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## What does God have to say about the trauma I'm facing?<sup>1</sup>

### Putting psychological and medical principles in a Biblical framework

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One Sudanese church leader told a conference that the very best motivation he and other leaders had found for people to use the translated Scriptures in their language was from reading particular passages at a Trauma Healing seminar.

What are people really worried about? What has hurt them inwardly in their lives? If they can see God working in those areas, not only the Scriptures come alive for them, but also Christianity.

Generally speaking, basic psychological principles put into a framework of biblical knowledge constitutes brand new information for many people in Africa and elsewhere in the developing world. During a Scripture Use seminar in New Guinea, to my surprise, the single session on the Scriptures and mental health was chosen as the most important session by many of the participants.

Where do we start? First by listening and finding out the burning issues in the region. Very unhappily many parts of Africa today are affected by wars, rebel groups, and civil unrest. Even without these, there are armed robberies, horrific road accidents, domestic violence and the increasing shadow of AIDS.

There is plenty of helpful literature available in many of these areas, but the problem is finding material that includes two things. First, people need information, whether medical, or psychological—how people normally react to stress and trauma. Secondly, they need to know what God says about it—through Scripture readings and discussions. Much of the material available is of one or the other variety, so some books have only basic facts, and others are glorified sermons.

It is possible, however, to put two books together. ACATBA<sup>2</sup> in Central African Republic took a shell book on AIDS (created in Cameroon) that is strictly secular and added Scripture passages and other Christian material, creating a very useful book.

The trauma healing book, "Healing the Wounds of Trauma, how the Church can Help" is now available for sale in English and French.

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a revision of: Hill, Margaret. 2003. 'Scripture Impact and Mental Health.' *Scripture in Use Today* 7:30-31.

<sup>2</sup> Central African Bible Translation and Literacy Association; in French, Association Centrafricaine pour la Traduction de la Bible et l'Alphabétisation

The topics covered are:

- Lesson 1: If God loves us, why do we suffer?
- Lesson 2: Recognizing the wounds of our hearts and how God helps us heal
- Lesson 3: What happens when someone is grieving?  
Extra section—Laments
- Lesson 4: How can we forgive other people for the evil they have done to us?
- Lesson 5: How to help children who have seen or experienced bad things
- Lesson 6: How to help women who have been raped
- Lesson 7: Conflict between ethnic groups
- Lesson 8: Taking our pain to the cross
- Lesson 9: Care for the caregiver
- Lesson 10: AIDS and the local church
- Lesson 11: Preparing for Trouble