

BIBLE - BASED TRAUMA HEALING

Why trauma healing?

Trauma is a deep wound of the mind and heart that can take a long time to heal. It can have many causes, ranging from childhood abuse to displacement and war. It hurts every part of us: our relationships, our bodies, our thoughts, and our faith. When faced with crushing loss, it's common to conclude that God has abandoned us, is punishing us, hates us, or doesn't exist.

Entire communities can be affected by trauma, just as individuals are. Individuals, churches, and communities need time and support to recover from traumatic events, such as natural disasters, war, abuse, suicide, violence, and extreme poverty.

The world is experiencing a trauma epidemic. The numbers are staggering:

- 1.32 billion abused women
- 160 million people affected by natural disasters
- 153 million orphans
- 68.5 million forcibly displaced people
- 11 million people in prison
- millions of military and first responders

The scale of the trauma crisis can be mind-numbing. But behind each statistic are millions of stories. One anguished human heart after another after another.

We envision a world where every broken heart experiences healing through restoration of their relationship with God through his Word.

How does Bible-based trauma healing work?

When people join a Bible-based trauma healing group, they begin a process that restores their connections with God, self, and others. This process has four stages: **Listen**, **Lament**, **Release**, and **Rebuild**.

■ LISTEN

In a small group of 6–8 people, participants share their stories of suffering, and a trained facilitator helps them talk through their pain. Talking through others' trauma helps each person work through his or her own.

Throughout this process, they integrate hundreds of Scripture passages that powerfully impact them with God's love and presence in the midst of their suffering.

■ LAMENT

The group discusses what trauma looks like, and they learn that lament is grief with a voice. In Scripture, they discover that laments are a biblical way of working through pain with God.

They write their own laments. When the heartache is beyond words, they sketch their grief in a therapeutic art exercise. For the first time since their trauma, they begin to feel that God hears them.

■ RELEASE

The facilitator reads Bible passages about Jesus's pain. Each participant feels like the words are written about them. As they look at the cross, they see how Jesus suffered just like them. They discover that Jesus is the Wounded Healer, a God who intimately understands their grief. And, more than that, he has conquered it—and invites them into a life of healing and greater resilience.

Participants journal the deepest wounds of their hearts, their grief flowing onto a special sheet of dissolvable paper. They place these notes in a bucket of water at the foot of Jesus's cross. As they watch the paper dissolve, they feel their despair melt away. It is replaced with a sense of hope that this is a new beginning. They begin the journey to reclaiming their joy.

■ REBUILD

A healing group is just the first step of the healing journey. Knowing that God is near and understands their grief, participants continue to process their feelings—bringing their sorrow to Jesus, laying it at his feet in faith, and sharing their sorrow with a supportive community of people on the same journey. They choose to walk with Jesus, whose suffering was also followed by new life. Strengthened by God and supported by others, they begin the hard work of restoring brokenness and rebuilding their lives.

What sets our program apart from other trauma interventions?

■ IT'S LOCAL.

With the support of partners like you, local churches and individuals are trained and equipped to use this method in their ministry. In traumatized communities, many people want to help their neighbors heal. But it takes knowledge and skill to help people who are in pain, without hurting them more.

Using the Trauma Healing curriculum, local churches host the trainings and invite partners in their networks. With funding and guidance, passionate believers like you and me are able to build trauma healing ministries for their own communities.

■ IT'S SUSTAINABLE.

As Trauma Healing ministry has grown, many leaders are gaining enough training and experience to train others. After holding at least two healing groups, many trainers choose to come back for more advanced training. These highly skilled individuals, known as “master facilitators,” now hold trainings in their own countries and regions.

Due to this strategy of “training the trainer,” modest investments in Bible-based trauma healing have supported hundreds of new trauma healing groups around the world. After just a few years of initial trainings and financial support, church communities have developed self-sustaining, locally led, and continually growing ministries. Ministry leaders share expertise with one another and help others start their own ministries. There are now more



Lesbia is a counselor in Guatemala who championed the launch of Bible-based trauma healing in her country. She discovered the ministry's power as a participant.

than 12,000 trained ministry leaders, serving through hundreds of churches, charities, and ministry organizations.

■ IT'S BIBLICAL.

Bible-based trauma healing was developed for the church, by the church, with Scripture at its very heart. In too many places, the only trauma interventions available are based on secular models. Even when paired with Scripture verses, these programs rely on human theories and psychological models for healing. The Bible-based trauma healing model is to connect hurting people with the healing power of Scripture itself.

■ IT'S FOR THE CHURCH.

We believe that it's the role of the church to be equipped and respond to the suffering in their communities. The body of Christ is called to do what Jesus did: enter into the suffering of his children for their healing. Churches often struggle to know how to respond to those experiencing trauma. Through Bible-based

trauma healing, compassionate Christians receive the tools to reach out to those who are suffering most in their congregations and communities. Equipped with the powerful and healing Word of God, these churches become safe places for people to share their suffering, bring their heartache to Jesus, and find healing in him.

How did American Bible Society get involved in trauma healing?

In the late 1990s, the Democratic Republic of the Congo was devastated by widespread conflict. Workers from Bible translation agencies witnessed the effects of war in many of the African countries where they served. Local pastors saw their congregations suffer emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

Then African pastors, counselors, and leaders reached out to the Bible translation agencies like Wycliffe and SIL—initiating a curriculum that would transform millions of lives around the world.

Together, they created an early version of what we now know as Bible-based trauma healing. In 2001, they developed a series of lessons that would be easy to teach, translate, and train church leaders to share. These lessons were tested in war zones, then printed in 2004.

By 2010, the curriculum was being used by people in dozens of countries on five continents. It had been translated, in whole or in part, into more than 150 languages. And demand continued to grow.

More and more people were asking for training in trauma healing. And the program needed more structure and financial support.



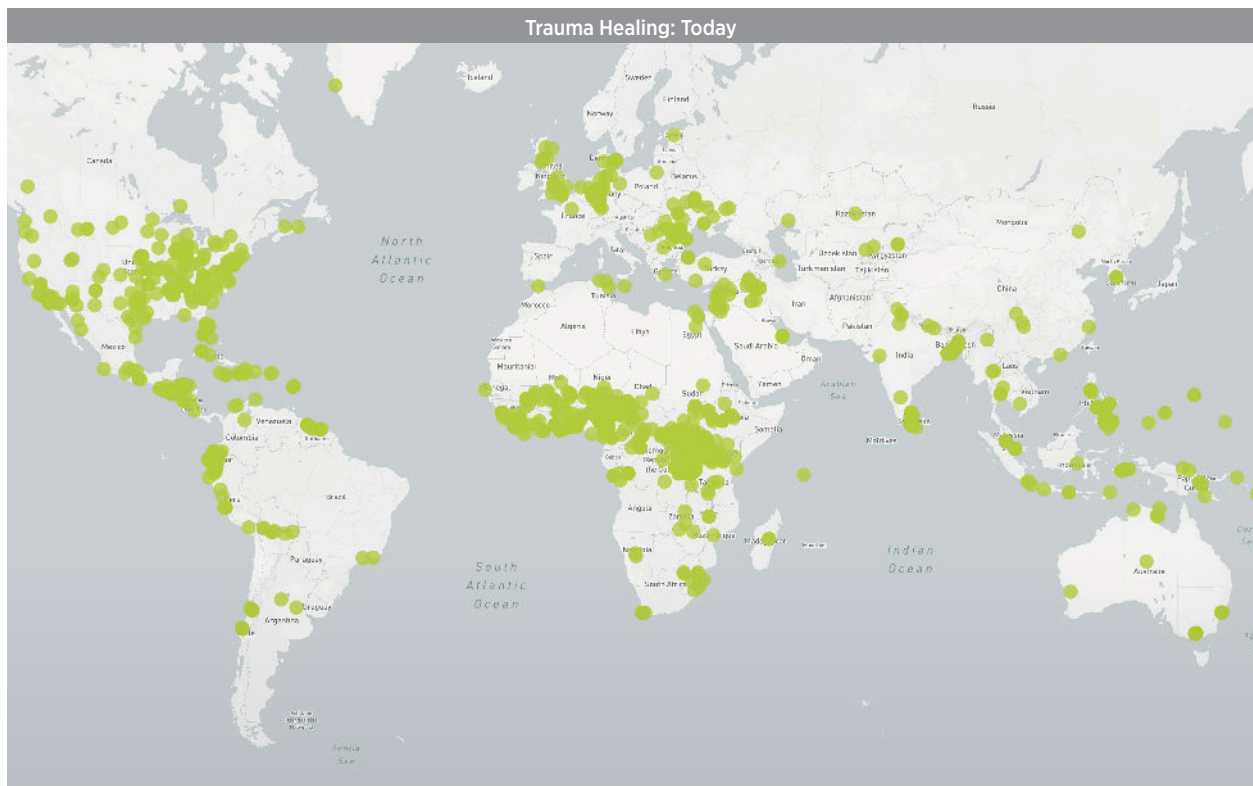
Consolatta was an early participant in Bible-based trauma healing. Living in the DRC, she was raped by soldiers and lost the ability to walk. But she says, “The Word of God has changed me.... My heart is at peace.”

That's when Bible-based trauma healing became a ministry of American Bible Society. Working with the original authors, we revised the lessons into a book called *Healing the Wounds of Trauma—How the Church Can Help*, a resource that continues to serve as the curriculum for Bible-based trauma healing today.

How has trauma healing ministry grown over the past 10 years?

The ministry has continued to grow. The curriculum continues to be translated into new languages and contextualized for more people. Lessons have been adapted for children, teens, disaster victims, and people in prison. Story-based oral versions have been developed for communities with low literacy or no written language. Radio and TV programs have reached millions in remote, rural areas with the healing power of God's Word.

Today, Bible-based trauma healing helps people experience God's nearness and love in more than 100 countries around the world. Its ministries can be found across Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, Asia, Eastern Europe, and the United States.





Bible Society in Iraq introduced Bible-based trauma healing to this camp for internally displaced people, who fled their homes to escape from ISIS. This young woman had been held prisoner and tortured by the militant group. Many residents of the camp are finding comfort in God's Word through healing groups led by Bible Society staff and local church leaders, supported with training from American Bible Society and funds from our generous financial partners.

Who are our partners?

Many of our partners are Bible Societies serving traumatized communities in 55 countries around the world. These Bible Societies are led and staffed locally, recognized as legitimate nonprofits by their national governments, and well-respected by their local communities.

Although conflict and political pressures can force international agencies and nonprofits out of countries, these local Bible Societies courageously remain. A constant presence in difficult times, they earn the trust of their neighbors—both Christians and those who practice other faiths. As a result, they have a

unique opportunity to introduce their neighbors to the healing power of God's Word.

These strong relationships are the foundation of trauma healing ministry in each nation. Bible Societies invite local churches, ministries, and community leaders to learn more about Bible-based trauma healing. They host trainings for those interested in starting their own ministries. And those local leaders go out into their communities, bringing the hope of Christ to their heartbroken neighbors.

How do we measure our impact?

American Bible Society teams conduct studies to assess the impact of Bible-based trauma healing globally. A recent study spanning 24 countries and nearly 3,000 participants showed that just months after completing a trauma healing group, 93 percent reported a significant decrease in trauma symptoms. Other studies focus on trauma healing's impact on Scripture engagement and sense of closeness to God. Thanks to studies like these, you can be confident that your support is helping traumatized people lead fuller, healthier lives.

We also measure our reach in several ways:

- Number of healing groups and healing group participants
- Countries and regions where trainings have been held
- Initial and advanced trainings
- Trained facilitators
- Master facilitators

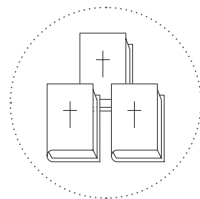
In addition, American Bible Society staff regularly visit partners, working with them to measure the impact of individual ministries. We help them overcome barriers in difficult contexts, develop and improve data collection and program assessment, and launch ministries in communities still waiting for Scripture's healing message.

What are our goals?



100

U.S. cities



100

Bible Societies

Our vision is to see Bible-based trauma healing adopted by partners in 100 U.S. cities and 100 Bible Societies serving communities across the globe.

The Sovereign LORD has filled me
with his Spirit.
He has chosen me and sent me
To bring good news to the poor,
To heal the broken-hearted,
To announce release to captives,
And freedom to those in prison.

—Isaiah 61:1 GNT

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