



Pastoral Care Response to **VICTIMS OF POST- CONFLICT TRAUMA**

Presented by

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Introduction

Rev. Nanchwat Laven is the pastor of an eighty-seven congregation of a small Baptist Church of Ancha in Bassa Local Council Authority, which is 47 kilometers from the city of Jos. His community was attacked on the night of September 12th, 2020. The following morning, they counted thirty-three dead bodies of his members, including his daughter, left by the attackers. In anger, frustration, and the need to flee the community, the church conducted a mass funeral for the dead. The local association asked me to go and support Rev. Nanchwat with the funeral since this was his first experience. Accessing the village on time was challenging because the neighboring villages were still under attack.



Introduction Cont...

I arrived at Ancha at 1 pm, which was behind the scheduled time for the mass funeral, and on reaching the funeral site, I met Rev. Nanchwat about to perform the funeral of his 33 members, including his daughter, and when he sighted me, he busted into tears. I took over the funeral service and relocated him and his wife to a safer town. The Christian Council of Nigeria Peacebuilding and Trauma Healing Centre had to work and offer trauma counseling and support to the Ancha community. Today the community is back, and life has gradually taken shape.



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People who experience trauma and crises have traditionally considered the church a haven of safety, hope, and restoration. In times of trouble, the church is frequently the first place that Christians and the local community turn to because pastors and churches are frequently the first responders when individuals face crises and traumatic events.

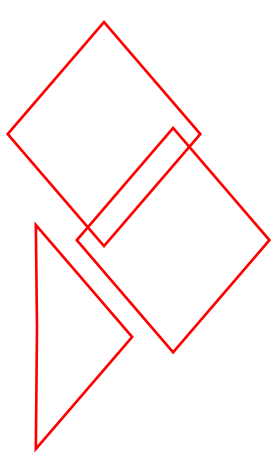
The Pastoral Care response to victims of post-conflict trauma as a healing process is treated from both the restorative and reconciliation perspectives. Involving victims, offenders, and community members in identifying needs and duties fosters healing among all parties involved.





Biblical Basis for Pastoral Care Response to Victims of Post-Conflict Trauma

For the Christian community, as people rooted in the Word of God, there is a need to investigate what the Bible says about trauma; how individuals have dealt with trauma; God's participation in trauma; and the ultimate conclusion for those who survived trauma.



The foundation on which to start and base our ministry as pastoral care providers is the written Word of God, which shows God's love through the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Numerous accounts of people that have gone through severe trauma throughout the Holy Bible, whether overtly stated or not, these accounts describe how people dealt with their trauma, overcame it, and eventually moved past it as transformed people.



Theologically, we learn that God's providential purpose for the person or group of people ultimately causes some promising and optimistic future to emerge out of the terrible occurrence. This feeling of God's unfailing grace and his assurance that the faithful will be restored can be seen in Jeremiah. Even though it seems there is no hope for them, God tells the people that there will eventually be hope and restoration for them.



The LORD declares,

"I know the plans I have for you, and they are not against you; they are for good and not against you, to give you a future and a future filled with hope."

Jer. 29:11





Pastoral care ministry is a helping relationship carried out by pastoral care ministers to heal, reconcile, guide, sustain, and nurture persons physically, socially, and psychologically traumatized or have challenges arising in everyday interactions and the ultimate means of concern. These include three broad activities: **Blessing and healing, reconciliation and conversion, and sanctification and fellowship.**

GALLERY

Care to Traumatized Households in Mangu LGA, Plateau State



More specifically, it has such things as visiting the;

- ❖ sick
- ❖ Attending to the dying
- ❖ Comforting the bereaved
- ❖ Encouraging reconciliation of the estranged
- ❖ Supporting those who are struggling or facing difficulties of any kind
- ❖ Nurturing and protecting the faith of those within the congregation
- ❖ Preaching
- ❖ Teaching
- ❖ Intercessory prayer and

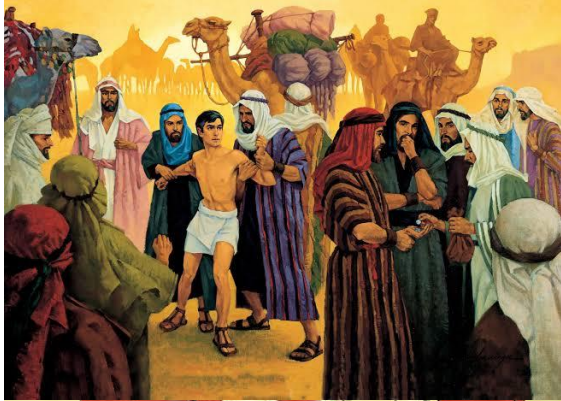


Counseling and Guiding the Traumatized to Develop Resilience

TRAUMA is when a person is overwhelmed by events or circumstances and reacts with tremendous fear, anxiety, horror, and helplessness. It is believed that Armed conflicts produce significant psychological and social distress in the afflicted populations, which necessitated the call for pastoral care to respond to victims of conflict worldwide.

An Old Testament figure who understood trauma and knew how to cope with it is Joseph, the son of Jacob. Parents in their advanced age raised him as their favorite child. Joseph went through six big traumatic events in the first thirty years of his life.





First, Joseph's mother passed away in childbirth.

Second, After he was intended to be killed, his brothers instead dumped him in a pit.

Third, his brothers sold him into slavery to benefit from their disowning him.

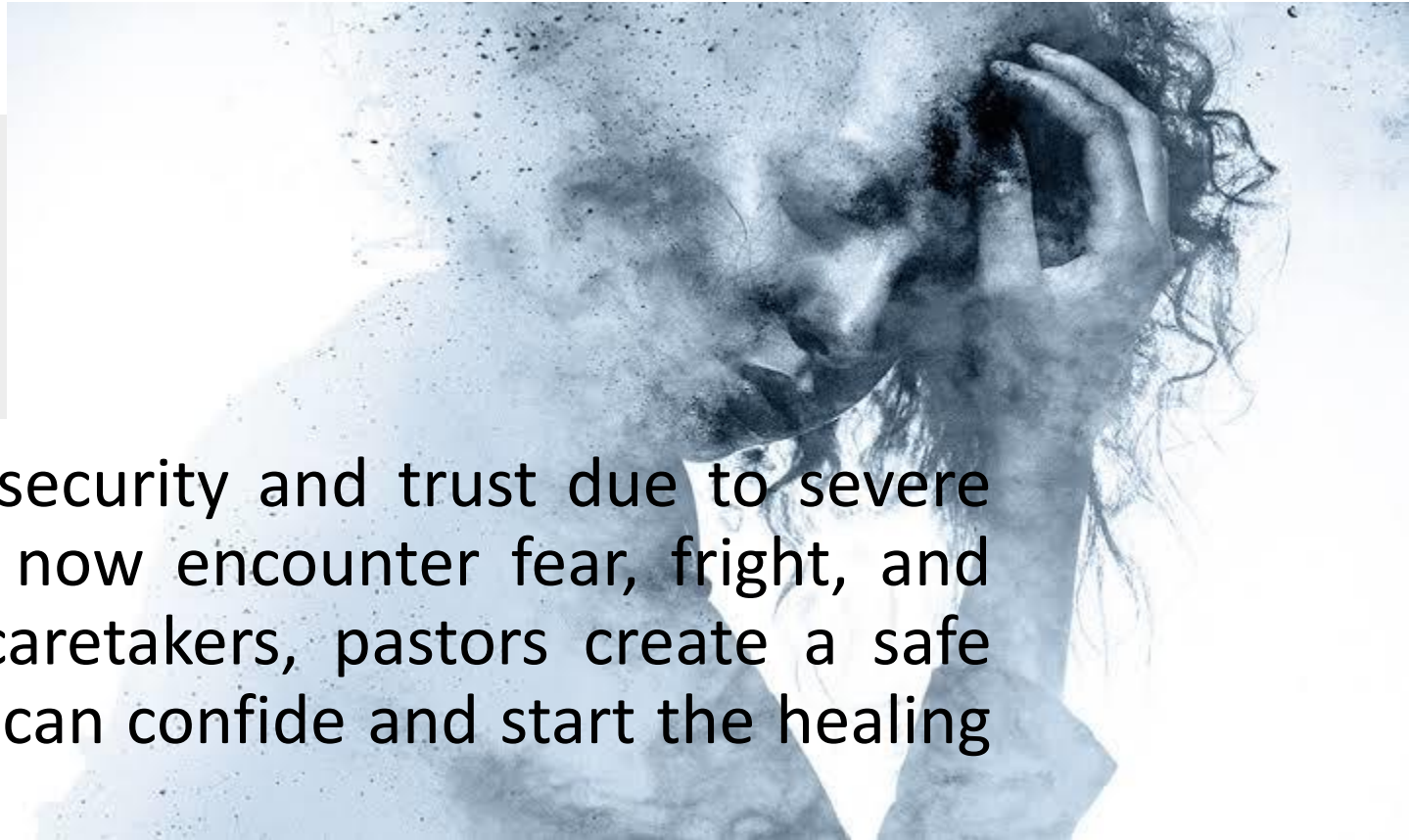
Fourth, he moved to another country as a refugee and was enslaved. The culture threw him off.

Fifth, his employer's wife tried everything to seduce him and then lied about his actions, and

Sixth, the husband was enraged by Mrs. Potiphar's accusation and sent him to jail. Joseph endured hardship, survived, settled in Egypt, and served for eighty years.

He expressed his faith in God and engaged in life-giving work, living life to the fullest. He stated, "***God has made me fruitful in the field of my affliction,***" indicating that he did not let his horrific experiences define or inhabit him (Genesis 41:52).

People lose their sense of security and trust due to severe and traumatic stress. They now encounter fear, fright, and even horror regularly. As caretakers, pastors create a safe environment where victims can confide and start the healing process.





Survival and Reintegration of Victims of Conflicts

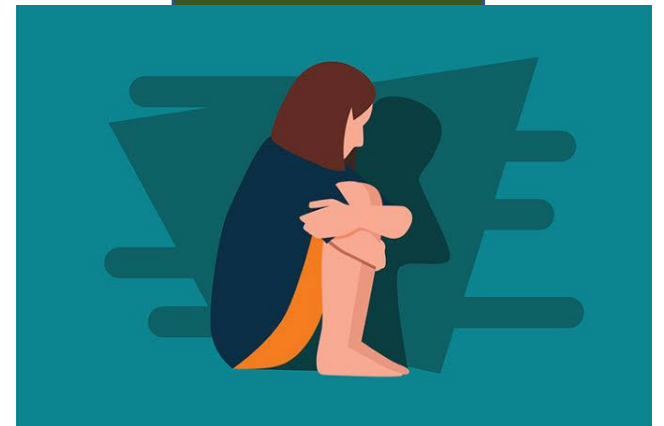
As a clergyman, the pastor serves as the sheep's shepherd. They must take care of all the members as part of their responsibility. They have a responsibility to look after the sick, pay visits to inmates, console the bereaved, and uplift both the traumatized and broken-hearted. The pastor knows the sheep and guides them to better pastures like a wise shepherd.

The church is expected to serve as a social support micro-system and a conduit for healing, acting as the most potent, protective component in trauma recovery.

In helping victims of post-conflict trauma, especially those who have lost loved ones or properties or are incapacitated, the pastor is to expose them to stages of healing thus:



- ❖ **The traumatized person must acknowledge that he is a victim and comprehend the consequences of his victimization. The victim is now prepared to apply the lessons from his horrific experience to their daily life.**
- ❖ **The traumatized person is prepared to take decisive action to boost his sense of control and power, defend himself from potential harm, and strengthen his relationships with those he has come to trust.**
- ❖ **The simple sentence could symbolize the third and final stage of recovery, "I know I have myself."**





After this, survivors will no longer feel controlled by their tragic past; instead, they will govern themselves. The person's current task is to change into the person they desire to be. The traumatized develops a new self that combines all these components in theory and practice.

As Christ's servants, our primary mission is to spread the gospel, assist people in need, whether Christians or non-Christians and promote the whole man's recovery, bringing healing and restoration to the entire family and community. More importantly, it's crucial to remember that, as Christian ministers, everything we do in the "practice" of ministry should be centered on the person of Jesus Christ.

A key component of effective pastoral care is the ministry of presence; it provides an opportunity for the caregiver to be in the middle of the suffering with the one who is hurting. Pastoral care places a strong emphasis on empathy. It is a technique for imagining oneself in another person's shoes and viewing the world from that person's viewpoint. The person experiencing the suffering always feels completely alone, but this is especially true after traumatic events. If not addressed, this feeling of absolute loneliness, emptiness, and isolation can drive one to despair.



The pastoral counselor's presence can serve as a reminder of Christ's solidarity with the suffering person. As evidenced by his cry of abandonment, "**Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachtani,**" Christ himself experienced total abandonment and isolation while on the cross. Jesus experienced the sorrow of isolation and abandonment, so Christians would never share such feelings of separation from God.

Therefore, in pastoral care, the caregiver assists the other to grasp Jesus' feeling of suffering and to remind the other that God is still with them in this moment of his/her/it's night of the soul. However, it is also very significant and beneficial to have a pastoral counselor there who may remind the sufferer of God's sympathy for their affliction.





THANK YOU

QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS?