

# Resilience and Sustaining Global Workers : Psychiatry's Contribution Part 1

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Global Health Missions Conference

Breakout Session 6



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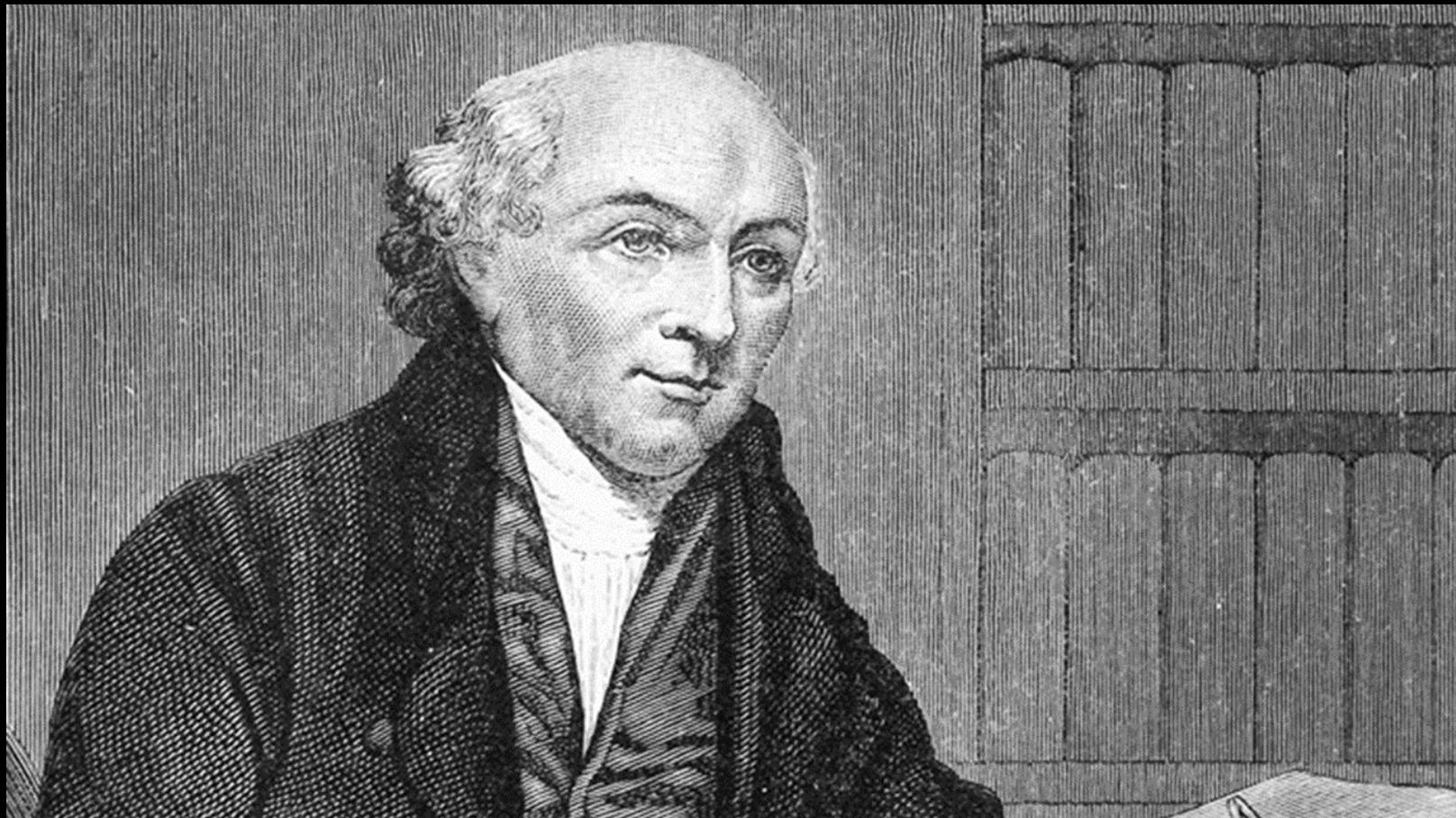


# My journey to mission psychiatry

## **Philippians 1:6**

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

# Psychiatry and Missions

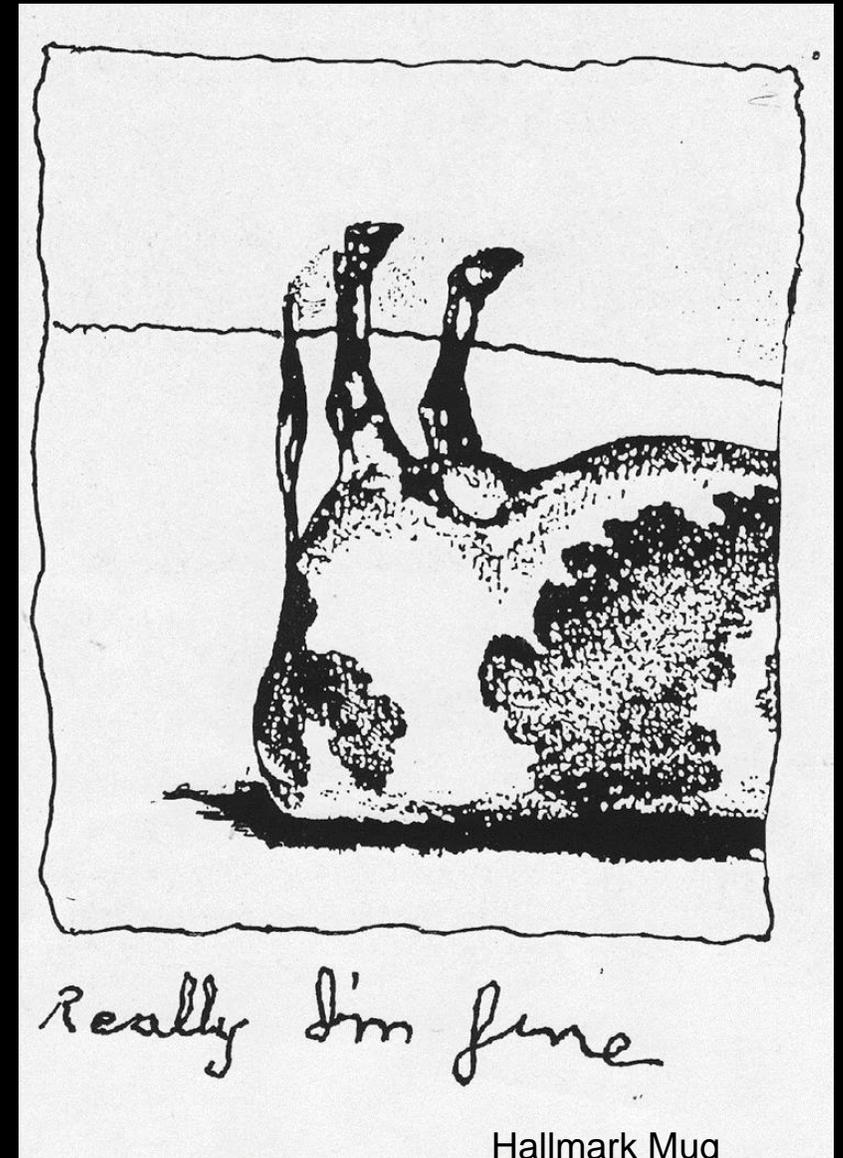


A suicide  
reveals a  
need





Really  
I'm fine



# Psychiatry's place in global worker mental health

## Common views of mental health

- Emotional problems due to spiritual issues or moral weakness
  - An aspect of spiritual warfare
  - In some cultures: demon possession
  - Medications might be seen as a crutch
- 
- “If we see a Christian going to a counselor it probably means there's a moral problem. If they go to a psychiatrist, they're crazy”.

So how do we provide care that is acceptable,  
relevant, and accessible?

How we are created in God's image from a human perspective "is always an interplay of biology, one's personal constitution, and the culture in which one lives." The same can be said of mental illness.

Quotation portion from Warren Kinghorn

So how do we provide care that is acceptable, relevant, and accessible?

Build trust with leaders and staff

- Personal credibility
  - Shared experience of getting to the field
  - Living in the same circumstances
  - Can be built even without those with a permanent field location
- Spiritual credibility
  - Theologically grounded
  - High view of Scripture
  - Faith and practice integrated

## Take services where they are

- Our mental health staff in SIL are placed strategically to support, not only SIL staff, but other missions as well. In SIL we now have mental health staff in Thailand, the Philippines, Cameroon, Germany, and a sensitive country. They provide face-to-face and, in some cases, distance counseling. In the US counseling is or soon will be provided at the 3 main centers where we have staff--Dallas, Waxhaw, NC and Orlando.
- Obviously the majority of our overseas staff don't have geographical proximity to a counselor or psychiatrist. And you'll hear more about new innovations to address that in part 2 of this workshop

# Mental health care through the global worker lifespan

- Application process
  - American Disabilities Act—employment can't be denied on basis of mental illness
  - After employment: a general health exam including attention to mental health
  - Identify areas of vulnerability

# Pre-field training: Intercultural Communications Course

- Spiritual Vitality
  - Theology of Suffering
  - Moral Purity
- Relational Maturity (this includes Interpersonal and Partnering Skills)
  - Impact Awareness
  - Dealing with conflict Biblically
- Cultural Sensitivity
  - World View: eg. Guilt/Forgiveness, Honor/Shame, and Power/Fear
- Life Skill Hardiness
  - Transitions
  - Trauma
  - MK issues

# Mental health care through the global worker lifespan

- Assignment selection
  - individual/family factors
    - Current functioning, history of trauma, family mental health history, addictive behavior, same sex attraction, marital satisfaction, medication use and availability on field, evidence of resilience

# Mental health care through the global worker lifespan

- Field realities
  - Stressors in the environment—exposure to violence, need for secrecy, isolation, poverty
  - Availability of resources—medical, spiritual, specialized services for children, medication

Psychiatrist can help identify what can be reasonably managed on the field (e.g. Bipolar disorder)

# Mental health care through the global worker lifespan

- On-field support

- Psychiatric evaluation and treatment
- Psychotherapy
- Training member care staff—listening skills, knowing when to get help
- Consulting with leaders about personnel issues (e.g intractable conflict and personality disorders)
- Debriefing and mentoring leaders—may not have much training for the role, may be more isolated after taking the role
- Crisis intervention and debriefing—(evacuation from war, traumatic death of of a colleague, natural disaster); stabilize, evaluate for follow-up care

# Mental health care through the global worker lifespan

- Referring for specialized care
  - When local resources aren't available or are insufficient
  - When the cost of their staying where they are is too high
    - On them or their family (children's reluctance to talk about their difficulties)
    - On their colleagues
    - On the community

- Impact of premature departure from an assignment
  - Losses for the individual or family
    - Long-held calling
    - Meaningful work
    - Disruption in school
    - Need to explain to many
    - Shame
  - Losses to the organization
    - Significant investment
    - Their contribution to ministry

# Making mental health care acceptable, relevant, and accessible

- In-house counseling service
  - existing members re-trained in counseling
  - outside counselors recruited to join
  - psychiatrists
- Brick and mortar facilities (strategic location)
  - Tumaini Counseling Center (Nairobi)
  - Cornerstone and The Well (Chiang Mai, Thailand)
  - Olive Tree, (Turkey)

# Making mental health care acceptable, relevant, and accessible

- Decreasing Stigma

- More caught than taught.

- Leadership's role

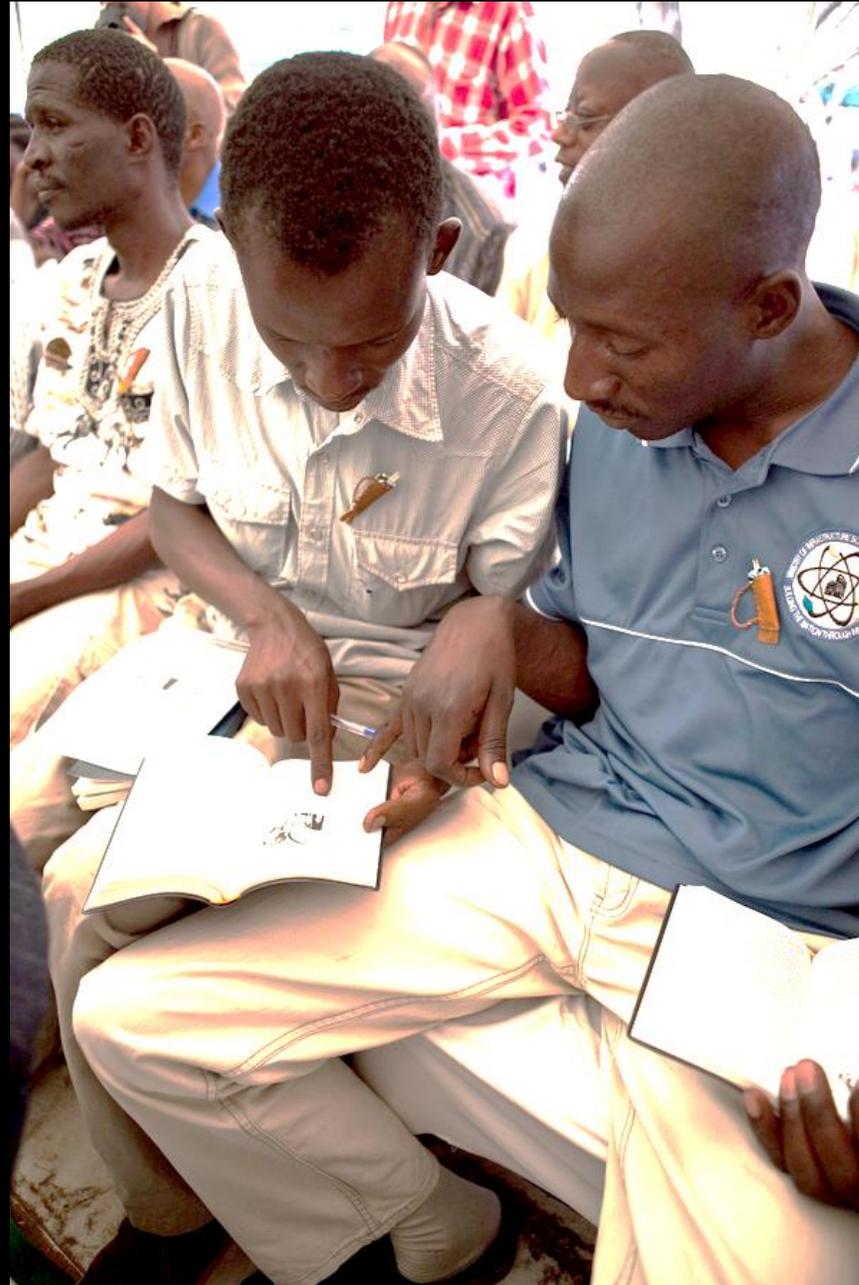
- Giving opportunities for stories to be told in appropriate setting

# Addressing the needs of the church

- Trauma Healing: How the church can help
  - Local stories
  - Scripture-based
  - Psychological principles of trauma
  - Experiential learning



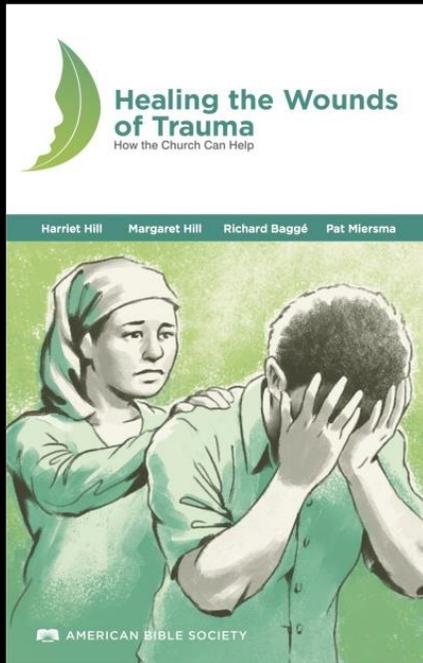
# Scripture Engagement



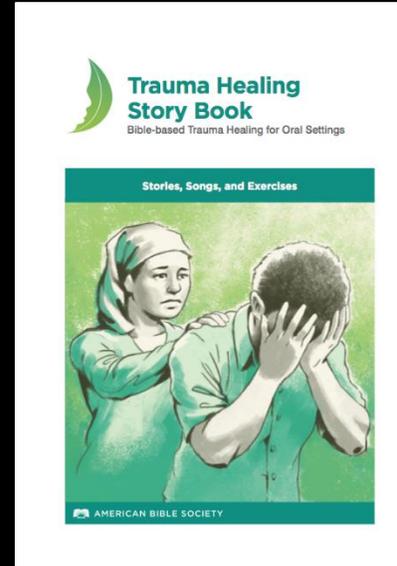
# The unexpected

- Trauma Healing: How the church can help
  - Local stories
  - Scriptural principles
  - Experiential learning

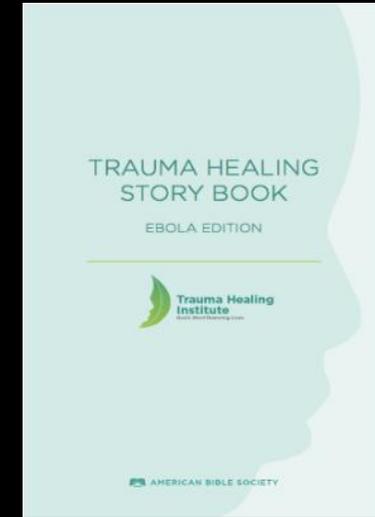
## Classic TH



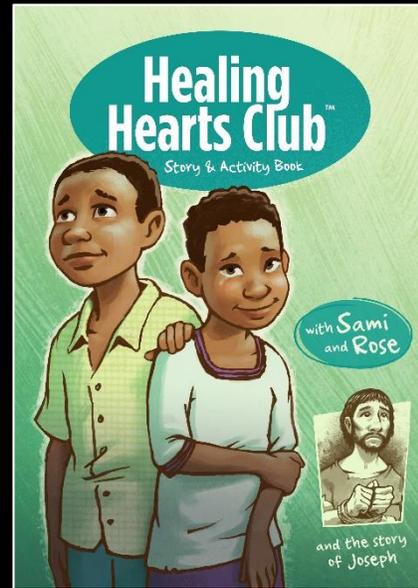
## Story-based TH



## Audio TH



## Children's TH



## Documentary



# Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the church can help

- If God loves us, why do we suffer?
- How can the wounds of our hearts be healed?
- What happens when someone is grieving?
- Taking your pain to the cross
- How can we forgive others?

# Healing the Wounds of Trauma: How the church can help

- Helping children
- Rape
- HIV/AIDS
- Domestic abuse
- Addictions
- Suicide
- Care for caregivers
- Living in the midst of conflict
- Preparing for trouble
- Disaster response