, but it is usually

¹⁸³ Saul M. Olyan, “Theorizing Circumstantially Dependent Rites in and out of War Context,” In *Warfare, Ritual, and Symbol in Biblical and Modern Contexts*, ed. Brad E. Kelle, Frank Ritchel Ames, and Jacob L. Wright (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2014), 22-23, Kindle.

¹⁸⁴ Sherman, *Afterwar*, 42.

expressed in a time and place when none of the participants of the ritual are able or willing to move to the next step of relational connectedness.¹⁸⁵

“Thank you for your service” is a gratitude ritual. It can serve to open the door to more interaction between veterans and civilians. It is like an invocation to a religious service or public ceremony, inviting veterans to share their stories and experiences. The gratitude ritual provides a model of how society can show public appreciation for the military service of veterans. Also, showing gratitude helps people feel gratitude. Finally, “Thank you for your service” should open the door to further interactions, which allow veterans and civilians to establish meaningful connectedness.¹⁸⁶ Society needs to find ways to go beyond hollow and rote rituals and to develop a meaningful dialogue between veterans and civilians.

Military specific rituals

The military has many rituals. Some of these rituals fall into the category of postwar rituals. Most soldiers returning from the recent Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts receive processional ceremonies that welcomed them back from their deployment. They experience some isolation from society and receive training sessions to prepare them to reintegrate with their friends and families. Celebratory events help them to tell the story of their unit's deployment.¹⁸⁷ The military conducts these rituals for limited audiences, i.e., military members, military families, and selected guests. The Army conducts these activities during the post-deployment phase of the deployment cycle. The goal in this phase is to orient soldiers back into their home environment.¹⁸⁸ Reintegration training focuses on individual integration within a limited

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., 43.

¹⁸⁶ Sherman, *Afterwar*, 44-45.

¹⁸⁷ Doyle and Peterson, 365-67.

¹⁸⁸ Adler, Zamorski, and Britt, 155.

community. These rituals are important steps in reintegration, but they are insufficient because they have a restricted audience and only address a limited population.

Integration Models

Many warriors seeking to integrate into civilian society struggle to find a path that allows them to honor their military service, interact with civilians, and live a balanced, productive life. There are four models of integration in the modern sources that seem to offer a path through the process.

Judith Herman's Model

Judith Herman developed the initial standard therapy for all types of PTSD recovery. Her model was simple. Most other forms of PTSD recovery use part or all of Herman's stages, especially when in a clinical setting. It was also individualistic, not communal. The goal of Herman's model is to help the traumatized individual to move from victimization to survival.¹⁸⁹

The first stage of Herman's model was to establish safety. The therapist helped the client to develop a safe environment. The client met his basic health needs and maintained regular bodily functions (eating, sleeping, and exercise). A safe environment enabled the client to manage PTSD symptoms and control self-destructive behaviors.¹⁹⁰ A safe environment included caring people, a plan for future protection, and assessments of continued threats and precautions.¹⁹¹

¹⁸⁹ H. Norman Wright, *The Complete Guide to Crisis and Trauma Counseling* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House, 2011), 225-26.

¹⁹⁰ Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery* (N.p.: Basic Books, 1992), 150.

¹⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 164.

The second stage was remembrance and mourning. The therapist assisted the client to reconstruct the story of the trauma. They reviewed the client's life before the event. Then, they rebuilt the traumatic event as a recitation of fact.¹⁹² Next, the therapist helped the client transform the traumatic memory into a full, integrated narrative of the client's life.¹⁹³ In the last step of this stage, the client and therapist mourn the traumatic loss in the client's life. Loss is part of a traumatic experience, and grieving is necessary for recovery.¹⁹⁴

The final stage was reconnection. "Empowerment and reconnection are the core experiences of recovery."¹⁹⁵ After learning to recognize and understand victimization, the client was ready to incorporate the lessons of their traumatic experience. Those lessons include the ability to reconcile with oneself and reconnect with other people. The client was able to find a survivor mission that helped them resolve their trauma.¹⁹⁶

Hoge's LANDNAV Model

Charles Hoge offered an individual focused, cognitive-behavioral based model. Hoge framed his model around the acronym "LANDNAV." In the military, LANDNAV stands for land navigation. It is a skill that includes compass reading, map reading, and maneuvering across rugged terrain. A small mistake in navigation can lead to critical mission failure. Hoge implied that failure to navigate the reintegration process properly would lead warriors in the wrong

¹⁹² Ibid., 176-78.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 181.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 188.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 197.

¹⁹⁶ Herman, 202-11.

direction.¹⁹⁷ Hoge's model has seven topics. The topics build on the previous material, yet a warrior will work through several of them simultaneously.¹⁹⁸

The first LANDNAV learning objective was life survival skills. Life survival skills included understanding warrior reflexes and improving sleep.¹⁹⁹ Hoge recommended five skills to enhance this topic. These skills included journaling reactions, accepting reactions without judgment or anger, exercising, improving sleep, and learning the effects of drugs and alcohol.²⁰⁰

The second LANDNAV learning objective was to attend to and modulate reactions.²⁰¹ This objective has six skills. The warrior needed to pay attention to their physical reactions and anxiety levels and monitor his emotions and feelings and to create space between his initial reactions and any action. His goal was to limit the use of "should" statements, be aware of breathing, and practice meditation.²⁰²

The third LANDNAV objective was to narrate one's story. Telling the events of one's warrior experiences helped connect emotions to the incidents. It assisted the warrior in identifying other people in the veteran's account of the situations. It spread emotional pain and allowed others to help carry the pain. Storytelling helped the warrior to live with their experiences and move forward. It permitted the warrior to express his emotions in words.²⁰³

¹⁹⁷ Hoge, xxi.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 49.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 51.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., 83.

²⁰¹ Ibid., 87.

²⁰² Hoge, 113.

²⁰³ Ibid., 116-17.

The fourth LANDNAV objective was to deal with stressful situations. The skills in this objective helped a warrior to face their fears, cope with unimportant but irritating things people do, and deal with serious situations relating to people.²⁰⁴ Finally, Hoge spent the last part of this objective coping with anger, which is an essential issue for many veterans.²⁰⁵

The fifth LANDNAV objective was navigating through the mental health care system.²⁰⁶ Hoge's detailed description of the health care system was a long chapter in which he talks about stigma, medications, and treatments found within the VA health care system.

The sixth LANDNAV objective was acceptance.²⁰⁷ Hoge gave four skills that help a warrior process and deal with significant losses.

Hoge labels the final LANDNAV objective "The V's." Here, he gave a list of various attitudes and issues that support a warrior's reintegration. The V's are vision, voice, village, *joie de vivre*, and victory.²⁰⁸

Hoge's model has helped many warriors as they reintegrate into society. It is a very individualistic approach with only minimal reference to the contribution of community participation in integration. He does not use any postwar rituals.

Adsit's Combat Trauma Healing Manual

Reverend Chris Adsit developed a manual for the Military Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ. The purpose of the manual was to provide a resource for individuals and small groups

²⁰⁴ Ibid, 134-54.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., 154-66.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 170.

²⁰⁷ Ibid., 213.

²⁰⁸ Hoge, 273.

to help returning warriors with reintegration and internal injury issues from a faith-based perspective.²⁰⁹ The manual is a ten-week program with a workbook. Adsit designed the manual for an individual to complete a chapter and then engage the material in a group setting. A certified and approved leader may guide the group setting.

The Military Ministry of Campus Crusade for Christ has used *The Combat Trauma Healing Manual* effectively at many military installations. The manual's emphasis on Scripture gave it broad appeal to many Christian military members. The model does not include a community integration session, and it does not utilize any biblical postwar rituals.

Tick's Warrior's Return Model

Edward Tick offered a community assisted model based on ancient postwar rituals.²¹⁰ His purpose was to enlighten and initiate warriors to serve as elder warriors within their communities. "The steps of return occur through sacred and communal rituals meant to carry combat survivors through intensive processes that address the moral, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions of their invisible wounds."²¹¹

Tick's first step was isolation and tending. As Moses ordered the returning warriors to remain outside the community camp in Numbers 31, Tick recommended that warriors endure a period of separation from their community. The community does not leave their warriors to themselves; instead, elders and leaders of the community are to minister to them and help with the initial release of combat stress.²¹²

²⁰⁹ Chris Adsit, *The Combat Trauma Healing Manual: Christ-Centered Solutions for Combat Trauma* (Newport News, VA: Military Ministry Press, 2007), 5.

²¹⁰ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 206.

²¹¹ Tick, *Warrior's Return*

²¹² *Ibid.*, 206-07.

The next step was an acceptance of the Warrior Destiny. Warriors needed to accept the fact that their experiences have changed them. Also, acceptance reframed their experiences with a more positive attitude. Elders questioned the warriors to help them make the transition.²¹³

Then, the warriors experienced purification and cleansing. This process helped to remove the toxins accumulated during combat. Since there are no modern rituals for purification and cleansing, Tick used Native American sweat lodge ceremonies with Vietnam veterans. Other methods involved baptism using water, fasting and confessing, or burning symbolic items in a fire.²¹⁴

The fourth step was storytelling and confession. Stories helped connect the warrior's experiences into the larger narrative of the community. They aided in restoring truths that hide in traumatic situations. Stories have a cathartic effect that allowed the warrior to empty his soul of the pain he may have experienced, and they let others in the community help carry the pain expressed.²¹⁵

The fifth step was restitution in a community. War breaks the social contract between communities and individuals and, warriors and communities needed to take steps toward restoration. The individual warrior needs to move beyond forgiveness to help pay for his deeds. This payment was the practice of atonement. Also, the community must take steps of restitution. Community atonement acknowledged the community's responsibility for the war and the injuries that the warrior and community suffered.²¹⁶

²¹³ Ibid., 208.

²¹⁴ Ibid., 210.

²¹⁵ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 212.

²¹⁶ Ibid., 212-13.

The final step was the initiation. The community recognized the warrior as an elder warrior who has served their community. The warrior used their warrior experiences to benefit their community.²¹⁷

Conclusion

Warriors continue to return home from deployments, combat operations, and service in the U.S. Military, yet American society has only used insufficient rituals to integrate them into civilian life. While the literature acknowledges the need for an effective integration model, most of the models available do not adequately address the spiritual needs of returning warriors and their families. The Bible offered at least five postwar rituals. Scholars need to look at ways to adapt those rituals to modern society. The Biblical Warrior Integration model seeks to address this need.

²¹⁷ Ibid., 214.

Chapter 3

Methodology

Congregation members of Oakland Baptist Church have limited knowledge of the military lives and experiences of their veterans. While civilian congregation members would like to hear their veterans' lives and experiences, they do not have a venue to listen to the veterans' stories. Veterans are not sure what they should share with civilians. Some think that civilians do not care. Others believe that their experiences are insignificant and not worth telling others. The author developed the Biblical Warrior Integration model to help connect veterans and civilians within the congregation through fellowship and storytelling.

The Biblical Warrior Integration model does not diagnose, treat, or cure mental, emotional, or psychological issues, including PTSD, moral injury, or soul wounds. Veterans participating in the Biblical Warrior Integration model may experience or express problems and symptoms related to these injuries. The author directed those veterans to licensed mental health professionals as needed. The Institutional Review Board (IRB) approved the author's project on June 4, 2020 (See Appendix H for IRB approval).

The author is a member of Oakland Baptist Church and serves the church as a volunteer minister. He is the minister of discipleship and leads the men's ministry group and has established friendships with many of the congregation members and several of the veterans of the church. The author coordinated with the senior pastor of Oakland Baptist Church to get the project on the church calendar and use the facilities necessary to complete the project. He developed the Biblical Warrior Integration model and all its components and conducted all the

surveys, interviews, and training sessions that are part of the model. The author analyzed all the data collected.

Intervention Design

Oakland Baptist Church is a small church, but since it is in a military town, it has a large population of veterans. Oakland Baptist Church respects and appreciates the service of the veterans who are members of the congregation. Still, some of the civilian members of the congregation cannot identify many of the members who are veterans. Most of the congregation members do not know the stories and experiences of the veterans. While the veteran members of the congregation get together and occasionally share some of their experiences among themselves, they rarely share their stories with civilian members. Also, many of the veterans think that others are not interested in their stories and experiences. This lack of communication leads to a relational disconnect between the civilians and the veterans within the congregation.

Purpose

The Biblical Warrior Integration model sought to bridge the communication gap between the civilian and veteran members of the congregation. The Biblical Warrior Integration model helped veterans express their warrior experiences and stories in an appropriate setting. It gave the civilians an opportunity to hear the veteran's experiences and affirm their service to the country. These two objectives helped to heal the relational disconnect between veterans and civilians. The opportunity to tell their stories helped reduce feelings of isolation in the veterans. Hearing the stories enhanced civilians' understanding of veterans. Both veterans and civilians identified unique aspects of the veterans' warrior experiences that the congregation could use to strengthen their ministries and witness. The Biblical Warrior Integration model enhanced the relational connections within the church.

The Biblical Warrior Integration Model

The initial concept for the Biblical Warrior Integration model was a compact project that could take about ten days to two weeks. All members who wish to participate completed the initial survey. Veterans who want to join would attend a four-hour training program dealing with warrior experiences and integration. At the end of the training program, veterans planned to host a meal with the adult members of Oakland Baptist Church who wished to participate. One veteran would eat the meal with five to seven congregation members who were not family members. During the dinner, the veteran would share vetted stories of their warrior experiences with the congregation members. Afterward, all participants would complete an exit survey.

COVID-19 restrictions forced the author to change the original implementation model of the Biblical Warrior Integration project. It is essential to see the original plan and the COVID-19 changes to understand the full impact of the project. First, the author gives a detailed explanation of the initial concept for the implementation of the Biblical Warrior Integration model, then describes how he implemented the project in the COVID-19 restrictions.

First, the author planned to announce the beginning of the Biblical Warrior Integration project to the congregation members of Oakland Baptist Church two weeks before the beginning date. The author included the announcement in the bulletin two weeks before the beginning of the project. Also, the author planned to ask the senior pastor to announce the program during Sunday church services.

On the first week of the project, the author provided the initial Biblical Warrior Integration survey to all congregation members who volunteered to fill one out (See Appendix A: Initial Congregational Survey). Those members who wished to participate would complete the survey at the end of a Sunday morning service. The survey was anonymous and did not

contain any personal identification information. Also, the author planned an initial mixed veteran and civilian focus group that would ascertain the relational connectivity between veterans and civilians.

Then, the author planned to invite all veterans who wished to participate in the veterans' training session. The author would conduct the training on Saturday for approximately four hours. The church planned to provide breakfast for the veterans and lunch if necessary. At the beginning of the session, veterans would provide proof of service (retiree ID card, a DD214, or a military photo). The author planned to describe the parameters of the project. The veterans would complete consent forms and an initial veteran's survey (See Appendix B: Initial Veterans' Survey).

The first session of the Biblical Warrior Integration model introduced the biblical model for warriors' integration found in Isaiah 2: 2-5. This passage contains phraseology that provides illusions to biblical postwar rituals. Veterans can see how biblical warriors used postwar rituals to help them integrate into civilian life after battle. Also, the first session discussed the postwar ritual of cleansing and purification. Numbers 31: 13; 19-24 describes ancient Israelite purification rituals that warriors used after a battle. After teaching, the author planned to conduct a focus group to help the veterans develop and apply concepts of spiritual cleansing and emotional purification. The first session would take approximately one hour and fifteen minutes.

In the second hour of the model, the author introduced the concept of storytelling as a postwar ritual. Storytelling is an ancient postwar ritual seen in war songs, lament, and memorials. These rituals allowed biblical warriors to tell the story of their experiences in battle. The ultimate victorious warrior is God. Isaiah 2: 2-3 reflects God's war song. For other biblical warriors, their war songs and lament include praise to God for providing protection and victory (Psalm 91). The

Biblical Warrior Integration model encouraged veterans to remember their service in the armed forces and recall times when God provided protection and victory. The author would conduct a focus group with the veterans to discuss God's protection and success in their military service. The second session was to last approximately one hour.

The third session of training focused on restitution within the community. The session looks at Isaiah 2:4 and Numbers 31: 25-47 as biblical examples of how warriors can reestablish relationships within the community of faith. Also, in the focus group, those veterans who wished to do so would share their warrior experiences. This storytelling began to allow the veterans to develop their stories and to vet each other's stories. The third session was to last approximately one hour.

In the fourth and final training session, the author reviewed the biblical postwar rituals found in Isaiah 2: 2-5. In the focus group, the veterans would finish developing their stories and vet them with each other. The veterans would share these stories with the civilians who eat dinner with them at the veteran hosted dinner. The fourth session would take approximately one hour.

Then, the veterans would host a meal with the adult members of Oakland Baptist Church who wished to participate. The senior pastor committed to allowing the dinner in place of the Sunday night service. The church would provide the food. One veteran would eat the meal with five to seven congregation members who are not family members of the veteran. During the dinner, the veteran planned to share vetted stories of their warrior experiences with the congregation members. The meal would take approximately two hours. Finally, all participants would complete an exit survey (See Appendix C: Exit Veterans' Survey and Appendix D: Exit

Civilian Survey). The exit surveys are anonymous and contain no personal identification information.

Within one week, the author planned to conduct a final focus group of selected veterans and civilians who participated in the Biblical Warrior Integration model. The last focus group would assess the impact of the Biblical Warrior Integration model. Participants planned to discuss what they learned from participating and how the project impacted their lives and the congregational life of Oakland Baptist Church.

On or about March 12, the United States began to feel the effects of the coronavirus. After March 15, Oakland Baptist Church suspended all in-person services or meetings due to the COVID-19 restrictions. These restrictions remained in place through the end of May. While Oakland Baptist Church began in-person worship services on Sunday morning, June 7th, all other meetings and gatherings remained suspended. The researcher was unable to conduct the veteran training session or the veteran-hosted dinner. To complete the project within the time parameters of his Doctor of Ministry course, the researcher needed to adjust his model. While most of the congregation could complete the initial congregational survey after the worship service, the author found it necessary to make the survey available online through SurveyMonkey.com. Also, since he could not conduct the veteran training session, the researcher visited those veterans who wished to participate and interviewed them in private. Next, since they could not host a dinner for the congregation, the author recorded veteran testimonies of veterans who granted him consent. He would post these video recordings on the Oakland Baptist Church Facebook page. COVID-19 restrictions forced the author to focus on the biblical postwar ritual of storytelling. He was not able to discuss modern applications of the other four biblical postwar rituals that are part of the Biblical Warrior Integration model.

Model Specifications

The author conducted the Biblical Warrior Integration model at Oakland Baptist Church. The author asked the congregation members of Oakland Baptist Church to participate. The author did not exclude visitors from participating in the initial survey or the exit survey. The author announced the beginning of the project one week before it was to begin. Also, he posted an announcement on the church's Facebook page (see Appendix F).

Oakland Baptist Church has an average attendance of 80 – 100 people in its Sunday morning service. The author anticipated that most of the members who are attending on the first Sunday of the project would participate in the initial survey. The initial survey gathered quantitative data on the connectedness and understanding between civilians and veterans within the congregation. Since the surveys were anonymous, the participants did not require a consent form.

The author interviewed veterans who wanted to participate. The author anticipated interviewing fifteen to twenty veterans. Some of the veterans did not want to provide a video recorded veteran testimony. The author expected ten to fifteen veterans to complete the interviews and veteran testimonies. The author provided each veteran interviewed with an approved consent form (see Appendix G: Approved Consent Form). Also, veterans and civilians who participated in a focus group completed and signed an approved consent form. The author stored the completed and signed consent form in a file cabinet in his office at home.

The author developed all the resources for the Biblical Warrior Integration model. These resources included the initial congregational survey, the initial veterans' survey, the lesson plan for the training sessions, exit survey for the civilian participants, and the exit survey for the veterans.

One of the ethical issues involved with working with veterans is processing PTSD and other negative experiences. Some veterans need to express these experiences to help them heal their trauma. It is necessary to provide a safe and secure venue in which veterans can express all their experiences. The Biblical Warrior Integration project provided a safe and secure venue for veterans to express their stories during the interview process. The author interviewed the veterans in a safe and isolated environment. The veterans were confident that only the veteran and the author were present. Some of the veterans with decreased memory issues asked their spouses to participate in the interview. These spouses completed and signed a consent form. The author did not probe the veterans to express memories or stories that they were uncomfortable sharing. Only one of the veterans interviewed has a PTSD diagnosis and received medical care for PTSD. The veteran wanted to share his experiences with the author, but he did not want to make a veteran testimony. The author encouraged this veteran to talk about experiences that would not exasperate his PTSD.

Data Collection

The author collected data through surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Surveys were a written record of the participants' perspectives, and the author recorded interviews and focus groups where applicable. The author produced verbatims as necessary. He kept a journal throughout the process to record ideas, impressions, and corrections as needed.

First, the author used longitudinal, quantitative surveys to measure the congregation's identification and understanding of its veteran population. The initial survey and the exit survey were similar. The author sought to gain the same information with both surveys. The exit survey showed that the congregation members can identify its veterans and that they understand some of the veterans' experiences.

Next, the author used a convenient sampling of qualitative information from the participating veterans to measure the veterans' expression of their warrior experiences. During the project, the author interviewed selected veterans. He recorded these interviews.

Also, the veteran interviews helped the veterans develop the narratives of their warrior experiences into stories to share in an appropriate venue. These stories represent essential experiences, significant events, and critical incidents in the veterans' military experiences that shaped who they are. Those veterans who shared their stories with congregational members via the veteran testimonials posted on the church's Facebook page helped the congregational members understand and connect with the veterans.

Finally, the author used a purposeful sampling of qualitative information from civilian and veteran participants to measure the connectedness between the civilians and the veterans. The author conducted an initial focus group with civilians. This data collection focused on connectedness issues like identifying veterans within the congregation and the civilian's knowledge of the veterans' warrior experiences.

At the end of the project, the author conducted a focus group of mixed veterans and civilians. He asked questions like, "How did the participating veterans view their time in service differently since participating in The Biblical Warrior Integration model?" "What did the congregational members learn from the veterans' stories?" "Do they understand each other better because of the experience?" A deeper understanding of the veterans' experiences showed an increase of the relational connection within the congregation.

The author secured all written and recorded data received in his personal file. He used a locked file cabinet at his private residence to ensure the privacy of the participants. The author

used the data collected only for this project. He did not share the data collected with anyone not authorized to handle the data.

Implementation of the Intervention Design

Implementation of the Biblical Warrior Integration Model

The Liberty University Institutional Review Board gave the author conditional approval to begin his project on May 5, 2020. COVID-19 restrictions continued to limit activities within Oakland Baptist Church, and the author adjusted his intervention design to meet COVID-19 restrictions. COVID-19 rules prohibited large in-person meetings. The author was not able to conduct a training session for all the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church. Also, he could not allow the veterans to host a dinner. The adjustments necessary to pursue the project included one-on-one interviews with the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church. The author maintained social distancing or wore a mask as necessary during these interviews. Since the veterans could not host a dinner for the civilians of the church, the author decided to post veteran testimonials on the church's Facebook page. The veteran testimonials allowed the veterans to tell their stories within COVID-19 restrictions. Finally, the author used the Zoom application to host two focus group sessions with civilians and veterans instead of face-to-face meetings.

The COVID-19 restrictions limited the Biblical Warrior Integration Project to four tasks. The first task was to conduct the necessary surveys to collect longitudinal data on the congregation's information about the veterans of the church. Next, the author interviewed the veterans of the church to determine their connectivity within the church and to glean an understanding of their warrior experiences. Third, those veterans, who agreed, told their stories as a veteran testimony. The author posted these testimonies on the church's Facebook page. With the veteran's approval, the author narrated some of the veteran testimonies either anonymously

or with the veterans' permission to use their name. This task gave the veterans a safe venue in which to tell their stories to the members of the church. The final study collected data from a mixed focus group of veterans and civilians of Oakland Baptist Church to gain qualitative data on the congregation's information about its veterans.

Pastor Mike Winfree, the senior pastor of Oakland Baptist Church, gave the author formal permission to use Oakland Baptist Church, its facilities, and congregation members on May 12, 2020. On May 14, 2020, the author submitted Pastor Winfree's permission letter to the Institutional Review Board. Also, he updated the procedures and tasks of his project to reflect the COVID-19 restrictions at that time. The Liberty University Institutional Review Board gave the author final approval to begin his project on June 4, 2020 (see Appendix H).

On March 15, 2020, Oakland Baptist Church conducted its last in-person service due to COVID-19 restrictions. June 7, 2020, the church re-initiated in-person services with social distancing requirements. With the church's permission and the Institutional Review Board's approval, the author began his project on June 7th. The author posted an announcement on the church's Facebook page.

The first task of the Biblical Warrior Integration project was to conduct two surveys. The project began with the Initial Congregational Survey (see Appendix A). All adults in attendance on June 7th received a survey and had the opportunity to complete the survey. This survey was anonymous, and no consent forms were required. The author also distributed the Initial Congregational Survey on June 14th to congregants who were not in attendance on June 7th. The author received a total of thirty-nine hard copies of the initial survey.

On June 8th, the author posted the Initial Congregational Survey on the church's Facebook page using Survey Monkey website as a platform for the survey. The author received

four responses via Survey Monkey. The project produced forty-three Initial Congregational Surveys.

At the end of the project, the author distributed the Congregational Exit Surveys (see Appendix E) on July 12, 2020. He collected fourteen. On July 13, 2020, the author posted the Congregational Exit Survey on the church's Facebook page using Survey Monkey website as a platform for the survey. The author received one response via Survey Monkey. Congregational members gave the author additional hard-copy surveys over the next couple of weeks. The project produced twenty-one Congregational Exit Surveys.

Next, the author interviewed the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church. Fifteen veterans agreed to talk with the author. The author identified thirty members of Oakland Baptist Church who are veterans. The author contacted as many of these veterans as possible via phone, internet, or in-person contacts. Six veterans were not available for interviews. Five veterans were too sick to participate. Two were out of town or inactive members of the church. One veteran died during the project. The final identified veteran was the author. The author conducted all the interviews in-person with the veteran, and the veterans signed a consent form before the meeting. Occasionally, the veteran's spouse attended the interview. The spouse also signed a consent form. The spouse attended to assist the veteran in dealing with memory loss and dementia issues. The author took detailed notes throughout all the interviews. He also recorded the interview with an application on his cell phone; however, the app disappeared from his phone's memory, and the author lost all the interview recordings. The author obtained a transcript for two of the interviews before the app disappeared. He was able to gather sufficient data from the interview notes. Also, the author re-interviewed two of the veterans on video. Thirteen of the interviews

took place between June 9th and June 24th. The last two interviews took place on July 1st and July 14th.

The purpose of the interviews was to assess the veterans' connectivity to the Oakland Baptist Church congregation and to determine aspects of their experiences that they could develop into a story. The author asked about the branch of the military in which the veteran served and the length of their service. Then, the veterans told the author about the reasons the veteran joined the military. Next, the author discussed the impact serving in the military had on the veterans. Also, the author discussed various post-service or post-deployment rituals that help veterans process their transition into civilian life. Finally, the veterans explored their relationship with Oakland Baptist Church. Did the veteran feel recognized as a veteran in the congregation, and did others in the congregation know the veteran's stories and experiences?

Then, the veterans of the church told their stories using veteran testimonies posted on the church's Facebook page. The veteran interviews produced thirteen veteran testimonies. The researcher recorded these testimonies with the veterans' approval and posted them on the church's Facebook page. For the first testimony, the author did an introduction to prepare the congregation for the veterans' testimonies. Eight of the veterans spoke their testimony on video. The researcher narrated three of the veterans' statements and gave his veteran testimony. As of July 26, 2020, the veteran testimonies averaged 349 encounters on Facebook.

Finally, the author hosted two focus groups. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the author used the Zoom application for both focus group meetings. The author conducted the first focus group on June 13th. This focus group included nine participants. Seven were civilians. One was a veteran, and one was the researcher. During this focus group, the researcher probed ideas that reflected the questions on the Initial Congregational Survey (see Appendix A). First, the author

asked the participants to name as many of the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church as possible. Also, the author sought to see if the participants knew the branch in which the veterans served. Next, the author inquired about how many stories they had heard from the veterans. Also, the author determined what the congregation members would like to know about the veterans in the church. Then, the researcher asked if the participants could identify how the veterans' service impacted their lives. Finally, the author determined if the civilian members of Oakland Baptist Church identified how military service shaped the veteran members of the church.

On July 6th, the author set up the final focus group of mixed veterans and civilians. Eleven of the participants were civilians, four were veterans, and one was the researcher. First, the author determined how many of the thirteen veteran testimonies the participants had watched. Next, they discussed how many veterans they could identify and how many veterans were members of Oakland Baptist Church. Also, the group talked about the insights that they gained from watching the veteran testimonies. The author asked the participants to describe the thoughts and feelings they experienced from the testimonies. Then, the author requested that the veterans share their thoughts about the project. Finally, the author ascertained if the participants felt more connected because they participated in the Biblical Warrior Integration Project.

Data Triangulation

The author achieved data triangulation using surveys, interviews, and focus groups. Also, he collected Facebook statistics from the veteran testimonies posted on the church's Facebook page. A comparison of the data collected from these sources gave the author comprehensive information on the relational connectivity within the congregation.

First, the author used the initial congregational survey and the congregational exit survey to collect longitudinal, quantitative data. This data reflected the congregation's ability to identify

veterans and understand the veterans' experiences. The data collected showed an overall increase in the congregation's ability to identify the veterans within the congregation.

Next, the author used veteran interviews to collect convenient samples of qualitative data. This data reflected the essential warrior experiences of the veterans. Also, it identified information and stories that the veterans have withheld from the civilian population. These stories represented key experiences, significant events, and critical incidents in the veterans' military experiences that shaped who they are. The data helped the veterans determine which stories they feel they could share with civilians and which accounts they only share with fellow veterans.

Then, the author collected statistical data from the veteran testimonies. This data showed the number of times people watched or interacted with each veteran testimony posted on the church's Facebook page. The veteran testimonies allowed the participants to hear the veterans' stories and experiences.

Finally, the author used focus groups to collect purposeful samples of qualitative information from civilian and veteran participants. Initial focus groups focused on connectedness issues identifying veterans within the congregation and the civilian's knowledge of the veterans' warrior experiences. The final focus group of mixed civilian and veterans collected data on the impact of the project on the participants. Comparing the data from the initial focus group with the information gleaned from the final focus group provided the author with qualitative samples of veteran and civilian responses to the project.

The Sequence of Data Collection

The author began the project with the initial congregational survey and a selected focus group. First, the project started with the initial congregational survey. This survey collected

quantitative data reflecting the congregation's overall connectedness between veterans and civilians. Then, the author conducted a focus group of selected civilians and veterans to collect a purposeful sample of quantitative data focusing on connectedness issues.

As the project continued, the author interviewed veterans who were willing to participate. These interviews analyzed the veterans' experiences and helped them develop their stories to share with others. Also, some of the veterans interviewed told their stories through veteran testimonies. These testimonies allowed them to express their experiences to the civilians of Oakland Baptist Church. COVID-19 necessitated the use of the veteran testimonies since the church was unable to have a dinner to allow the veterans to tell their stories. To determine the impact of the veteran testimonies, the author collected Facebook statistical data on each testimony that he posted. He recorded this data within twenty-four hours of the initial posting and after one week of the initial posting. Finally, he recorded the information for all the veteran testimonies on July 26th, two weeks after the end of the project.

As the project concluded, the author conducted the congregational exit survey and a mixed focus group session. The initial project anticipated that the veteran hosted dinner was the capstone event of the project. Since COVID-19 restrictions forced the cancellation of the dinner, the veteran testimonies were the critical means of communicating the veterans' experiences to the congregation. Also, this change in the project required the author to distribute the congregational exit surveys during a Sunday morning worship service and online via Survey Monkey. The surveys collected the same or similar data as the initial survey conducted at the beginning of the project. The Monday before distributing the congregational exit survey, the author did the final focus group session of civilians and veterans to collect data on the impact of the project.

Data Analysis

To analyze the data, the author first compared the initial survey with the exit survey. The author used a T-test to report the analysis and determined that there is a significant difference in the data. This analysis showed a quantitative increase in the congregation's ability to identify its veterans and to understand their experiences. Also, the researcher reviewed the Facebook statistics collected from the veteran testimonies. This data showed an increase of encounters over six weeks, but most of the encounters occurred within the first week. Next, the author categorized the critical experiences that the veterans expressed during their interviews. With only a small number of participants, the author was able to categorize the veterans' experiences on an excel spreadsheet. He sought to identify key themes in the veterans' experiences and identify which experiences the veterans withheld from civilian congregational members. Finally, the author used an excel spreadsheet to compare the initial focus group data with the final focus group session. This comparison provided quantitative data on the increase of relational connectedness between civilians and veterans within the congregation.

Chapter 4

Results

COVID-19 restrictions limited the Biblical Warrior Integration project. The project could only focus on the biblical postwar ritual of storytelling. The veterans who participated told their stories to the interviewer. Some of the veterans told their stories through the veteran testimonies. Overall, the participating veterans had some closure and connection through storytelling. The veterans were able to express themselves to the congregation. Also, the congregation was able to experience the stories of the veterans who produced the veteran testimonies. The civilians felt connected to the veterans and were able to identify more of the veterans of the church. The author reviewed the results of his analysis of the data gathered in the surveys, interviews, and focus groups conducted during the Biblical Warrior Integration model. The data collected during the Biblical Warrior Integration model impacted three groups of stakeholders. The first group was the veterans who participated in the program. The second group was the civilians who participated in the program. The third group was the full congregation of Oakland Baptist Church.

Results of Data Analysis

The author collected data throughout the Biblical Warrior Integration model using surveys, interviews, and focus groups to collect the data. He used pseudonyms to represent specific participants within the project.

Survey Comparisons

First, the researcher used the initial congregational survey and the congregational exit survey to collect longitudinal, quantitative data. This data reflected the congregation's ability to

identify veterans and understand the veterans' experiences. The data collected showed an eighteen percent increase in the congregation's ability to identify the veterans within the congregation.

The researcher compared the initial congregational surveys to the congregational exit survey. First, the author used a T-test to compare the surveys. The T-test asked if there was a difference between the number of veterans identified in the initial survey and the number of veterans identified in the exit survey. Comparing the initial survey to the exit survey made the T-test a paired test. The alpha level for the test was .05. The p-value from the test was .0261. Since the p-value of .0261 was smaller than the alpha level of .05, the test showed a significant difference in how the congregation identified the veterans between the initial survey and the exit survey. The T-test showed a better than ninety-three percent chance that the congregation members can identify more of their veterans after participating in the Biblical Warrior Integration project.

The main question in the initial survey asked the congregants to list up to ten persons affiliated with Oakland Baptist Church, who was a veteran. The researcher compiled the numbers given on a scale from zero to eleven plus. Seven percent of the participants listed zero veterans. Nine percent named eleven or more. As the researcher reviewed the full scale from zero to eleven plus, he saw that twenty-three percent of the congregation identified five or fewer veterans within the congregation. Seventy-seven percent identified six or more veterans. When comparing the names of congregation members identified as veterans, the author found another interesting result, sixteen percent of the congregation misidentified at least one person, listing at least one person as a veteran even though they did not serve in the military.

One of the main questions in the exit survey also asked the congregation to list up to ten persons affiliated with Oakland Baptist Church, who was a veteran. Again, the researcher compiled the numbers on a scale of zero to eleven plus. In the exit survey, only five percent listed zero veterans. Nineteen percent identified eleven or more veterans. Reviewing the full scale, the researcher found that five percent of the congregation identified five or fewer veterans, while ninety-five percent listed six or more. The researcher found an eighteen percent increase in the congregation's ability to identify their veterans. Also, only ten percent of the exit surveys contained misidentified persons. The six percent decrease in misidentified persons represents a clearer understanding of the veteran population within Oakland Baptist Church.

The chart below compares the responses from the initial congregational survey to the congregational exit survey (Table 1.1). The blue columns represent the data from the initial survey. They show that a significant number of congregants identified zero to five veterans in the initial survey. The orange columns represent the exit survey. They reveal a shift as the majority of respondents to the exit survey identified six or more veterans. The Biblical Warrior Integration project enabled more of the congregants to identify more veterans.

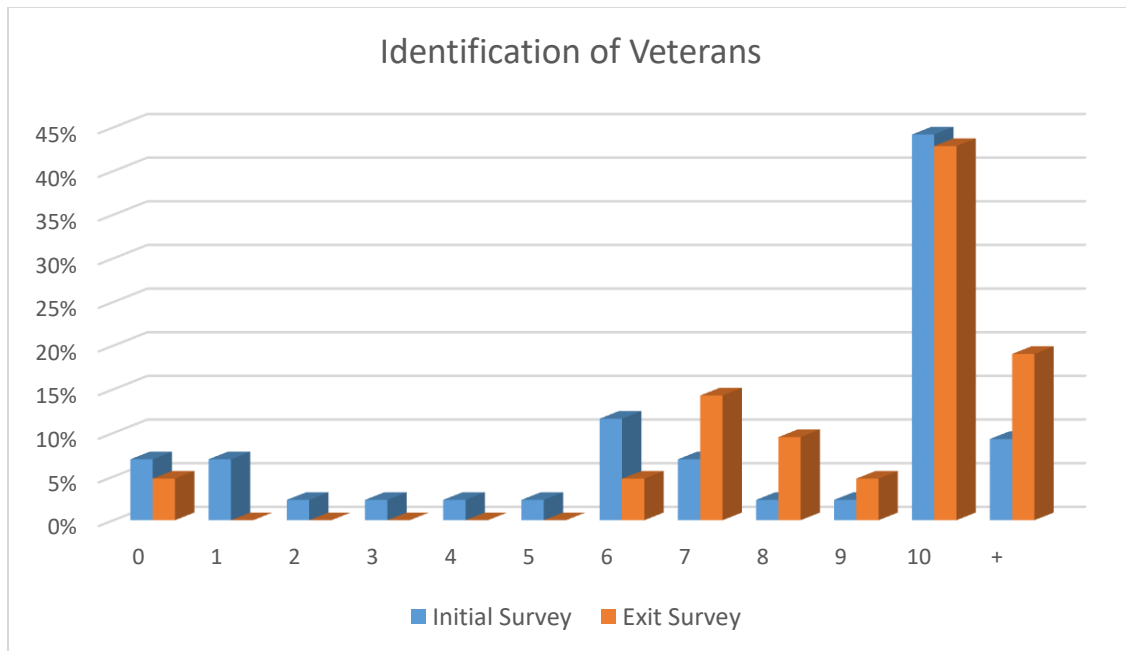


Table 1.1

Most veterans closely identify with the military branch in which they served. Their military branch is usually one of the first pieces of information that veterans share with other people; therefore, identifying a veterans' military branch is an initial indicator of a person's understanding of a veteran. The initial survey asked the congregation members to connect the military branch with the veteran that they identified in the survey. Twenty-eight percent could not connect the veterans they listed with the branch in which they served. The exit survey did not show a significant decrease in the percentage who did not connect the veterans to their branch of service. Twenty-four percent of the exit survey participants could not identify the veterans' branch. Further review of this twenty-four percent of participants showed that none of them had watched any of the veteran testimonies. Since the veteran testimonies were the main way for the civilians to connect to the veterans, these participants were not able to increase their understanding of the veterans.

Another question from the initial survey asked the congregants to indicate how many stories or experiences they had heard from the veterans. Thirty-five percent of all the participants did not respond to this question. The author assumed that those who did not respond to this question knew zero stories from the veterans of the church. Thirty-five percent acknowledged that they had heard two or more stories from the veterans. Of the thirty-five percent, one-third of them had listened to the stories and experiences from only one veteran. Only one of them had heard the stories and experiences of five veterans. None of the thirty-five percent knew the experiences of more than five out of the thirty veterans within the congregation. Sixty-five percent said that they had heard veterans' stories or experiences from one or less of the veterans. Since this figure included the thirty-five percent of the participants who did not respond to this question, the researcher determined that the vast majority of the congregation had not heard the stories of the veterans within the congregation.

While the exit survey did not ask asked the congregants to indicate how many stories or experiences they had heard from the veterans, the researcher determined how many of the veteran testimonies posted on Facebook the participants watched. Fourteen percent of the participants did not have Facebook; therefore, they did not watch any of the veteran testimonies. Twenty-four percent choose not to watch any of the veteran testimonies. Sixty-two percent watch four to thirteen. The congregants who watched the veteran testimonies represent a twenty-seven percent increase in the number of people who heard the stories and experiences of the veterans within Oakland Baptist Church.

Comparing the initial survey to the exit survey showed an increased ability of the church members to identify and understand the veterans within the congregation. The T-test showed with ninety-three percent certainty that the congregation could identify its veterans. The

comparison of the number of veterans listed in the initial and exit surveys showed an eighteen percent increase in the congregation's ability to identify their veterans and a six percent decrease in the number of misidentified veterans. The exit survey showed a twenty-seven percent increase in the number of people who heard the stories and experiences of the veterans. Identifying veterans and hearing their stories are key factors necessary to enhance the relational connectivity between veterans and civilians.

Veteran Testimonies

After comparing the initial and exit surveys, the author reviewed the Facebook statistics collected from the veteran testimonies. This data showed an increase of encounters over six weeks, but most of the encounters occurred within the first week. The author posted thirteen veteran testimonies to the Oakland Baptist Church Facebook page from June 15th through July 2nd. The Oakland Baptist Church Facebook page is a public, non-profit religious organization with approximately 475 followers. The researcher recorded the Facebook statistics for each veteran testimony within the first twenty-four hours, after one week, and on July 26, after the completion of the Biblical Warrior Integration Project. The majority of Facebook encounters occurred within the first twenty-four hours. The most significant number of encounters within the first twenty-four hours was 883. The lowest was 122.

The average number of encounters for all veteran testimonies within the first twenty-four hours was 259. The veteran testimonies averaged a twenty-seven percent increase after a week of posting. The testimonies averaged 329 encounters after one week. On July 26, they averaged 349 encounters, only a six percent increase. Three hundred forty-nine encounters represent seventy-three percent of the approximately 475 followers of the Oakland Baptist Church Facebook page. While the 349 encounters include an indeterminable number of duplicate hits, the researcher

determined that the majority of the Facebook followers viewed most of the thirteen veteran testimonies. Seventy-three percent of the Facebook followers who viewed multiple veteran testimonies correspond with the sixty-two percent of respondents on the exit survey who watched four to thirteen of the veteran testimonies.

The majority of people affiliated with Oakland Baptist Church watched a significant number of the veteran testimonies. The veteran testimonies helped the veterans tell their stories to the congregation, and they helped the civilians hear and understand the veterans. These encounters enhanced the relational connectivity among the congregation.

Veteran Interviews

Next, the author categorized the critical experiences that the veterans expressed during their interviews. The author sought to identify key themes in the veterans' experiences and identify which experiences the veterans withheld from civilian congregational members. The interviews also allowed the veterans to tell their stories and experiences to an open and neutral listener.

The fifteen veterans that the author interviewed are a representative sample of the thirty veterans affiliated with Oakland Baptist Church. All were male. The congregation only has one female veteran, and she was unavailable to do an interview. The veterans interviewed served from 1949 through 2004. Twelve of the veterans interviewed served in the Air Force, two in the Navy, and one in the Army. All served as enlisted service members. Nine of the fifteen retired after eighteen plus years of service. Five served one enlistment of four years. One served four years on active duty and four years in the reserves.

Eleven veterans were on active duty between 1964 through 1973, representing the highest number of Oakland Baptist Church veterans serving at any given time. Of the eleven serving

between 1964 and 1973, four deployed to Vietnam and three deployed to either Thailand or Japan in support of the war effort. One had an overseas assignment to Spain and Greece with the Navy, and another had an overseas assignment in Japan and then in Hawaii with the Air Force. Two did not serve overseas from 1964-1973. Of the remaining four veterans interviewed, one deployed to Korea during the Korean War, one deployed to Kuwait during the GWOT, and two did not serve overseas. Nine of the fifteen veterans interviewed deployed into hostile areas or combat situations. The usual length of deployment in a hostile environment for U.S. military personnel was twelve months. Whether deployed to Korea, Vietnam, Thailand, the Middle East, or other areas, the veterans each spent about a year separated from their families and under the stress of deployment. A typical overseas assignment is two to three years. In most cases, the service member can take family members with them on overseas assignments. Oakland Baptist Church is part of an Air Force community. Most of its veterans served in the Air Force. The most significant number served during the Vietnam era; however, their military careers often extended beyond that period. Deployments and overseas assignments greatly impacted the veterans. Paul said the native people “taught me that ... their character was honorable, and we as a society can do better.” After a combat deployment, Luke said, “After I got home, I remember feeling very thankful to God for protecting me during combat. That feeling made me seek God more intently.”

The veterans joined the military for a variety of reasons. Also, most of them identified several reasons for enlisting. Many of them said, “I enlisted in the Air Force to avoid being drafted into the Army.” For them, “being drafted into the Army” meant a deployment into a combat zone. Though many of the Airmen did serve in Vietnam, they felt their assignment to airfields and supply posts were not as dangerous as a combat assignment with the Army.

Thirteen of the fifteen gave economic reasons for joining the military. George said, “I grew up on the streets of” a large city, “just a wild kid. No jobs were available.” Gavin stated, “It was either the military or farming. I choose the military.” Working in a dead-end job, Matthew asked his employer for a raise. The employer said, “You’re not worth the money you are making now.” So, Matthew joined the military. Though all the veterans were very patriotic, only two listed patriotism as a reason for enlisting. Three enlisted to improve themselves and get the benefits that the military offers.

Serving in the military impacted the lives of all the veterans. While they used many different terms to describe the impact, the author found five similar concepts in all the veterans’ lives. First, the veterans told how the military strengthened them to pursue life. Some used the term “discipline.” “The military gave me a sense of discipline,” a number of the veterans said. Others talked about how the military helped them grow up and mature into productive adulthood. These concepts reflected the strength that the military seeks to instill in its service members. Next, the veterans expressed how the military taught them responsibility. George said, “It (the military) taught you how to work. . . . Not be lazy, you know. If you had a job, you went and did it.” The veterans used other terms like “teamwork,” “leadership,” and “mission first” to express their sense of responsibility. Also, the veteran developed a sense of appreciation. They learned to appreciate their country, their families, and their way of life. They experienced and learned to appreciate other cultures. Seeing impoverished children in Vietnam and Thailand helped Stephen to recognize poverty in the United States. He now works for a local poverty ministry. Then, military service increased the veterans’ patriotism. The sacrifice they made gave the veterans a deep and abiding love for their country. Finally, the military taught them to trust God. Not all the veterans interviewed sought to live a Christian life when they served. Some were not believers,

but as they looked back over their service, they could see the hand of God working in their lives. For most, the military neither hindered them in their Christian walk nor helped them spiritually. As young men and in the early days of their tour, many did not look for God's work in their lives, but as they matured, their time in the military helped them to be sensitive to God's work in their lives. Eric, who accepted Christ during his time in service, saw his children accept Christ. Seeing his children's spiritual growth motivated him to minister to children within the church. Cody said that his military experiences inspired him to be "the spiritual leader of his family," taking them to church and teaching tithing.

The veterans were not familiar with the concept of biblical postwar rituals: purification, celebration, storytelling, memorialization, and restitution. The COVID-19 restrictions prevented the author from providing group training to enlighten them on the postwar rituals. During the interviews, the author explained the biblical postwar rituals to the veterans and asked them if they experienced any of them. For the ritual of purification, eleven veterans did not identify any events that purified them from their warrior experiences. Two said they did some purification. Two had experienced purifying events, but they did not recognize them as such. Gavin had a spiritual encounter after retirement and accepted Christ as his Savior. This experience provided him some purification. Matthew was angry with how military leaders treated him in his last two years in the military. After his retirement ceremony, he held a private ceremony in which he burned his uniform. This cathartic experience gave him some peace against perceived injustice.

The author asked the veterans if they did anything to celebrate either a redeployment from overseas or the end of their time in service. Seven had private celebrations with friends and families, but eight had no private celebration. Fourteen of the fifteen said they had no public celebration to commemorate a deployment or their time in service. The one who experienced

public celebrations after deployments served in the Navy. After a cruise on a naval vessel, the Navy hosted public celebrations to welcome the sailors back and to reunite them with their families. Celebrations would provide the church an opportunity to identify the veterans within the congregation. Six of the veterans felt that seventy-five to ninety percent of the congregation would recognize them as veterans. Five felt that only five or ten percent would recognize them as veterans.

Memorialization represents items, pictures, mementos, and other things that remind a veteran of their time in service. Nine out of fifteen have kept some memorials of their time in service. These memorials help them remember the warrior experiences. For some of the veterans, their warrior experiences cause pain. Others did not think that their warrior experiences had value in their civilian lives. These veterans were less likely to keep memorial items.

Storytelling is a valuable asset to help people process their life experiences and to connect with other people. The American military seems to have an unspoken tradition of keeping their warrior experiences from the civilian population. Twelve of the veterans interviewed said they shared no stories and did not talk about their warrior experiences to others. The remaining three interviewees shared their stories with limited friends and family. When asked if the members of Oakland Baptist Church knew their warrior experiences and stories, the veterans acknowledged that only a limited number of people within the church had heard their stories. One veteran felt that twenty-five percent of the congregation knew his story. Most felt the number was between one and ten percent. Stephen said, “we have no opportunity to really do that. The church thinks that we’re all secular backgrounds and being in the military is no different than the secular, but it is.”

The final Biblical postwar ritual is restitution. Though none of the veterans used the word restitution, twelve out of fifteen described ways in which they tried to help other people and improve things around them. Three of the veterans formed a handyman team that went to the homes of the shut-in, handicapped, and elderly in the church to repair and maintain their residences. “The three of us, we were all retired and had free time, and there were quite a few of the civilians that needed handicapped ramps and porches and stuff built. We built them for them. If they couldn't afford to pay, we paid for it.” Several of the veterans used the skills they learned in the military in specific ministries within the church: media ministry, children’s ministry, and assistance ministries.

Focus Group Insights

Finally, the author compared the initial focus group data with the final focus group session. This comparison provided quantitative data on the increase of relational connectedness between civilians and veterans within the congregation. It also provided qualitative data on the impact of the project on the veterans, civilians, and the church.

The researcher conducted the initial mixed focus group on June 13th via Zoom. Eight congregational members and the researcher attended. The researcher and one of the participants were veterans. The researcher only asked questions and directed the conversation. He asked the participants to identify up to ten members of Oakland Baptist Church who were veterans. The average of the responses given was seven. This average was significantly higher than the average from the forty-three initial congregational surveys. One hundred percent of the focus group identified between six to nine veterans; however, none identified ten or more veterans. In the initial survey, only twenty-three percent identified between six and nine veterans, but fifty-three percent recognized ten or more. The participants in the focus group were more attuned to the

veterans of the congregation. Also, they had heard an average of three stories from the veterans of the congregation. Sixty-three percent of the focus group had experienced two or more stories from the veterans. Only thirty-five percent of the initial congregational survey respondents had heard two or more stories from the veterans. The researcher asked the focus group what information they would like to know about the veterans. They wanted to hear the veterans' stories, their jobs, and the places and cultures they visited. They felt this information would help them relate to the veterans better. The researcher asked how military service impacted the veterans. They thought that the veterans developed greater appreciation and respect. They also wanted to know how the veterans' service affected their testimony. They acknowledged that most of the Oakland Baptist Church veterans were from the Vietnam era and that they had received no parades of public celebration for their service. When the researcher asked how military service shaped the veterans, the group did not have an answer. They hoped that the veterans had learned to trust God, but they did not know how the veterans changed. The majority of the initial survey respondents acknowledged that military service shaped the veterans but did not see how the veterans changed. While the focus group participants were more attuned to the veterans of the congregation, their relational connectivity to the veterans was not more profound than the average respondent of the initial survey.

On July 6th, the author conducted the final mixed focus group via Zoom. Fifteen congregational members and the researcher attended. Four of the participants and the researcher were veterans. The researcher only asked questions and directed the conversation. First, the researcher asked the participants to identify veterans within the congregation. The participants identified between five and twenty, with an average of eleven. One hundred percent of the focus group recognized five or more veterans. In the congregational exit survey, ninety-five percent of

the respondents identified five or more veterans. Forty percent of the focus group identified eleven or more veterans as opposed to only nineteen percent of the exit surveys. While the participants of the final focus group were more attuned to the congregational veterans, they also displayed an increase in their ability to recognize the veterans when compared to the initial focus group. The researcher asked how many of the veteran testimonies the participants had watched on Facebook. Seven percent did not have Facebook. Another seven percent had watched none of the veteran testimonies even though they had Facebook. Eighty-seven percent watched at least two or more of them, while fifty-three percent watched ten or more. There was a twenty-four percent increase over the number of stories the final focus group heard because of the project over the number of stories the initial focus group knew about the veterans.

The researcher asked the focus group what the veteran testimonies and the Biblical Warrior Integration project taught them about the veterans. One participant, Sally, indicated that for several of the veterans her response was, “Oh, that’s why they do that role in the church.” She saw the connection between the veterans’ military experiences and their service in the church. John said that he saw “God was in control of what they were going to do even when they said they weren’t going to do it.” God’s providence worked in the lives of the veterans, even when the veterans did not see it. “It was interesting to hear about close calls,” Barry, a civilian, said, “and how God carried them through.” These responses reflected the stories and experiences that the initial focus group wanted to hear from the veterans.

Next, the researcher asked the participants to express their thoughts and feelings they experienced as they heard the veterans’ stories. Since the congregation knows most of its veterans as mature men, Grace said, “It was hard to remember these men were young once.” “We’re lucky to have some of them with us,” Barry said. “We should never forget the sacrifice

of the few. In today's society, many are forgetting." The focus group showed an increased level of respect and appreciation. "We all need to spend more time investing in these guys."

Then the author asked the veterans how the Biblical Warrior Integration project impacted them. Brad said, "It was interesting because that (my service) was far into my past – my unsaved past. Yet I still see God's work" in life. Also, Brad said, "It helped me know I'm not the only one who had some negative feelings about the service." Eric said, "my career was easy, but God guided me through. It was good for me to look back" on it and see God's work. Stephen said, "people who didn't deploy don't understand," but the project allowed the veterans to tell the civilians about their experience.

Finally, the researcher asked about the overall impact of the Biblical Warrior Integration project on Oakland Baptist Church. All agreed that the project had a positive effect. One veteran said that it helped him open up more, and Grace indicated that it increased her respect for the veterans of the church. Sally said it "renewed her sense of history" as she remembered growing up in the Vietnam era. The veteran stories connected her to that part of her past. Barry said, "these people may feel like their service is forgotten. This brings it center stage."

The majority of the participants in the final focus group were actively engaged throughout the Biblical Warrior Integration project. Their responses to the questions and comments about the project showed an increase in their relational connectivity with the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church. One hundred percent of the focus group identified ten or more veterans from the church. Eighty-seven percent watched at least two or more of them, while fifty-three percent watched ten or more. Their comments showed an enhanced understanding of the veterans and a greater appreciation of their role within the church. While the participants of both focus groups were attuned to the veterans of the church, after participating in the Biblical

Warrior Integration project, the final focus group displayed enhanced connectivity to the veterans.

Impact on the Veterans

The Biblical Warrior Integration model impacted veterans who participated in three ways. First, the veterans had an opportunity to share their warrior stories and experiences. Storytelling is one of the Biblical postwar rituals discussed in this thesis. Storytelling provided catharsis and closure for the veterans. The veterans also learned that telling their warrior experiences was a way to praise God for his providence in their lives. In the exit survey, one veteran said, “I enjoyed telling people my story and giving people an insight into where I have been and how God led me to where I am today.” While not all the veterans who participated told their stories through the veteran testimonies, all of them appreciated being able to share their experiences with the author. Most of the veterans are now able to talk about their experiences.

Next, the veterans experienced healing and understanding through telling their warrior experiences, issues, and stories to caring congregational members in a safe venue. A veteran said the Biblical Warrior Integration model “helped me understand the personal feelings I have had for a long time, but that I didn’t talk about or reveal to many people. It gave me a chance to tell my story and how much God is a part of that story.” In the final focus group, Brad, a veteran, said, “When I talked about my service it wasn’t all positive, but it helped me to know that I’m not the only one . . . some of my fellow church members feel what I felt.”

Finally, the veterans experienced deeper relational connectivity with the civilian of the church. In the exit survey, a veteran said, “I listened to all the stories and experiences” of my fellow veterans, and that gave me a deeper knowledge of “the difficulties each endured and how it affected them spiritually. It brought back memories.” Another said, the expressions of “pride in

America, faith, discipline, and family” increased the respect of the congregation for its veterans. “Not one person expressed feelings that anyone owed them anything for the sacrifices they made. All were proud of their service, and all realized how God was part of their service.” In the final focus group, Eric, a veteran, said, “I think we will see the impact (of the project) even more down the road . . . I think we will see good results.” Pastor Mike Winfree said, “I believe this project made our veterans feel like they were not forgotten but appreciated, and rightly so.”

Impact on Civilians

The Biblical Warrior Integration model impacted the civilians who participate in three ways. First, the civilians were able to identify the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church. A comparison of the initial congregational survey and congregational exit survey showed an eighteen percent increase in the congregation’s ability to identify its veterans. These surveys also showed a six percent decrease in misidentified persons. Pastor Mike Winfree said, “As pastor of the church, I was unaware of how many veterans we had in our church. I realized through the survey and through the veterans sharing their testimonies of serving in the military what each one went through or at least more than I knew before.”

Next, the civilians learned about the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church and how the veterans’ warrior experiences impacted and shaped the veterans’ lives through storytelling. The congregants who watched the veteran testimonies represent a twenty-seven percent increase in the number of people who heard the stories and experiences of the veterans within Oakland Baptist Church. Also, approximately seventy-three percent of the followers of the Oakland Baptist Church Facebook page viewed or engaged the veteran testimonies posted there. This result represents an impact beyond the civilians of the church and into the community. In the exit surveys, one civilian said, “I felt. . . proud.” I “appreciate them in all they did and do.” Another

said, “I enjoyed hearing the stories of God’s call and victories in each person’s life.” Also, a congregation member said, I “learned so much more about that person and how being in the military was a positive experience in their life.” These quotes indicate an increase in the civilians’ relational connectivity to the veterans.

Finally, the civilians were motivated to look for ways to remain connected to Oakland Baptist Church members who were on active duty and to reach out to the veteran community of Warner Robins. In the final focus group, Sally asked, “what are we doing to make sure. . .” the young men of the church who are on active duty. . . “don’t feel that sense of disconnect and loneliness from their family and church family?” Several participants gave suggestions to meet the need, but the Biblical Warrior Integration project helped to raise awareness of the issue. Also, the final focus group discussed opportunities to reach out to the active-duty military community of Warner Robins. These comments indicate an increased awareness of the warriors within and around the church.

Impact on Oakland Baptist Church

The Biblical Warrior Integration model impacted Oakland Baptist Church in three ways. First, the church experienced more vital connectedness between its veterans and its civilian congregation members. Pastor Mike Winfree said, “Through the Biblical Warrior Interrogation Project, our church became more aware of those who served (in the military), and conversations happened related to individuals and the things they shared about themselves.” In the exit survey, one member said, “I gained a deeper understanding of why they served and their love of Christ in the service.” Another said, “There are things in these men and women’s lives that I never know they went through.” In the final focus group, Sally said that as she remembered her experiences

of the history of the Vietnam era and beyond. “To think that some of our church members were there or almost there made more of a sense of being connected to them.”

Next, the church was motivated to recognize the veterans within the congregation and celebrate their time of service. In the final focus group, Stephen, a veteran, emphasized the need for the church to conduct veteran celebrations at appropriate times. Other participants agreed with his assessment.

Finally, the church realized that the veterans among them utilized their warrior experiences to benefit the congregation and the community. Many of the exit surveys include comments on how the church’s veterans used the things the veterans did, learned, or experience in the military within the congregational setting. “God used their military experiences to prepare them for many things they would be called on to do later in life.” Pastor Mike Winfree said, “I sensed a greater appreciation for those who served and respect because of their service. I believe it helped our church body not to take our veterans for granted. Not only the veterans but their families who also sacrificed so much.”

The Biblical Warrior Integration project enhanced the relational connectivity between the veterans and civilians of Oakland Baptist Church. Congregation members who participated in the project showed an increased ability to identify the veterans of the congregation. Also, the participants displayed a greater appreciation of the veterans and a higher understanding of some of the roles and activities the veterans do to provide restitution for their service. The veterans who participated were able to express their stories and experiences to the author and to the congregation. Storytelling gave them an opportunity to describe some of the key events and factors that shaped their lives and helped them become the people they are today. Telling their story gave them significance and standing within the congregation. Also, they were able to

glorify God for his work in their lives. Congregation members who were not able to attend church due to COVID-19 were able to participate online through the veteran testimonies and the online surveys. Veterans who could not attend church were able to tell their stories on video. These benefits to the civilians and the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church have helped to unify the congregation in a time of isolation.

Chapter 5

Conclusion

The Biblical Warrior Integration model sought to address the relational disconnect between civilians and veterans in the congregational life of Oakland Baptist Church. Though the civilians within the church expressed great appreciation for the idea of veterans in the church, many could not identify a significant number of members who served in the Armed Forces. Those that could identify veterans had not heard or understood the veterans' warrior experiences and stories. Since the veterans were not identified, and their experiences were not expressed within the congregational setting, they were not fully integrated into the church. Some felt isolated. Others felt their service did not have value within the congregational setting.

Since the beginning of GWOT, many scholars have tried to address the issues of integrating warriors returning from deployments. The author found that most scholars provide integration models that are individually based and focus on traumatic recovery and psychological methodologies. While these models help veterans achieve balance, they often leave out or minimize the community aspects necessary for veterans to reintegrate into civilian life.

The author's research revealed five postwar rituals that ancient and biblical people used to integrate their warriors into the community. These postwar rituals included purification and isolation (Numbers 31:19-24), restitution to the community through the distribution of the spoils of war (Numbers 31:25-47), construction of memorials and monuments (Numbers 31:48-54), postwar celebration and processions (1 Samuel 18:6-9), and storytelling through war songs and laments (2 Samuel 22; 2 Samuel 1:17-27). Modern application of these biblical postwar rituals would help the church to integrate its veterans within the community of the congregation.

The author designed the Biblical Warrior Integration model to help integrate veterans within a congregational setting. It was congregation-based and relationship-focused. It helped to heal misunderstandings and neglect between veterans and civilians. Also, it was biblically based and reflected a modern application of biblical postwar rituals identified within the biblical text. Though the Biblical Warrior integration project only focused on one of the biblical postwar rituals, the project enhanced the relational connectivity between veterans and civilians in Oakland Baptist Church.

The original concept for the Biblical Warrior Integration project discussed all the biblical postwar rituals and helped the veterans applied a modern application to three of them: purification, storytelling, and restitution. COVID-19 restriction prohibited the implementation of the complete Biblical Warrior Integration model. The author focused on storytelling as a key resource to enhance the relational connectivity between veterans and civilians. Allowing the veterans to tell their stories in a safe and secure venue helped the congregation member identify the veterans who participated and understand the impact that their service had on their lives and their relationship with God. Some of the veterans only told their stories to the author during interviews. Others told their experiences to the congregation through the veteran testimonies posted on the church's Facebook page. All of them had a deeper sense of connectivity to the church. The civilians who watched the veteran testimonies expressed a deeper appreciation and understanding toward the veterans.

The literature review revealed that civilians are disconnected from veterans because they do not understand the warrior's role, the warrior's wounds, and the warrior's isolation. In the Biblical Warrior Integration model, veterans had the opportunity to talk about the roles they played during their military service. The veterans continued to live out many of these roles in the

service they provided to the church and community. Civilians expressed their understanding of how the veterans' service shaped and prepared them for the jobs and services they do in the present. While only one of the veterans who participated in the project had a PTSD diagnosis, many of the veterans expressed internal wounds that have shaped their lives. The project gave the civilians a chance to see some of these wounds. The compassion and appreciation that the civilians expressed as they heard about the warriors' roles and wounds allowed some of the veterans to experience some healing and to move beyond their isolation into the community of the church.

Many scholars addressed the disconnect between veterans and civilians. Nancy Sherman described the military-civilian gap present in American society. "The absence of a generalized obligation to serve one's nation does isolate, and at times over-idealize, the military as a special group that serves and sacrifices."²¹⁸ The Biblical Warrior Integration model addressed the disconnect between veterans and civilians because it provided a safe venue for veterans to tell their warrior experiences and stories to caring congregation members.

Other scholars provided individual approaches to veteran integration issues. Hoge's LANDNAV model sought to help individual warriors apply their warrior skills and experiences to their civilian life to manage reintegration stress.²¹⁹ Hoge's focus on the individual did not address the disconnect between veterans and civilians. While Hoge helped veterans learn to adapt to civilian life, he did not address society's isolation and over-idealization of veterans. The Biblical Warrior Integration model helped connect veterans and civilians to provide support and affirmation.

²¹⁸ Sherman, *Afterwar*, 29.

²¹⁹ Hoge, 48-49.

Most scholars overlook the concepts and applications found in ancient postwar rituals. Tick's Warrior Return model utilized ancient postwar rituals to develop a community-based integration model.²²⁰ Secular and faith-based communities can use Tick's model to help integrate warriors as they return from military service. The Biblical Warrior Integration model mirrored some of Tick's steps; however, because of its biblical foundation, Christian churches and congregations will find that the Biblical Warrior Integration provides a model they can use to enhance the relational connectedness between their veterans and civilians.

The author advocates further research into biblical postwar rituals. Biblical postwar rituals helped biblical warriors integrated into their civilian communities after a battle. Also, they helped civilians within the community affirm and support the biblical warriors and their experiences. These concepts could help the modern church as it seeks to integrate its veterans into congregational life.

The full Biblical Warrior Integration model included training for the veterans on purification. Discussions on purification need to investigate modern rituals that provide a physical component to the spiritual purification that is part of the contemporary Christian expression. Also, the project was to include a community dinner with the veterans and civilians. This dinner represented a form of celebration. Scholars, leaders, and congregations need to consider appropriate ways to celebrate the warrior experiences of their veterans. Memorializing veterans and their service is another biblical postwar ritual that honors the veterans and their service to God and country. A church that the author attended had a wall of the military pictures of many of its veterans. The church had not updated the wall, and the church did not do anything to remind its members of its existence. The congregation lost to the significance of the memorial.

²²⁰ Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 205-15.

While governments erect statues and other monuments in public venues, most churches do not have a way to honor their veterans. The final biblical postwar ritual is restitution. Many veterans find personal ways of restitution after their military service. Churches and congregations should seek to organize opportunities to help veterans with restitution. In Isaiah 2:4, the final goal of warriors is to “hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks.” Changing the skills of war into instruments of peace is the ultimate restitution for a warrior.

A study of the lives of Saul and David in the books of Samuel showed two men who had many warrior experiences. These experiences deeply impacted both men. The text seems to indicate that David applied biblical postwar rituals more effectively in his life. David expressed his need for purification and received cleansing through fasting, prayer, and songs (2 Samuel 12:15-17; Psalm 51). Also, he used psalms and songs to tell his war stories (2 Samuel 22). These stories were not expressions of his pride and warrior abilities, but he glorified God in the stories and gave testimony to God’s work in his life. Finally, David sought restitution with his community as he followed the Numbers 31 principle to distribute the spoils of his battles to combatants, non-combatants, and affected cities (1 Samuel 30:1-6).

The Biblical Warrior Integration model focused on the three biblical postwar rituals that were significant in David’s life. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, the project only dealt with storytelling rituals; however, the modern application of storytelling through video testimonies posted on Facebook allowed for healing and understanding within Oakland Baptist Church. As David’s war song allowed him to praise God for his warrior experiences, the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church were able to give a testimony of God’s work in their lives. This brought them some closure and allowed them to connect with other members of the congregation.

Isaiah 2:2-5 provides a possible biblical model of integration that utilizes all five biblical postwar rituals discussed. Given is a time of war, this passage shows how God uses biblical postwar rituals to glorify his name and bring peace to the nations. When speaking to veterans, many scholars and preachers concentrate on verse four, “They will hammer their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, and never again will they learn war.” Veterans find restitution with their community as they use their warrior skills and experiences to benefit others. These words will help veterans and nations find peace.

Also, Isaiah 2:2-5 reflects the other biblical postwar rituals discussed. The end of verse two and the beginning of verse three describes a victory procession and celebration. In a part of verse three, God expresses his war song as he teaches his ways to the nations. The law establishes a memorial to God’s victory in the world (verse three). Verse five encourages the people to purify themselves; so that they can “walk in the light of the Lord.”

The Biblical Warrior Integration model used Isaiah 2:2-5 to teach the five biblical postwar rituals to veterans. Continued study of this passage can give insight into developing modern applications for these biblical rituals. The project found a modern application of the war song in allowing veterans to share their experiences through Facebook. Other modern applications of storytelling are available. The Biblical Warrior Integration model provides for a veteran-hosted dinner. While the project was not able to host a dinner, the dinner represents a modern application of the biblical celebration and procession ritual. Scholars and church leaders can seek a modern application for each of the identified biblical postwar rituals.

American society has many insufficient and incomplete postwar rituals. The “Thank you for your service” ritual is an incomplete storytelling ritual. It does not provide a venue or the

trust needed for the veteran to express the warrior experiences of his service, nor does it prepare the civilian to hear the veterans' stories.²²¹ The central storytelling ritual in American society is video media. Hollywood producers tell most of the veteran stories in popular video media. They tell the story as a fantasy, not as veterans experienced it. Many veterans feel these stories do not accurately express their warrior experiences. Media presentations provide a fantasy storytelling ritual. Military welcome home ceremonies are incomplete celebration rituals because they are only directed toward the military community and do not reach out to society at large. Psychological integration programs are insufficient purification rituals since they focus only on the individual and do not include family and community perspectives. Also, these programs overlook or minimize the spiritual component of purification.

Frequently, governments and communities establish statues and memorial displays as postwar memorialization rituals. These memorials are comforting and encouraging to veterans and civilians. Most memorials are built years after the events they are designed to memorialize. These displays are delayed rituals. Restitution rituals provide closure and peace. Many veterans seek restitution within their communities. When civilians or the veterans do not understand the significance of the restitution ritual, they are frustrated, and the veterans and communities do not experience the benefits that are possible through these rituals.

The Biblical Warrior Integration model encouraged Oakland Baptist Church to move beyond some of the insignificant rituals of American society. By providing veterans with a safe and secure venue to express their stories, the Biblical Warrior Integration project helped civilians complete the "Thank you for your service" ritual. Civilians in the church expressed the need to hear more of the veterans' stories, but they did not know how to ask for more information. There

²²¹ Sherman, *Afterwar*, 44-43.

was no real opportunity for civilians to hear from the veterans. The veteran testimonies posted on Facebook allowed the civilians to hear and understand some of the veterans. The veterans who participated in the testimonies felt confident enough in the civilians' acceptance to trust their story with others. Also, the video testimonies provided a more authentic storytelling venue than the media presentations that are prevalent in American society.

The modern American military is using welcome home ceremonies as they seek to reintegrate warriors returning from deployment and combat areas. These ceremonies are insufficient because they only impact the military community and do not reach out to the civilian community. This focus on the military community to the exclusion of the civilian community can increase the isolation of warriors from civilians. As they leave military service, many veterans lose touch with the military community. The Biblical Warrior Integration model gives the church an opportunity to welcome veterans into the civilian community and celebrate the warriors' contribution to society and the church.

The Biblical Warrior Integration model provided a community component to the psychology-based individual models that are available to veterans. These models benefit veterans and help them develop and maintain personal resilience. Without the community component, these models can leave veterans isolated from other people. The church can help veterans overcome their isolation using the Biblical Warrior Integration model. It helps the church to welcome veterans into a loving and caring community that can comfort the veterans as they heal from internal injuries.

While implementing the project, the author learned that many veterans within the church applied some of the biblical postwar rituals without outside instruction. Most of the veterans found ways to use their warrior skills to benefit their church and community. Transforming their

warrior skills into instruments of peace was vital to helping them process negative experiences and providing balance in their lives. Many of the veterans found purification and cleansing as they dedicated their lives to God and his service. This commitment enabled them to look beyond the negative experiences of their military service and see God's work in their lives. The veterans with whom the author worked were a mature and well-adjusted population. They did not think that their stories were worthy of expression; however, the civilians of the congregation respected their veterans and wanted to hear more about their struggles as a testimony of God's work in their lives. The church had no venue or time to make the connection between the two populations. The Biblical Warrior Integration model provided an answer to this problem.

Any church could use the Biblical Warrior Integration model to help enhance the relational connectedness between its veterans and civilians. The church represents a compassionate and caring community that can welcome hurting veterans and well-adjusted veterans into its fellowship. Leaders can reproduce the training sessions to help veterans understand biblical postwar rituals. Also, leaders can utilize the veterans' sessions as a local weekend retreat for veterans within a congregation. After completing the session, they can host civilians from their church to a dinner to share their warrior experiences and stories. Utilizing the biblical postwar rituals of purification, celebration, storytelling, and restitution can revitalize a church's ministry to active duty personal and veterans within their community.

Other religious communities can use the Biblical Warrior Integration model. A group of churches and congregations, an association, or district can combine to host a veterans' training and a celebration/ storytelling dinner. These organizations provide the opportunity to reach more veterans and civilians.

While the heavy biblical emphasis of the model limits its use in secular communities, the principles of the five biblical postwar rituals provide healing and understanding when used with modern applications. Edward Tick uses these five biblical postwar rituals in his work. A congregation or a religious organization can combine the Biblical Warrior Integration model with Edward Tick's Soldier's Heart Model.²²² The Biblical Warrior Integration model provides a biblical foundation to Tick's work that will enable biblically focused congregations and organizations to reach out to the veteran communities outside of the church.

The author recommends that pastors consider appropriate ways to recognize and affirm the veterans within their congregations. Just recognizing the veterans on military holidays like Veteran's Day and the 4th of July is an insufficient ritual. While the civilians among the congregation may be able to identify some of its veterans, they are not provided with a venue to hear and understand the veterans' stories and experiences. Veteran testimonies and other storytelling ideas can enhance the connectivity between veterans and civilians. Also, veterans need to learn how to use their warrior experiences for the betterment of their congregation and community. Serving others provides restitution, which helps veterans balance their military skills and experiences with civilian life. The church needs to encourage its veterans to seek out service opportunities, then to recognize the service the veterans provide within the community. Finally, civilians need to affirm and support the service of their veterans within their church. Civilians need to learn to give veterans safe and secure venues to express their warrior experiences. Safe and secure venues may include church dinners that focus on the veterans' contributions to the congregation or small group settings in which veterans can share their stories with trusted and compassionate church members.

²²² Tick, *Warrior's Return*, 215,

The Biblical Warrior Integration is a biblically based, congregation centered model that will help churches connect their veterans and civilians, enhancing healing within the congregation.

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Appendix A: Initial Congregational Survey

1) List up to ten people who you think are veterans within our church by first name or familiar name include the branch or branches of the military in which they served:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, or I don't know

2) How many of the above-identified veterans retired after 20 years or more in the military?

3) How many of the above-identified veterans served overseas? _____

4) How many of the above-identified veterans served in a combat zone? _____

5) For the above-identified veterans, what do you know about their military service?

I know two or more stories or events from the military service of #_____ of them.

I know one story or event from the military service of #_____ of them.

I know zero stories or events from the military service of #_____ of them.

6) Are the above-identified veterans still impacted by their military service?

Yes #_____, No #_____, I don't know #_____

7) Are the above-identified veterans influenced or motivated by their military service?

Yes #_____, No #_____, I don't know #_____

8) Did their military service shape the identity (who they are, how they see themselves) of the above-identified veterans?

Yes #_____, No #_____, I don't know #_____

Appendix B: Initial Veterans' Survey

How did your service impact your view of yourself?

While you were serving?

Now in your daily life?

In your future?

What warrior experiences, issues, or stories have you kept from other people?

What warrior experiences, issues, or stories do you share in an appropriate manner and place?

What warrior experiences, issues, or stories can you use to benefit others to enhance your relationships within the church or community?

How many civilian members of Oakland Baptist Church know your warrior experiences, issues, or stories?

What percentage of the civilian members of Oakland Baptist Church care to know about your warrior experiences, issues, or stories? _____%

How does that impact you?

Do you have something from your warrior experiences, issues, or stories that you would like to share with the civilian members of Oakland Baptist Church? If so, what?

Appendix C: Exit Veterans' Survey

How do you view your time in service differently since participating in The Biblical Warrior Integration model?

What warrior experiences, issues, or stories did you discover that you needed to reveal to other people?

What warrior experiences, issues, or stories did you share in an appropriate manner and place?

What warrior experiences, issues, or stories did you use to benefit other people, the church, or the community?

How many civilian members of Oakland Baptist Church know your warrior experiences, issues, or stories since participating in The Biblical Warrior Integration model?

Since participating in The Biblical Warrior Integration model, what percentage of the civilian members of Oakland Baptist Church do you think care to know about your warrior experiences, issues, or stories? _____%

How does that impact you?

Appendix D: Exit Civilian Survey

1) List up to ten people who you think are veterans within our church by first name or familiar name:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

2) In what branch of the military did the above identified veterans serve?

Army #_____, Navy #_____, Marines#_____, Air Force #_____, Coast Guard #_____, I don't know #_____

3) How many of the above identified veterans retired after 20 years or more in the military?

4) How many of the above identified veterans served overseas? _____

How many of the above-identified veterans served in a combat zone? _____

5) For the above-identified veterans, what do you know about their military service?

I know two or more stories or events from the military service of #_____ of them.

I know one story or event from the military service of #_____ of them.

I know zero stories or events from the military service of #_____ of them.

6) Are the above-identified veterans still impacted by their military service?

Yes #_____, No #_____, I don't know #_____

7) Are the above-identified veterans influenced or motivated by their military service?

Yes #_____, No #_____, I don't know #_____

8) Did their military service shape the identity (who they are, how they see themselves) of the above-identified veterans?

Yes #_____, No #_____, I don't know #_____

Appendix E: Congregational Exit Survey (Final)

1) How many of the 14 veteran testimonies posted on Facebook did you watch?

If you did not watch any do you have access to Facebook? Yes ___ No ___

2) Total number of veterans in Oakland Baptist Church you can identify. # _____

3) List up to ten people who you think are veterans within our church by first name or familiar name include the branch or branches of the military in which they served:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, I don't know

4) What veteran stories or experiences did you hear during this project?

5) What insights did you gain from hearing the veteran's stories and experiences?

6) Describe what you felt and thought as you heard the veteran's stories and experiences?

7) If you are a veteran, describe telling your stories and experiences?

8) Do you feel more connected to fellow members of Oakland Baptist Church congregation?

Appendix F: Facebook Announcement

6 June 2020: Day 27 of DMIN 885

Posted Facebook announcement for my project on the Oakland Baptist Church Facebook page. Text as follows:

This is Ray Bennett. As many of you know, I am a graduate student in the Rawlings School of Divinity at Liberty University. I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a DMIN degree. The name of my project is "The Biblical Warrior Integration Model." The purpose of my research is to enhance the relational connectedness between civilians and veterans affiliated with Oakland Baptist Church. This project begins Sunday. Sunday morning, you can complete the initial congregational survey. If you cannot be present in the service this Sunday, I will post the survey online on Monday. If you are a veteran who wishes to participate, contact me via Facebook messenger or in person. More details will follow. Thanks.

Appendix G: Approved Consent Form

Consent

Title of the Project: Biblical Warrior Integration
Principal Investigator: Alva Ray Bennett, graduate student in Pastoral Counseling Cognate of the Rawlings School of Divinity

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. In order to participate, you must be 18 years of age or older and be a member of Oakland Baptist Church. If you participate as a veteran, you must have honorably served in the U.S. Armed Forces and provide verification of service. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to enhance the relational connectedness between civilian and veteran congregational members of Oakland Baptist Church.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

1. All participants will complete an initial, anonymous survey. This will take about 20 minutes.
2. Veteran participants
 - a. Provide verification of service in the U.S. Armed Forces.
 - b. Selected veteran participants will be asked to participate in an initial mixed veteran and civilian focus group session. This will take approximately one hour and be recorded.
 - c. Participate in a veterans' workshop that will include Biblical teaching and focus group sessions. This will take approximately four hours.
 - d. Host a table at a veterans' hosted dinner in which you will share your military experiences with persons affiliated with Oakland Baptist Church. This will take approximately two hours.
 - e. After the dinner, they will complete an anonymous veterans' exit survey (approximately 10-15 minutes).
 - f. Selected veteran participants will be interviewed. This will take about one hour and be recorded.
 - g. Selected veteran participants will be asked to participate in a final mixed veteran and civilian focus group. This will take approximately one hour and be recorded.
3. Civilian participants
 - a. Selected civilian participants will be asked to participate in a focus group session. This will take approximately one hour and be recorded.
 - b. All civilian participants will be invited to participate in a veterans' hosted dinner in which they will hear the military experiences of one of the veterans of Oakland Baptist Church. This will take approximately two hours.

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- c. After the dinner, they will complete an anonymous exit survey (approximately 10-15 minutes).
- d. Selected civilian participants will be asked to participate in a final mixed veteran and civilian focus group. This will take approximately one hour and be recorded.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

The direct benefits participants may expect to receive from taking part in this study include the following:

1. Veteran participants
 - a. Discover greater insight into your veteran experiences.
 - b. Understand how your veteran experiences impact congregational life at Oakland Baptist Church.
2. Civilian participants
 - a. Identify congregation members who are veterans.
 - b. Develop a deeper understanding of fellow congregation members who are veterans.

Benefits to society include helping veterans integrate their military service into civilian life.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life. Veterans may experience emotional discomfort talking about their military experiences. Civilians may encounter veteran experiences and military events that they are unfamiliar with.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses to all surveys will be anonymous. Participant responses gathered in focus groups or interviews will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms. Interviews will be conducted in a location where others will not easily overhear the conversation.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

What are the costs to you to be part of the study?

There are no costs to participate in the research.

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Does the researcher have any conflicts of interest?

The researcher serves as a volunteer pastor and deacon at Oakland Baptist Church. This disclosure is made so that you can decide if this relationship will affect your willingness to participate in this study. No action will be taken against an individual based on his or her decision to participate in this study.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Oakland Baptist Church. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher in person or at the phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

To withdraw from the study contact, Alva Ray Bennett in person or at 706-399-6163. State that you no longer wish to participate in the study. Be sure to provide your name so that your information can be deleted from the study.

Because the surveys are anonymous, I will not be able to remove the survey responses for participants who choose to withdraw after completing and submitting a survey.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Alva Ray Bennett. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact him at 706-399-6163 and/or abennett47@liberty.edu. You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Rodney Phillips, at rphillips67@liberty.edu.

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

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If you only complete the anonymous surveys, you do not need to sign this form.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

The researcher has my permission to audio-record me as part of my participation in this study.

I am a veteran who served honorably in the U.S. Armed Forces.

The researcher has my permission to video record me. AAs

Printed Subject Name

Signature & Date

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Appendix H: IRB Approval Letter

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

June 4, 2020

Alva Bennett
Rodney Phillips

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY19-20-91 Biblical Warrior Integration

Dear Alva Bennett, Rodney Phillips:

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the date of the IRB meeting at which the protocol was approved: June 4, 2020. If data collection proceeds past one year, or if you make modifications in the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit an appropriate update submission to the IRB. These submissions can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. This form should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office