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THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HOPE FOR THE TRAUMATIZED

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THE HOLY SPIRIT'S HOPE FOR THE TRAUMATIZED

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For Elizabeth and Kendall. Your resilience and radiance shine light everywhere you go.

Our hope is not in vain.

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PREFACE

This thesis is the product of many who helped, prayed, guided, and encouraged me. My boss, pastor, and friend Dr. Jonathan Pennington designed a beautiful ThM program and encouraged me to apply. He listened patiently as I talked through my undeveloped ideas. My supervisor, Dr. Gregg Allison offered invaluable help, guidance, support, grace, and both positive and constructive feedback as I studied a difficult topic. This work would not be possible without his supervision and friendship. My thesis fellow, Alex Tibbot, was incredibly helpful in asking good questions that forced me to strengthen my work, coaching me in clearer communication, and modeling how to be a good thinker and writer. He always kindly offered substantive feedback that made this thesis better than it would have been without his input.

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My dad and hero encouraged me to pursue this thesis, but more so consistently encourages me to pursue Jesus with all my heart. He models faithfulness, steadfastness, and genuine love to me and my family every day. Many other family members and friends encouraged me, supported me, and prayed for me. This thesis, and my sanity as I wrote it, would not have been possible without them.

Christian trauma survivors inspired and motivated me. They move through the world with vibrance and resilience, and that is a miracle. I am overwhelmed with gratitude.

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INTRODUCTION

While trauma and its effects have been problematic for humanity since the fall, Christians have only recently begun to recognize the significant role it plays in the life of the church and its members. The National Center for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder estimates that 60 percent of men and 50 percent of women “experience at least one trauma in their lives.”¹ Churches are not immune to this pattern of experiencing trauma.² Worse, the church is sometimes the site of traumatic events. Even with these statistics, few evangelicals have sought to delve into the study of trauma and promote a biblical source of hope for trauma victims.

Part of the difficulty in studying trauma lies in identifying what constitutes as trauma and distinguishing it from general suffering. The church has a fairly robust theology of suffering.³ However, it has proven challenging to address trauma from a theological perspective. Trauma is complicated and so is its study. Therefore, determining a path toward healing is complicated, too.

From each end of the spectrum, scholars agree: one key to healing from trauma is hope; trauma survivors are not likely to recover substantially without hope for healing

¹ National Center for PTSD, “How Common Is PTSD in Adults?” accessed February 12, 2021, [Ptds.va.gov](https://www.ptsd.va.gov).

² See Jennifer Baldwin, *Trauma-Sensitive Theology: Thinking Theologically in the Era of Trauma* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018) to understand just one story of trauma and her encounters with many more inside and outside the church. One need not recount many more examples as they are ubiquitous.

³ See especially Herman Bavinck, *Reformed Dogmatics*, vol. 3, *Sin and Salvation in Christ*, ed. John Bolt, trans. John Vriend (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 158-160; John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 282-301.

and a better life.⁴ True hope for the traumatized lies in the Triune God and his eschatological promise. This thesis will explore specifically the work of the Holy Spirit to produce hope for the traumatized.

Thesis

This thesis will argue that the Holy Spirit fuels hope for the traumatized in his works of regenerating, sealing, indwelling, sanctifying, resurrecting, and glorifying believers, and producing shalom. I will argue that the Holy Spirit works through these actions to heal the mind/heart, body, and relationships of individuals producing a response of genuine hopefulness in Christian trauma survivors.

Methodology

I will argue this thesis with three major points. First, I will define trauma and human personhood (for the intents of this paper) and explore how the former impact the latter. Second, I will consider how the works of the Spirit in the individual – regeneration, sealing, indwelling, sanctification, and resurrection, and glorification – prove to fuel hope for the traumatized. Third, I will explore the ways in which the Holy Spirit’s role in producing shalom serves to produce hope in trauma victims.

⁴ See Jennifer Baldwin, *Trauma-Sensitive Theology*, 28; Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence – from Domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1992); and Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: a Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010).

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Trauma is drastic and damaging. In order to understand why that is the case, it is necessary to understand some key features of what it means to be human, the environment humans were meant to maintain and enjoy, and some necessary components of what makes an event “traumatic.” Humans are made in God’s image; trauma violates that image and its effects trickle down to every other piece of the individual. Humans were meant to inhabit a beautiful world built for thriving and trauma hinders that. Trauma impedes life and flourishing. However, for Christians, trauma does not have the last word; the Triune God does, and that is reason for hope.

Humanity

Integral to understanding trauma is the definition of human personhood. Instead of offering a comprehensive definition, I will provide an overview of some key components to a biblical notion of humanity in order to understand the depth of the impact of trauma.¹ Before considering some key components of humanity, they must first be set in the framework of the image of God.

Imago Dei

The framework for understanding human personhood is the image of God. In

¹ Certainly, some more components to the biblical notion of human personhood could be offered. However; these foundational components are most relevant to the discussion of trauma and its impact. To see a more comprehensive definition of biblical personhood see: J. Gordon McConville, *Being Human in God’s World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2016); Marc Cortez, *Resourcing Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017); Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020); and Gregg R. Allison, *Embodiment: Living as Whole People in a Fractured World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021).

Genesis 1:26, after God has created the earth and all other living things, he says, “Let us create man in our own image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.”² God’s likeness and the role he gives to humanity is then an essential basis of what it is to be a person. Karl Schumacher avers, “to be human is to be the imago Dei and to be the imago Dei is to be human.”³ Because being human means being the imago Dei, all humans have God-given inherent dignity and worth.⁴

Three Components of Human Personhood

The first component of the human is the inner-self or the heart.⁵ The Hebrew word for heart is “leb,” the part that contains the intellect, will, and emotions.⁶ The same idea is captured in the Greek with the word “kardia.” Scripture refers to the heart often, and it is the part of humans that thinks, feels, desires, wills, and commits.⁷ The heart and its functions are fundamental to what it means to be human.

² English Standard Version (ESV).

³ Karl P. Schumacher, “A Functional Holistic View of Man as the Image of God and Its Implications for Environmentalism” (PhD diss. The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2010), 11.

⁴ Though scholars have endeavored to define the image of God, it is beyond the scope of this project. For example definitions see Peter John Gentry and Stephen J. Wellum, *Kingdom through Covenant: A Biblical-Theological Understanding of the Covenants* 2nd ed. (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2018), 235; John Calvin, *The Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Robert White (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2017), 32; Joshua R. Farris, *An Introduction to Theological Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2020), 80; Michael Horton in *T&T Clark Reader in Theological Anthropology*, ed Mark Cortez and Michael P. Jensen (New York: Bloomsbury, 2018), 117-27; McConville, *Being Human in God’s World*, 11-29.

⁵ For the purpose of this project “heart,” “mind,” and “inner-self” will all be used interchangeably. Though some nuanced semantic ranges of each word could be explicated, it is beyond the scope and unnecessary for the purpose of this project.

⁶ Peter Gentry, “Sexuality: On Being Human and Promoting Social Justice,” *Christian Psychology Journal* 58, no. 1 (2014): 51.

⁷ Jeremy Pierre, *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016), 15.

A second component of personhood is embodiment. There are many implications to having a body that are important parts of what it means to be human. Each person is only able to be in one place at one time. People use their bodies to move and serve and work and express agency. Bodies need rest. They both empower and limit. God created men and women with bodies. God will restore humans with renewed bodies in the new heavens and new earth. This is an essential part of what it means to be a human person.⁸

As a function of both heart and body, persons have the ability to relate to one another.⁹ Relationality is the third component of humanness. People flourish in healthy community, because God designed it that way.¹⁰ Genesis 2:18 says, “Then the Lord God said, ‘It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a helper fit for him.’” God knew Adam needed a companion and created one for him. In addition to the family in Genesis, God institutes the church as a family in the New Testament. Togetherness and community is glorifying to God and necessary for life.

These components together – image of God, the mind and heart, embodiment, relationality – serve as foundational elements to a biblical notion of human personhood. These offer a baseline for the discussion of trauma, its consequences on the victim, and aid in considering the hope of the triune God for trauma sufferers.

Shalom

God created the world to be perfect and as part of that perfection the world, and everything in it, experienced shalom. Shalom means peace, wholeness, or

⁸ Gregg Allison, *Embodied: Living as Whole People in a Fractured World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021), 254.

⁹ The relationship between the body and heart induces much debate and is related to but beyond the scope of this project.

¹⁰ Allison, *Embodied*, 73-82.

flourishing; it is the state of being exactly as God intended.¹¹ The Holy Spirit fructified the words of God in creation, causing each created thing to do exactly as it was intended, and when God looked at creation, he declared it to be “very good,” (Gen 1:31). This declaration of “very good” indicates that the result or reality of creation was in exact conformance to what was intended.¹² This correspondence to God’s intention provides the basis for shalom.

Shalom is the balance within which image bearing was to reach its potential. Humans were to live peaceably with one another, creating a home that was healthy and flourishing. Adam was to work the garden and he and Eve were to create and raise a family. In a state of shalom, humans could carry out their God-given purpose and flourish.

Trauma

When sin entered the world, trauma accompanied it. Immediately, Adam and Eve were cursed and banished from the garden. Shortly thereafter, one of their sons murdered the other. And so trauma began.

Trauma is difficult to define. Is the victim’s reaction what makes an event traumatic?¹³ Is the difference between trauma and suffering simply severity? Is it necessary for the event to be a near death experience to be traumatic? Psychologists and theologians alike have worked to answer these questions, but some themes seem to be widely accepted aspects of trauma.

¹¹ Mark Devine, *Shalom Yesterday, Today, and Forever: Embracing All Three Dimensions of Creation and Redemption* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 1.

¹² Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 300.

¹³ Throughout this thesis I will use the terms “victim” and “survivor” interchangeably to describe those who have experienced trauma. The term “victim” captures the severity of trauma and acknowledges that, in most cases, the sufferer was victimized by another. The more positive term “survivor” captures the beauty of how trauma sufferers are also overcomers.

There is now a diagnosis for the human response to trauma.¹⁴ The fifth addition of the *Diagnostics and Statistics Model of Mental Health Disorders* (DSM-5) requires that in order for a person to be diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) it be established that he or she was exposed to a “potentially traumatic event,” described as,¹⁵

Exposure to actual or threatened death, serious injury, or sexual violence in one (or more) of the following ways: 1. Directly experiencing the traumatic event(s). 2. Witnessing, in person, the event(s) as it occurred to others. 3. Learning that traumatic event(s) occurred to a close family member or close friend. In cases of actual or threatened death to a family member or friend, the event(s) must have been violent or accidental. 4. Experience repeated or extreme exposure to aversive details of the traumatic event(s) (e.g., first responders collecting human remains; police officers repeatedly exposed to details of child abuse).¹⁶

A common thread among the described events is that they so violate the integrity of the image of God in a person and impose circumstances so far beyond shalom that they significantly detract from a person’s ability to display the imago dei in a healthy and flourishing manner. Four components of trauma contribute to its detraction from survivors’ struggle to image God and live as whole people.

First, a traumatic event is one that affects the victim far beyond the actual occurrence of the event.¹⁷ In her book, *Spirit and Trauma*, Shelly Rambo asserts, “Trauma is suffering that does not go away.”¹⁸ While traumatic experiences may take place in one instance or over a period of time, they are overwhelming in such a way that

¹⁴ Not every traumatic event results in a Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) response or diagnosis, the conditions for diagnosing PTSD aid us in our understanding of trauma.

¹⁵ American Psychiatric Association, *Diagnostics and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders*, 5th ed. (Arlington, VA: American Psychiatric Association, 2013), 265.

¹⁶ American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-5*, 271.

¹⁷ Shelly Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma: A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2010), 15.

¹⁸ Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 15.

the victim cannot process them immediately.¹⁹ The victim struggles to fold the traumatic event into the regular framework of life, causing additional pain as the trauma is extended. Cathy Caruth, in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, writes of traumatic experiences, “the event is not assimilated or experienced fully at the time, but only belatedly, in its repeated *possession* of the one who experiences it.”²⁰ The victim’s inability to process the event in the moment is one of the traumatizing features; life is not the same again even after the traumatic event has passed. Rambo describes this recurring aspect of trauma in case studies: “In each of these cases, the study focuses on ways in which an overwhelming event or events of violence continue in the present, returning and impacting the present and the future in unaccounted-for ways.”²¹ The inability to process trauma normally adds to its difficulty as it continues to consume and overwhelm the victim.

A second component of trauma is that the sufferer cannot process the event at its occurrence, but also cannot process it in such a way as to fold it in to his or her previous understanding of the world. Rambo writes, “The challenge of trauma is the challenge of witnessing to a phenomenon that exceeds the categories by which we make sense of the world.”²² The severity of the event is so overwhelming that the victim cannot place it in a previously held notion about the world and his or her place and identity within it.

A third component of trauma is its connection to death. Scott Harrower in, *God of All Comfort: A Trinitarian Response to the Horrors of This World*, defines one

¹⁹ Cynthia Hess, *Sites of Violence, Sites of Grace: Christian Nonviolence and the Traumatized Self* (Plymouth, UK: Lexington Books, 2009), 36.

²⁰ Cathy Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), 4.

²¹ Shelly Rambo, *The Spirit and Trauma A Theology of Remaining* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 4 (*italics original*).

²² Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 31.

criterion of horror: “it includes a degeneration of life toward death by means of replacing the makeup of a being with absences or distortions of them and replacing the qualities of things with lacks or distortions of those qualities.”²³ Horror is an event that so demeans a person that it brushes with death.²⁴ Rambo agrees with Harrower that trauma has this element of being somewhere between life and death: “To witness trauma is a complex and disorienting process. It is a process of witnessing death and life in a radical reconfiguration... Trauma is often spoken about as a dissolution of the death-life boundary.”²⁵ To be traumatized is to experience an event so opposite of life and flourishing that it degrades the very nature of being alive, of being a person.

Death does not just mean in the final sense, as in when one takes his final breath and officially passes from living to dead. Rather, it includes the process of moving toward death through a significant diminishment. Rambo writes to the same point, “Because trauma shatters so much of what we understand to constitute life, the very definition of life is in question.”²⁶

A fourth component of trauma is its connection to violence.²⁷ Whether the violence is physical or takes another form, it is a stark opponent to well-being, safety, and shalom. Many traumatic events do involve physical violence; for example, domestic abuse, rape, and assault. Other events could involve a sudden loss or be of a more emotionally violent nature. Either way, the event causes a violent disruption to the typical flow of life. Caruth refers to traumatic events causing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder as

²³ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 27-28.

²⁴ Harrower prefers the term “horror” to describe a traumatic event and “trauma” to describe the response. Therefore, a definition of “horror” for Harrower would be synonymous with “traumatic event” etc.

²⁵ Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 25.

²⁶ Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 25.

²⁷ Hess, *Sites of Violence Sites of Grace*, 33.

“violent occurrences.”²⁸ Rambo writes of the history of trauma study, “Analysis of trauma began to move into multiple disciplines, as each attempted to understand the nature and impact of violence in its social, political, and historical dimensions.”²⁹

All the events described in the DSM-5 treatment of PTSD are significantly violent or comprise the aftermath of violence. Whether physically, sexually, emotionally, or relationally violent, they all involve an abrupt disruption of the normal order and pattern of a healthy life. In *Trauma Sensitive Theology*, Jennifer Baldwin describes the difference between events that cause trauma and those that fall somewhere in the realm of normal – albeit negative – occurrences. She writes, “Traumatic Wounding often occurs when we experience a crisis event or violence.”³⁰ Such events can be considered violent even if not physically so. For example, a child being forcibly removed from his home by a social worker may not experience physical violence, but is so disruptive to the normal pattern of a healthy and flourishing life that it is emotionally and relationally violent.³¹ Cynthia Hess in *Sites of Violence Sites of Grace*, argues that trauma study is the study of violence, “the interdisciplinary field of trauma studies vividly describes an acute form of violence that can become internal to the self over time: traumatic violence. Comprised of scholars and clinicians from many disciplines who all address ‘trauma’ or ‘traumatic violence’ – violence that leads to patterns of psychic wounding – this field analyzes a range of events and experiences.”³² Violent events are so oppositional to life that they cause trauma, opposing shalom and hindering human flourishing.

These four components will provide the basis for further discussion about the

²⁸ Caruth, *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, 3.

²⁹ Rambo, *Spirit and Trauma*, 26-27.

³⁰ Baldwin, *Trauma-Sensitive Theology*, 24.

³¹ This example of a potentially emotionally traumatic event does not mean that there are not instances in which this would be the better option for the child.

³² Cynthia Hess, *Sites of Violence Sites of Grace*, 3.

impact of trauma and hope for the traumatized. The severity and violent nature of trauma pose a theological question different from that of commonplace suffering: is there hope of recovering a meaningful life?³³ Trauma requires victims to wrestle with and reconcile the truths of scripture differently from those who experience more typical suffering, because the victims have been affected in such a violent and severe manner.

Trauma and Human Personhood

Trauma poses a unique threat to human personhood, because it degrades life. Humans are meant to flourish and experience shalom, but trauma interrupts life and flourishing, negatively affecting each of the aspects of personhood.

Trauma and the Imago Dei

The framework of what it means to be human is the imago Dei. Trauma violates the dignity of that image. Harrower writes of this concept, “Traumatic events undermine a person’s ability to be active in the world and relate to it from a position of competence and confidence that is proper for an image of God.”³⁴ Trauma survivors struggle to operate in the world in the way God designed. Hess argues that trauma survivors often experience a loss of agency: “Some trauma theorists argue that this loss of control is an especially crippling effect of trauma because human beings need a sense of control to function well in the world.”³⁵ When one loses her ability to function well in the world and relate to it as a representative of God, her ability to exercise what it means to bear God’s image is diminished.

Because humans bear God’s image, any violation of a person’s body or dignity is a direct affront to God. God’s image is perfect and to inflict trauma upon a person is to

³³ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 50.

³⁴ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 51.

³⁵ Hess, *Sites of Violence, Sites of Grace*, 47.

diminish his or her ability to reflect God's image. Image bearers do not have the right to detract from other image bearers' dignity in reflecting God's image.³⁶ Traumatized individuals struggle to carry out God's purpose for them as the traumatic violation is so severe that it hinders survivors' ability to have dominion over the earth and to be fruitful and multiply. Victims struggle post-trauma to exercise their autonomy and command over themselves and to feel like they have any control over their lives and surroundings.³⁷ They are unable to adequately "exercise dominion" over creation. Because it is difficult for trauma survivors to trust and be in healthy relationships, their ability to "be fruitful and multiply" is also hindered.

Trauma and the Components of Human Personhood

First, trauma affects the way a person thinks and feels, his heart. Judith Herman in *Trauma and Recovery* notes that, "[Traumatic events] undermine the belief systems that give meaning to human experience. They violate the victim's faith in the natural or divine order and cast the victim into a state of existential chaos."³⁸ The inner struggle caused by trauma challenges the victims' notions of the meaning of life and their place in it. This struggle is directly related to victim's heart and mind. Trauma violates the normal, healthy thinking and believing components of a person.

Second, survivors struggle to think rightly about themselves and the world around them. People process trauma differently than they do more normal kinds of suffering.³⁹ Therefore, survivors' minds do not recover at the same speed as they do from

³⁶ Gregg Allison, "The Holy Spirit and Humanity," unpublished class notes for 81430 (The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Winter Semester, 2021).

³⁷ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 33-35.

³⁸ Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 51.

³⁹ Rambo, *The Spirit and Trauma*, 19.

typical daily struggles. Because trauma is such a severe violation of a person, victims have difficulty with negative thoughts and emotions, hopelessness, and despair.

Third, trauma affects the way a victim views his or her embodied state. It is often a threat to the body physically. Whether the trauma one experienced was a direct physical threat or not, a victim's response almost always involves a physical factor. In *The Body Keeps the Score*, Bessel Van der Kolk argues that survivors often experience a loss in the physical senses and, "when our senses become muffled, we no longer feel fully alive."⁴⁰ Our embodied state is a key aspect to what it means to be human and alive, to function and carry out our God-given assignments, but trauma violates the body and disrupts its healthy function.

Most forms of trauma are a direct violation of the body. But even in cases where someone experienced non-bodily trauma (for example, witnessing a traumatic event or undergoing severe verbal abuse) the memories are stored in the brain.⁴¹ Survivors often struggle to function as normal. They devalue their body and its goodness. Because people are embodied, humans are their bodies.⁴² Something that violates or person's body violates his or her person.

Trauma theorists agree that trauma negatively influences a victim's relationality and that a restoration of healthy relationships is essential for recovery.⁴³ The victim was violated so terribly that the ability to relate well to others is challenged, even broken. But because healthy relationships and community are such an important part of what it means to be human, wholeness cannot be achieved without them.

⁴⁰ Bessel Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 91.

⁴¹ Bessel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 39-42.

⁴² Allison, *Embodied*, 21.

⁴³ See especially Harrower, *God of All comfort*, 182-218; Hess, *Sites of Violence, Sites of Grace*, 89-105; and Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, 133.

Because relationships are fundamental to what it means to be human, unhealthy relationships result in a lack of flourishing. People need one another to thrive. An unfortunate consequence trauma survivors face is an inability to trust and relate to others.⁴⁴ Often times well-meaning loved ones have difficulty relating and helping the victim and struggle to pursue the victim as he or she works to overcome the difficulty relating. This vicious cycle causes the survivor to feel more isolated, less understood, and unable to pursue healthy relationships, to his or her continued detriment.⁴⁵

Trauma and Shalom

The environment God designed for humanity to enjoy was one of shalom. Harrower refers to shalom as the “backstory of horrors.”⁴⁶ Because the world existed in a state of shalom, a violation of that perfection results in suffering for humanity. A significant violation of shalom, results in trauma.

God created a beautiful, perfect world with humanity at its center, existing in perfect shalom. Then Adam and Eve sinned, separating humanity from that perfection and hindering shalom. Mark Devine describes the effect of the fall on shalom thusly, “The distortion and spoliation brought on by humankind’s rebellion against the creator has penetrated each of these layers and dimensions [of shalom] within the wrecked home we now inhabit.”⁴⁷ The home God had made for humans to dwell in was fractured and its equilibrium shaken; it was no longer the healthy, life-giving haven it had been.

⁴⁴ Baldwin, *Trauma-Sensitive Theology*, 50-53.

⁴⁵ Herman, *Trauma*, 133.

⁴⁶ Scott Harrower, *God of All Comfort: A Trinitarian Response to the Horrors of the World* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 7.

⁴⁷ Devine, *Shalom*, 168.

The starkest contrast to shalom is trauma. Trauma directly diminishes the survivor's ability to exist in peace and wholeness and live out his or her purpose. Trauma negatively affects image bearing in the following ways: 1) it inhibits the image bearer's ability to feel and think rightly, 2) it inhibits the image bearer's ability to use and view his own body, 3) it inhibits the image bearer's ability to relate to God and others. Trauma affects shalom negatively by disrupting peace and inducing brokenness. Humankind cannot flourish fully where shalom does not exist, and trauma is antithetical to shalom.

Trauma and the Necessity of Hope

Trauma, however, is not the end of the story. The broken shalom and shattered personhood of trauma is not all that remains. There is hope, as Calvin describes:

Now where there is this living faith, it is always accompanied by the hope of everlasting salvation, or rather it engenders and produces it. For if this hope is not in us, however nicely and attractively we prattle on about faith, we retain nothing of it. If, we have already said, faith is a sure conviction of God's faithfulness, and if his faithfulness cannot lie, deceive or disappoint, whoever has come to the conviction will similarly expect the Lord to fulfill his promises which he holds to be true. In short, hope is nothing less than an expectation of the blessings which faith believes have been promised by God.⁴⁸

If Calvin is correct, and "hope is nothing less than the expectation of the blessings which faith believes have been promised by God," then Christian hope is far more than anticipation and a positive outlook; hope is *sure*. As Constantine Campbell underscores in *Paul and the Hope of Glory*, "Paul regards hope as of central significance for those in Christ. It is not wishful thinking nor mere optimism; hope is rather the certain expectation of what God will do based on his promises and his past faithfulness."⁴⁹ God's promises for the future can be trusted because he has been faithful in the past. For the Christian,

⁴⁸ John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Robert White (Carlisle, PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 2017), 291.

⁴⁹ Constantine Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020), 287.

God's promises give reason for a forward-looking, hopeful perspective.

God has promised many things about life in the current age and life in the new heavens and the new earth. Because Jesus's death, resurrection, and ascension have ushered in the kingdom of God, the current age is impacted by the age to come when God will renew the heavens and earth.⁵⁰ For instance, Paul says in Romans 6:14, "For sin will have no dominion over you, since you are not under law but under grace." Christians are already under the rule of grace; therefore, believers can place their confidence in the promise that sin will not reign forever. Because sin will not reign forever, believers have hope that they will be renewed in their hearts and minds.

Paul explains another of God's promises: that as creation waits for the world's eschatological end – the adoption of the sons of God completed – believers can hope. Paul says, "For in this hope we were saved," (Romans 8:24). The teleological end is coming, and it will be good; the world will be right again: "The one who conquers will have this heritage, and I will be his God and he will be my son," (Rev 21:7). The hope of all being set to right in the new heavens and the new earth fuels hope in the restoration of our bodies.

Hope is the key to healing. Trauma sufferers need to know that there is hope for a good future and that they can live in light of that hope now. In Ephesians 2:18-19 Paul declares, "For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God." Because of Jesus's death and resurrection and the Holy Spirit's indwelling, believers are members together with one another. This truth fuels hope in the traumatized that relationships can be restored both now and in the age to come.

⁵⁰ Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory*, 65-69.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the basis of trauma is its violation of the image of God in human persons. The image of God in individuals is the framework for understanding their inherent worth and therefore the severity of trauma. Trauma affects the heart, body, and relationships of survivors in a way that hinders flourishing. Trauma is the opposite of the shalom in which humans were designed to exist and flourish.

In order to reestablish a flourishing life post trauma, reestablishing hope is key. The Holy Spirit fuels that hope by his perfecting work. The next chapter will explore how regeneration, sealing, indwelling, sanctification, resurrection, and glorification fuel hope for the traumatiz

CHAPTER 2

TRAUMA AND THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Introduction

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Triune God and is fully God with the Father and the Son. John Frame describes the Spirit's work as God's power, authority, and presence in the world.¹ In other words the Holy Spirit is responsible for implementing, fructifying, and sustaining God's work in the world. Gregg Allison summarizes the Spirit's work, "In the past, the Holy Spirit gave birth to the church as the body of Jesus Christ. In the future, the Holy Spirit will perfect the church as the bride, the wife of the Lamb. In the present, the church lives, grows, ministers, and multiplies in the age of the Spirit."² Through the Spirit, God's past, present, and future designs and intentions come to fruition.

In this chapter, I will argue that the Holy Spirit fuels hope for the victims of trauma through his role in perfecting recreation, specifically: regeneration, sealing, indwelling, sanctification, resurrection, and glorification.³ The Spirit's past involvement

¹ John Frame, *Systematic Theology: An Introduction to Christian Belief* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2013), 925.

² Gregg R. Allison and Andreas J. Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit* (Nashville: B&H Academic, 2020), 223.

³ I affirm the doctrine of inseparable operations which indicates that all actions of God belong to the Triune God, but that some activities can be attributed primarily to one person of the Trinity. God is one God in three persons. Since the purpose of this thesis is to explore the ways in which the Holy Spirit fuels hope for the traumatized, the involvement of the Father and the Son in the same mission are not discussed significantly. The Father and the Son share in the work of the Spirit and have activities that terminate with them that fuel hope for the traumatized. See Harrower's, *God of All Comfort*, for activities through which all and each of the persons of the Godhead produce hope for those who have been subjected to horror.

with creation, his current involvement in the salvation and sanctification of believers, and his future involvement in bringing about the promises of resurrection and glorification produce hope for Christian trauma survivors.

First, I will consider the basis for recreation: creation. The Holy Spirit's role in creation is the basis by which he is involved in recreation, and thusly, the hope and healing of trauma survivors. Then, I will explore how the Holy Spirit's work in recreating and perfecting fuels hope for the traumatized by repairing and restoring their fractured persons.

Creation

The World

God began by bringing order to chaos. Genesis 1:2 reads, "The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." The world was uninhabitable, but then God made light and dark, sun and moon, water and sky, fish and birds, land and land animals (Gen 1:3-25). Finally, he created humans: the culmination of his creative act. All of this was "very good" (Gen 1:31). Gregg Allison argues that it was the Holy Spirit who brought God's words to fruition, according to God's good design.⁴ The earth was full of shalom and humans maintained and promoted it.

Devine argues that in order to understand the importance of redemption one must first understand the importance of creation, "Creation lies at the very heart of the gospel of Jesus Christ, because without creation there is nothing to redeem. Creation ensures, prompts, and signals both the initiation and final shape of redemption."⁵ When

⁴ Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 297-299.

⁵ Mark Devine, *Shalom Yesterday, Today, and Forever: Embracing All Three Dimensions of Creation and Redemption* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2019), 11.

God redeems the world, he will redeem it from death and decay, to the beauty it once had.

Humanity

The three major aspects of human personhood, situated in the framework of the image of God, are relevant: 1) the heart, 2) the body, and 3) the relational nature of humanity.⁶ In the first two chapters of Genesis, this framework and these three aspects are highlighted.

Image of God. Genesis 1:2 states, “The earth was without form and void, and the darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.” The Spirit stood ready to turn the shapeless void into a beautiful, functioning earth. According to Gregg Allison in *The Holy Spirit*, the Spirit “fructified” the words of the Father in creation. When God said, “let there be,” or “let the earth produce,” and it happened, the Spirit’s agency caused that result.⁷ The climax of the creation event was the creation of humanity. When God said, “Let us make man in our own image...” the Spirit brought that declaration to fruition and mankind was made in the image of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

In Genesis 1:26-27 God says, “Let us make man in our own image, after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that that creeps on the earth.’ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them.” God’s people are made to be like him, to represent him, and to fulfill the role he set forth for them.

In Genesis 2, God creates the material and immaterial parts of the first man; “then

⁶ See the introduction to these components in chap. 1, pp. 4-5.

⁷ Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 297- 298.

the Lord God formed the man of dust from the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and the man became a living creature,” (v. 8). The material part of man was formed from the dust and the immaterial part was formed from the “breath of life” breathed by God into the man. These components together made him a “living creature.” The relational nature of man comes next as God says, “It is not good that man should be alone; I will make him a helper fit for him, (2:18).” Before anything had gone wrong, before any problem needed solving, God designed a woman to be in relationship with Adam, and she was essential to his flourishing, as he was to hers. The primordial couple’s bodies, hearts, and relationship reflected the image of God.

Inextricably linked to the image of God is the subsequent creation mandate, “And God blessed them and said, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth,’” (Gen 1:28). God purposed that mankind would reflect him to the rest of creation. Flowing from the image of God is a purpose to fulfill. As the Holy Spirit had a role in causing the other elements of creation to come forth and perform as they were intended, so he does with humans.⁸

The body and the heart. The next components of human personhood are the material and immaterial parts.⁹ The material part is the body. The immaterial part may be described as the mind or heart.¹⁰ Genesis 2:8 describes the combination of the “dust of the ground” and the “breath of life” as the basis for man’s being a living creature. The Holy Spirit is not the “breath of life,” humans are not infused with the Holy Spirit, but he,

⁸ Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 298.

⁹ While these parts are often separated for definitional and applicatory purposes, I leave them together in this section for two reasons: Genesis 2 shows their combination as what constitutes the man becoming “a living creature,” and the two parts together constitute the natural state of mankind; only in death do we see the two parts separated.

¹⁰ Peter Gentry, “Sexuality: On Being Human and Promoting Social Justice,” *Christian Psychology* 8, no. 1 (2014): 51.

as described by Gregg Allison, “gives the spark of life to the ‘dust of the ground’ and Adam becomes a living creature. The impartation of life to the first human creature is linked to the Holy Spirit.”¹¹

Relationality. A final component of human personhood is relationality. Humans need to relate to both God and other humans to flourish.¹² When God declared that it was not good for man to be alone in Genesis two, he was noting the man’s need for companionship. The Holy Spirit provides the ability to experience healthy companionship. Gregg Allison writes in *Embodiment: Living as Whole People in a Fractured World* that “it is by design that all gendered embodied people desire, express, and receive relationships.”¹³ God ordained that humans would exist in relationship and the Holy Spirit fructified the relationships in the garden.

Recreation

The Spirit provides hope for believers through his work in recreation. As he is involved in creation, the Holy Spirit is involved in recreation, which is the basis of hope for the traumatized.¹⁴ While creation will not be finalized until Jesus returns and sets all things right, the work of recreation began Christ’s first advent. He came inaugurating the reign of the kingdom of God, setting the world on its trajectory into the last days.

Regeneration

For individuals, the work of recreation begins with regeneration. The Holy Spirit regenerates believers, giving them a new nature, transforming their hearts and

¹¹ Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 334-335.

¹² Scott Harrower, *A Trinitarian Response to the Horrors of the World* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019), 15.

¹³ Gregg Allison, *Embodied: Living as Whole People in a Fractured World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Books, forthcoming), pg.

¹⁴ This does not mean that there is no basis for hope in the Father or the Son; only that the reason the traumatized can hope in the Holy Spirit is because of his perfecting work in recreation.

minds into the likeness of Christ. Regeneration is the starting point of hope for traumatized believers in each of the following categories of personhood: image of God, immaterial part/heart/mind, material part/embodiment, and relationality.

Regeneration provides hope for the traumatized because the Holy Spirit begins the work of transforming the Christian into his teleological end: an image bearer conformed to the image of Christ.¹⁵ Harrower writes of the relationship of trauma to image bearing, “Horrors perpetuate the cascade of problems that were initiated by the primeval couple’s failure to personally image God. Horrors degrade and downgrade the ways that images of God may flourish as relational, moral and creative persons.”¹⁶ Trauma interferes with humanity’s ability to image God, but the Holy Spirit works to rectify that. Trauma surviving believers can have hope that their purpose is being and will be restored because the Holy Spirit regenerates them, giving them a new nature. Paul says to the Philippians, “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.” The image of God - marred at the fall and violated in trauma - begins to be restored at regeneration.

The Holy Spirit’s work in regeneration provides hope for the traumatized because it begins the process of restoring the immaterial aspect of personhood. Regeneration turns a believer’s heart toward God. Harrower opines, “religious transformation stops and reverses the correlation between trauma and a dampened degree of lifetime happiness. Researchers believe that the root reason for this may be that people who have had a religious transformation may have positive beliefs about God, such as him being a loving being.”¹⁷ This embarks the regenerated on a path that allows them to see the beauty of God’s design, how trauma is a violation of it, and begin trusting

¹⁵ Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 369.

¹⁶ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 40.

¹⁷ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 184.

in God's promises for a perfect future. Harrower describes the future hope of Christians thusly, "Christian hope is therefore a future oriented hope. This hope includes the prospect of one day understanding ourselves, our experiences, and our interactions with others within God's perspective. Only then will our lives 'make sense' – divine sense."¹⁸ Regeneration provides the framework for the believer to entrust his heart with this future hope. Because God has regenerated him and shined light on sin and devastation, he can imagine and hope for a world that is restored.

The Holy Spirit's work in regeneration provides hope for victims of trauma to be restored bodily, because his work to transform Christians' hearts and minds ensures his promise to resurrect their bodies. Romans 8:22-23 says, "For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies." Those the Spirit has regenerated can trust he will redeem their bodies. Because regeneration means that believers are "born again," it means their bodies will be resurrected as well.¹⁹

Regeneration produces hope for restored relationships, because it invites Christians into a new family and community. This paves the way for reconciled relationships.²⁰ When a believer's heart is bent toward God, it is also bent toward God's people, allowing for openness and relationship.²¹ Harrower writes, "The Spirit also regenerates the creative capacities of each image [bearer]. The ethical purity of the holy

¹⁸ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 161.

¹⁹ There is a section on resurrection's importance in providing hope for trauma on pp. 31-33. This was narrowed only to the reasons regeneration provides hope for the traumatized.

²⁰ I am not referring to reconciled relationships with the perpetrator(s) of trauma.

²¹ This does not mean the survivor should feel that he or she is not regenerated if he or she is struggling to trust others and be open. If one is a believer, regeneration has already occurred, but the process of perfecting the transformation that began at regeneration is lifelong. This just means that the believer will ultimately be inclined toward loving and being loved by God's people.

and living God directs this transformation so that the creative capacities of human beings may now lead to life-giving cultures on earth.”²² Because believers are regenerated by the Spirit, they are empowered to foster healthy relationships and create a culture that is not one of trauma, but one that reflects God’s kingdom.

Sealing

Gregg Allison describes the sealing of the Holy Spirit thusly, “All those who embrace the gospel and confess the Lordship of Jesus Christ are marked by the Spirit.”²³ The sealing of the Spirit guarantees God’s promises will be fulfilled. Allison continues, “In light of the bearing of the Spirit’s mark, Christians adopt two postures...an avoidance of sin... [and] an anticipation of salvation in its fullness.”²⁴ These truths bring hope for the traumatized.

The sealing of the Holy Spirit gives Christians hope that they will see the image of God restored in themselves. Similar to the hope provided by regeneration, the sealing of the Spirit points to a day when redemption will be complete. Sealing is the down payment for the redemption that is to come. As the believer trusts in this seal and embraces the Spirit who indwells him, his confidence grows. Romans 8:14-17 says,

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs – heirs with God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

The Spirit is working in Christians to show them a vision for a hopeful future as full sons and daughters of God. Trauma victims need hope in a good future.²⁵ One of the most

²² Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 191.

²³ Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 395.

²⁴ Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 396.

²⁵ Flora A. Keshigan, *Time for Hope: Practices for Living in Today’s World* (New York:

detrimental emotions to the healing of trauma survivors is hopelessness.²⁶ The sealing of the Holy Spirit provides relief from hopelessness, because it guarantees a good future of being fully and wholly restored as an image bearer. Harrower says of this future hope, “The whole-person recreation we can anticipate affirms the teleological goodness of God’s will and actions. The final outcome of the entire process of each believing person’s creation, disorientation through the course of their life, and death and resurrection will lead to a full ontological reorientation as an image of God.”²⁷

The sealing of the Holy Spirit helps the traumatized person to be restored in his immaterial and material parts as well. The Spirit’s sealing offers hope for the future, which helps the mind and heart to heal. One of the struggles for trauma survivors is a difficulty imagining that things will ever be good again.²⁸ The Spirit’s sealing is the basis for the ability to look ahead and imagine a good life. God has promised a good future for those who love him, and the sealing of the Spirit is the guarantee - down payment - for that good future. Sealing offers hope for the body; it guarantees a future resurrection. Christians can look forward and frame their perspective around the future promises of God instead of their current or past pain.²⁹ Harrower describes hope from the Spirit this way, “the gift of the Spirit is the gift of God’s power, which liberates and reorients people from trending toward death to trending toward fullness of life in the new heavens and the new earth.”³⁰ Though the Spirit does as Harrower describes through all his work, his sealing is particularly geared toward a forward-looking, future-fulfilling promise.

Continuum, 2006), 1.

²⁶ Keshigan, *Redeeming Memories*, 39.

²⁷ Harrower, *A Trinitarian Response to the Horrors of This World*, 170.

²⁸ Bessel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 17.

²⁹ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 179.

³⁰ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 190.

Sealing offers hope for improved relationships in two ways. The first is that believers are no longer postured toward sin.³¹ Since Christians do not want to sin against God and grieve the Holy Spirit, they do not want to sin against one another. Sin hinders healthy relationships; therefore the posture to not sin encourages the traumatized to still be open to healthy relationships. This posture can also provide encouragement for the victim to trust that true Christian friends also desire not to sin and to love the victim well. The second way sealing offers hope for improved relationships relates to the second posture of the sealed: “the anticipation of salvation in its fullness.”³² Restored, sinless relationships will accompany the “fullness of salvation.” One way the Holy Spirit fuels hope for the traumatized is by offering the hope of redeemed relationships through the down payment of sealing.

Indwelling

The indwelling of the Spirit can be defined as his continual presence with those who are in Christ.³³ According to Allison, Ephesians 5:18-21 outlines four marks of those filled with the Spirit: genuine community, God-honoring worship, gratitude expressed in every circumstance, and love for one another through mutual submission. The Spirit’s indwelling – leading the existence of these marks in the believer, provides hope for Christians in the work God is doing in themselves and other Christians.

First, the Spirit’s indwelling produces hope for the restoration of the image of God in the traumatized. Jesus – the true image of God – has the Spirit in full, without measure. The Spirit’s relationship to the image of God is significant. Through his indwelling, the Spirit restores the fractured image of God in his people; he gives himself

³¹ Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 396.

³² Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 396.

³³ Allison and Köstenberger, *Holy Spirit*, 404.

in greater measure to those he indwells. When the image of God is being restored in trauma victims, they will grow in the four marks above. It serves as an encouragement to survivors that the Christians around them are growing in these marks as well. If the trauma survivor can see his primary identity as a member of God's kingdom through the Holy Spirit's indwelling, his healing will be propelled forward.³⁴

Indwelling aids in the healing of the immaterial part in the wake of trauma. Indwelling produces in believers the four marks above in an increasing fashion. The Spirit's help in "God-honoring worship," allows the trauma victim's heart to be oriented toward God. The consequence of trauma that causes the brain to be unable to process it like other events, often causes the sufferer to be overwhelmed by the event(s) and its effects, unable to see beyond it.³⁵ But the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit helps survivors to slowly put their trauma in perspective. Instead of minimizing or numbing one toward their traumatic experience, recognizing the magnitude of what occurred, the Holy Spirit is grieved with and for the survivor. The Holy Spirit's presence allows the sufferer to experience the comfort of the Spirit's mutual grief and recognize that God is still greater even than the worst of suffering. Even though healing is slow and difficult the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence helps the traumatized say with Paul in "God-honoring worship,"³⁶ "For I consider the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us," (Rom 8:18). This is not diminutive of the significance and magnitude of the suffering of trauma, but rather indicative of the magnitude of God's glory and humanity's part in it.

Indwelling provides hope for the healing the bodily effects of trauma in two ways. First, the Spirit indwells humans who are embodied. Their bodies become his temple (1

³⁴ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 179.

³⁵ Rambo, *The Spirit and Trauma*, 4 and American Psychiatric Association, *DSM-5*, 275.

³⁶ Allison and Köstenberger, *The Holy Spirit*, 405.

Cor 6:19). His indwelling presence indicates that their traumatized bodies are not too broken to become a temple of the living God. Second, the Holy Spirit's indwelling presence provides the traumatized with hope for future healing of their bodies.

The Spirit's indwelling presence produces "genuine community," and "love for one another through mutual submission." These marks aid in the growth of healthy relationships. Genuine relationships are simultaneously challenging and necessary for trauma survivors.³⁷ While the trauma victim might not feel like she possesses these marks in great measure, she can be encouraged in two ways: if she is a believer, she is and will continue to be marked by these characteristics, and the Christian community around her will grow in these areas as well. The survivor can trust that as the Spirit works in her friends, they will grow in their "love for [her] through mutual submission." The kingdom of God is the community through which victims can flourish because it is marked by "God's life-giving love."³⁸

Sanctification

Allison defines sanctification as "the cooperative work of God and Christians by which ongoing transformation into greater Christlikeness occurs."³⁹ Romans 8:29 explains, "For those he foreknew, he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, in order that he might be the firstborn among many brothers." The Holy Spirit spurs Christians' conformity to the likeness of the Son through sanctification, gradually repairing the image of God in them. Harrower affirms that, "A new purpose is given to believers in the context of trauma and horrors: to imitate Jesus' mission and manner

³⁷ Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence from domestic Abuse to Political Terror* (New York: Basic Books, 1997), 196.

³⁸ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 183.

³⁹ Gregg Allison, *The Baker Compact Dictionary of Theological Terms*, "sanctification," (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2016).

under the guidance of God’s Spirit.”⁴⁰ The Spirit conforms believers to this God-given, Christ-centered purpose through sanctification.

A temptation in the aftermath of trauma can be to live without hope, dejected and unable to see God’s goodness. Sanctification sets believers’ hearts on a steady trajectory toward Christ-likeness, ever increasingly maturing in the ability to see God’s goodness. Judith Herman writes of maturing integrity in a victim’s life, “Integrity is the capacity to affirm the value of life in the face of death, to be reconciled with the finite limits of one’s own life and the tragic limitations of the human condition, and to accept these realities without despair.”⁴¹ The believer can trust that the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit in sanctification will lead to greater integrity, an ability to accept his or her trauma and still have hope.

Sanctification offers hope for the restoration of the traumatized body. Trauma impacts the brain by causing certain areas of it not to function normally. One of those impacts can affect sensations, physical sensory perception, and one’s perception of his or her agency.⁴² These negative consequences of trauma often make a survivor feel apathetic, leading to a dissociation from the world around them. Apathy is not the goal of healing, “integrity” is.⁴³ As the Holy Spirit works in a person to gradually increase his Christ-likeness, he helps him to be able to see the “value of life in the face of death,” and “reconcile the tragic limitations of the human condition.” This helps to restore a healthily functioning brain and body. Harrower describes this phenomenon, “Integrity brings stability to the self.”⁴⁴ Since a sense of self and agency is necessary for a healthy brain,

⁴⁰ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 209.

⁴¹ Herman, *Trauma*, 154.

⁴² Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 89-100.

⁴³ Herman, *Trauma*, 154.

⁴⁴ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 209.

body, and life, this restoration through the Holy Spirit's work in sanctification yields hope in a productive and meaningful future, not constrained by the weight of trauma.

One area in which sanctification perhaps provides the most hope is in the realm of relationships. Galatians 5:22-23 says, "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness and self-control; against such things there is no law." The Spirit aids believers in growing in these fruits. These fruits are expressed primarily in relationship to others. Harrower writes, "The grace of God and its transforming power shine most brightly in the context of relationships that need to deal with one another's brokenness and sinfulness."⁴⁵ The trauma survivor can trust that the Spirit is growing these things in her, and can also take hope that he is doing the same in other believers. In the kingdom of God, these fruits abound. These truths help victims allow other Christians to pursue them in love, knowing God is working in them.

Resurrection and Glorification⁴⁶

Believers share in both the resurrection and subsequent glorification of Christ. If there were no other reason for hope, this would be enough. This is the promise that as Christ was raised from the dead, so too will Christians be. All the other promises point to this one and in this promise, the traumatized can rest.

Resurrection ensures Christians will be restored to the fullness of the image of God. His image will no longer be fractured within them, tainted by sin, suffering, and death. When the Holy Spirit raises saints from the dead, they will be fully conformed to the image of Christ. Harrower opines, "in the state of glorification, a person will be

⁴⁵ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 188.

⁴⁶ Resurrection and glorification are separate acts of the Holy Spirit. I treat them here in the same section because the hope that both resurrection and glorification provide for trauma sufferers is closely linked.

entirely healed physically, psychologically, relationally, morally, and creatively.”⁴⁷

Because trauma survivors experience such a violation to the image of God, knowing the image will be completely restored at the resurrection provides great hope.

Resurrection is cause for great hope for the restoration of the immaterial part of humans that is negatively affected by trauma, because their hearts and minds will be redeemed. Jennifer Baldwin opines that resurrection, “offers a theological model for the full unburdening of all the various parts that carry wounds and no longer functional beliefs.”⁴⁸ Saints’ hearts and minds will be restored in the resurrection in such a way that no longer bears the burden of trauma. Hearts and minds will be fully able to see God for who he is without the stain of sin or the wound of trauma.⁴⁹

Perhaps more than all the other works of the Spirit, resurrection provides hope for bodily restoration. While sealing and sanctification point forward, resurrection is the teleological end. When the Spirit redeems believers’ bodies, they will no longer be canvases for trauma perpetrators to enact their evil upon, wounded by pain and horror; they will be restored and redeemed and perfect.

The resurrection provides hope for restored relationships, too. Once shattered by trauma and its negative affect on survivors and those around them, relationships in the resurrection life – even those between victim and perpetrators (who are in Christ) – will be put back together, made perfect again. All will be right as it was in Eden before the fall. Our relationships with others and God will be perfect, sinless, selfless, and holy. This is what it will look like, “Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God.

⁴⁷ Harrower, *God of All Comfort* 170.

⁴⁸ Jennifer Baldwin, *Trauma-Sensitive Theology: Thinking Theologically in the Era of Trauma* (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), 137.

⁴⁹ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 125.

He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away,” (Rev 21:3-4). God’s people will act towards God and towards one another in accordance with God’s good design.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I explored how the works of the Holy Spirit in regenerating, sealing, indwelling, sanctifying, and resurrecting, and glorifying believers fuels hope for the traumatized. Each work of the Spirit has a positive impact on the survivor’s image of God, inner self, body, and relationships. In the next chapter, I shall consider how the Holy Spirit’s role in the restoration of shalom offers hope to trauma victims.

CHAPTER 3:
THE HOLY SPIRIT AND SHALOM

Introduction

When God created the world, a perfect shalom pervaded every aspect of it: everything was very good, according to God, meaning everything was living, thriving, flourishing, behaving, functioning, and growing according to plan. The plants were springing forth and releasing oxygen. The animals were grazing and galloping and helping Adam and Eve work the garden and providing companionship. Adam and Eve were at peace in their relationship with one another and visited with God in the cool of the day.

However, after Adam and Eve sinned, they immediately lost the peace they shared with one another and with God. They immediately experienced the loss of shalom. Creation suffered the effects of the lost shalom as well. Constantine Campbell writes, “There is an inextricable link between the fate of humanity and that of creation, with the latter subjected to decay because of the former, and it will only be released from its bondage once humanity has been restored.”¹ Because of sin, creation is not as it should be, and therefore, creation’s current non-shalomic state contributes to humanity’s pain.

¹ Constantine Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory: An Exegetical and Theological Study* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2020) 234.

The good news is that God is not satisfied with the absence of shalom; he made humanity and creation for more than the current state of chaos. He made the world very good and he has promised to restore it. Campbell opines, “It is clear that, while creation is the arena in which God works for the salvation and glorification of humanity, it is not merely the arena for such activity – it is, in fact, the object of it, as God will restore, renew, and recenter creation in concert with humanity.”² God is going to restore all of creation including humanity and the long lost shalom.

Ultimately, the traumatized need to have hope in order to heal, hope that life can be good again.³ Harrower avers, “The expectation of positive change is one foundational need of trauma survivors as they move from a numbed, death-like state to an authentic life post trauma.”⁴

The Holy Spirit’s Role in Shalom

The Holy Spirit fuels the hope that life will be good again through his role in the restoration of shalom. Through the Holy Spirit, God brought about shalom in the garden before the fall, now the Spirit maintains a remnant of shalom on earth as all creation awaits the total restoration of heaven and earth, and someday Jesus will return and the Holy Spirit will renew heaven and earth - reproducing shalom in its totality.⁵ Total

² Campbell, *Paul and the Hope of Glory*, 234.

³ Scott Harrower, *God of All Comfort: A Trinitarian Response to the Horrors of this World* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2019) 158.

⁴ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 158.

⁵ This is not to diminish the works of the Father and Son in creation.

shalom will include inward heart-level shalom, shalom in relationship to the physical world and physical bodies, and shalom in relationship to others.

Shalom and the Heart

In *The Dynamic Heart in Daily Life* Jeremy Pierre writes, “Sin’s corruption is dynamic, spreading to the full breadth of the heart’s function.”⁶ One step further, the effects of sin impact the heart’s function.⁷ Trauma is a reality in a fallen world and impacts the heart’s function. In order to heal and function more in line with God’s design, in a way that promotes flourishing, a trauma survivor needs hope. She needs hope her heart, mind, and emotions can be healed in such a way that she can live a healthy life.

Harrower argues, “Recovering a narrative that embraces tragedy rather than horror as its narrative arc allows trauma sufferers to process their emotions and make sense of their stories in a coherent way.”⁸ For survivors to have hope that they can heal, they need to be able to understand their story in a way that allows them to acknowledge what their heart is experiencing. Anger and grief as a result of their trauma is a reasonable reaction to the anti-shalomic horror they experienced. The Holy Spirit’s role in the original creation of shalom provides trauma survivor’s the context to understand their experience. God created the world from chaos into order, so when chaos like trauma

⁶ Jeremy Pierre, *Dynamic Heart in Daily Life: Connecting Christ to Human Experience* (Greensboro, NC: New Growth Press, 2016) 57.

⁷ I am not arguing that trauma is the direct result of the survivor’s sin, rather that trauma ultimately is an effect of sin and a fallen world.

⁸ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 178.

occurs, it is normal to respond in grief and anger. God's design was meant to cause flourishing, and trauma is the opposite of flourishing, so it is right to grieve.

The Spirit's role in the remnant of shalom that exists between the fall and restoration provides hope for the traumatized. Christian trauma survivors can trust that the Lord did not create a perfect world and abandon it. The Holy Spirit is working now. Romans 8:26-27 reads, "Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray as we ought, but the Spirit himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God." The Spirit is working now on behalf of believers. He knows the saints' weaknesses and relates to the depths of emotions by praying in ways deeper than what can be expressed by human language. Trauma survivors struggle to express themselves in prayer. It is difficult to address a good God in the wake of evil. It is challenging to reconcile God's perfection, love, and care with trauma. The Holy Spirit knows that weakness and prays for survivors as they struggle to relate to God.

John 16:13 says, "When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you." Christians can trust that the Spirit guiding them in truth. When people suffer from trauma, they can sometimes struggle to trust their own minds. Kathleen O'Connor writes, "Disasters brought about by traumatic violence disturb what people think, feel, and believe. They distort perceptions and shut down ordinary

life.”⁹ Trauma victims’ minds become as much victim to the horror as their bodies. But, Jesus promised, the Holy Spirit is working to guide his people into truth. This truth allows a spirit of shalom to remain as survivors await its fullness.

The Holy Spirit is working to produce a forward-looking hope in trauma survivors. As Harrower suggested, trauma victims need hope that they can again live fulfilling lives.¹⁰ In order to heal, sufferers need to believe that there is hope. The Holy Spirit shows his people that all suffering has a part in a larger story – there is an end coming. Harrower opines, “Christian hope has classically hoped for intimacy and shalom with God in renewed historical context.”¹¹ The Holy Spirit indwells believers and as a result fills them with a new perspective, one that points them forward to hope in God. Harrower writes, “Christian hope is therefore a future oriented hope. This hope includes the prospect of one day understanding ourselves, our experiences, and our interactions with others within God’s perspective. Only then will our lives ‘make sense’- divine sense.”¹² The Christian belief, fueled by the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit, that one day there will be no suffering and all will be according to God’s good design again, allows trauma survivors to hope in such a way that produces fruit in their lives as they walk in faithfulness.

⁹ Kathleen M. O’Connor, *Jeremiah: Pain and Promise* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2011) 3.

¹⁰ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 158.

¹¹ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 160.

¹² Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 161.

Shalom and Embodiment

Humans were designed with bodies, or as Gregg Allison argues, humans are bodies.¹³ Of course humans are more than simply a compilation the material matter of our bodies – the same material that is buried in the ground when we die - but we are not less that. When God looked at the world and declared it “very good” in accordance with his design, he meant all of it – the physical components included. In God’s perfect world, shalom existed unhindered. Adam’s and Eve’s bodies acted exactly as they should and related perfectly to the creation around them.

Since the fall, human bodies (and consequently other creatures’ bodies) do not always perform as they are supposed to. Their cells replicate incorrectly causing cancer. Their immune systems designed to protect them from harm overreact to harmless substances and result in deadly anaphylactic reactions to things as simple as peanuts. When trauma occurs, the brain usually reacts with a series of responses. These responses are designed to protect the body from further harm, but often, continue to operate even when the danger has passed.¹⁴ While the body’s trauma response is good when a threat is present because it protects the body from further harm, it is not the state bodies are meant to be in long term. Trauma responses are good for short bursts of adrenaline that help the endangered to run fast or think quickly to evade a threat. However, the body is meant to return to a state of equilibrium and rest. Sometimes when people undergo trauma, their

¹³ Gregg Allison, *Embodied: Living as Whole People in a Fractured World* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2021) pg.

¹⁴ Bessel Van Der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* (New York: Penguin Books, 2015), 53-54.

body gets stuck in a perpetual trauma response resulting in the inability to return fully to a balanced or restful state.¹⁵

The Holy Spirit promises shalom – everything acting in accordance with its design. Therefore, the traumatized can hope in the Spirit, that he will restore their bodies, too. Harrower opines that shalom includes several kinds or “senses.”¹⁶ He says, “The first has to do with holistic personal well-being.”¹⁷ Harrower gives the example of Joseph wondering how his brothers and family are when they come to get food in Egypt.¹⁸ Of this example and others, Harrower avers, “In these cases, shalom ‘designates well-being, prosperity, or bodily health.’”¹⁹ The traumatized experience a lack of well-being and bodily health. The Holy Spirit’s role in producing, maintaining, and restoring shalom provides hope to trauma victims that they were made for shalom, can experience it currently (even if not in its fullness), and will experience total shalom in the new heavens and earth.

At creation, the Holy Spirit fructified the ground and brought life to the animals. He caused the creation to fall in line with the plan. Creation functioned as it was intended, because the Holy Spirit empowered it to do so. Bodies functioned properly. Because the Holy Spirit caused human bodies to work in accordance with their design in the beginning, he can – and has promised to – do the same again.

¹⁵ Van der Kolk, *The Body Keeps the Score*, 52-55.

¹⁶ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 10.

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ *ibid*

¹⁹ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 10.

In the current age between the fall and redemption, bodies do not always act in accordance with their design. Romans 8 conveys that the current state of affairs is not as it should be. Evidence that all is not as it should be is that creation is sometimes chaotic, bodies sometimes die; therefore, they need to be resurrected. The traumatized can relate to Paul's read on reality. They, too, groan inwardly waiting for the redemption of their bodies, waiting for their bodies to be restored to perfect functioning. The Holy Spirit provides hope now, that even as creation waits, he is working. He is not absence and what semblance of order or alignment with the original design that still exists results from the Holy Spirit's maintenance.

Ultimately, trauma survivors can place their hope in the Holy Spirit's redeeming power, because he promises a future free from suffering. The ultimate bodily result of trauma is death, and again Paul declares, "For I am sure that neither death nor life...nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus (8:38-39)." Neither death, the ultimate bodily malfunction, nor any lesser dysfunction, can stop the Holy Spirit's power. In Romans 8:11, Paul states, "If the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, he who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit who dwells in you." The Holy Spirit promises to fill trauma victims' bodies with life once again as he did at creation, and that is worthy of hope.

Shalom and Relationships

One of the aspects of humanness severed by trauma is relationships. God designed humanity to relate to him, others, and the world around them. Trauma damages the survivor's ability to relate in a healthy way. After Adam and Eve sinned, they hid from God, no longer feeling comfortable to visit with him in the cool of the day as

before. Immediately when confronted by God, Adam blames the woman and even implies God is somewhat to blame, “The woman you gave to be with me, she gave me the fruit of the tree and I ate (Gen 3:12).” The relationship between God and Adam and between Adam and Eve are damaged. Adam and Eve become afraid of their good father and begin to turn on one another. The perfect shalom, the harmony in those relationships, is broken.

Harrower writes that one, “sense in which ‘shalom is’ used refers to interpersonal well-being.”²⁰ For shalom to exist, peace in relationships must exist. Harrower avers, “Thus we can say that covenantal relationships proved the security and orientation for shalom-like flourishing.”²¹ Before the fall, Adam and Eve experienced the covenant relationship between each of them and God and their covenant relationship with one another in a way that perpetuated perfect shalom.

The Holy Spirit fructified God’s work in creation. Thus, he fructified the relationship between Adam and Eve. Likewise, he fructifies shalomic relationships between people now. Paul tells the Galatians, “But I say, walk by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:16).” Then he goes on to explain the desires of the flesh, “Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these” (5:19-21a). Most of the items on that list deal with interpersonal relationships and they are evidence of the Spirit’s

²⁰ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 10.

²¹ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 11.

absence. When the Spirit is present, Paul says, “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control” (5:22-23a). While these items may in part refer to inner emotions, they all also refer to ways of living in relationship with other people. The Spirit produces peace in relationships.

Trauma survivors struggle to trust relationships post trauma. Judith Herman writes, “The core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others.”²² Because trauma is so often the result of one human’s grave sin against another, trauma victims often find it difficult to re-engage with people in a healthy way. However, a healthy re-engagement in relationships is necessary for healing. Herman opines, “Recovery can take place only in the context of relationships; it cannot occur in isolation.”²³ People need other people to thrive. So too with trauma, survivors need others to help them heal.

The Holy Spirit produces shalom among trauma survivors and others in their Christian community in two ways. First, the Holy Spirit works in the survivor’s heart to learn to trust again. Harrower declares, “The gift of the Spirit is the gift of God’s power which liberates and reorients people from trending downward toward death to trending to the fullness of life in the new heavens and the new earth.”²⁴ Isolation is a trend toward death and healthy, thriving relationships are a trend toward “fullness of life.” The Holy

²² Judith Herman, *Trauma and Recovery: The Aftermath of Violence* (New York: Basic Books, 1992) 133.

²³ Ibid.

²⁴ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 190.

Spirit's power allows sufferers to reopen themselves to connection with other people, so they can flourish.

Second, the Spirit works among the others in the community to build a safe environment for the survivor. Harrower avers, "If the Spirit is at work in the lives of Christians, then particular communities of faith may move toward more fullness... Those led by the Spirit will hopefully be less likely to overpower and impose their will and power on others."²⁵ If Christian communities are acting in accordance with the fruit of the Spirit, they will produce a safe environment for trauma survivors. They will not further traumatize the survivor by inflicting more pain, but will live out their faith in love, peace, gentleness, and self-control. "God deputizes his images in order to make his character and engagement with a suffering world visible and available," Harrower summarizes.²⁶ God's image bearers walking in step with the Spirit will make him known and will put his character on full display, allowing trauma survivors to find respite.

The other relationship trauma survivors need to maintain in order to heal is the one they have with God. It is easy to question God in the wake of trauma, but it is necessary that survivors regain a trusting relationship with their Father.²⁷ Harrower avers, "The Spirit reestablishes the capacity within those made in God's image to relate to their creator."²⁸ Creatures are not healthy outside of a healthy relationship with their creator. The Spirit reestablishes a healthy relationship between God and people as he works in

²⁵ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 191.

²⁶ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 182.

²⁷ I am not arguing that God's goodness is ever rightly doubted due to trauma, simply that trauma survivors do wrestle with questions of God's goodness in the wake of trauma. He is always good.

²⁸ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 190.

their hearts because he indwells them.²⁹ Harrower declares, “The personal presence of God in his Spirit means that persons do not *necessarily* have to remain as victims and perpetrators of horrors.”³⁰ Christian trauma survivors have the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit and can hope that he is working to establish shalom between him and God.

In addition to the hope of shalom in relationships that the Spirit provides now, he also provides hope for a greater future shalom. Revelation 21:3-4 reads, “Then I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore. For the former things have passed away.’” This passage highlights the hope for shalomic relationships with God and others.

First, Revelation 21:3-4 displays the hope Christians have in a coming shalomic relationship with God. Second, God will relate to his people rightly as God and they will relate to him as his people. The result of this right relationship between God and man is that “he will wipe away every tear from their eyes and death shall be no more.” The people of God will be healed, whole, and happy. Third, God’s people will relate to one another in shalom, not causing one another pain, or to cry, or to mourn anymore. Humanity’s relationship with God and others will be beautifully, harmoniously, as it should be: shalom.

²⁹ The Father and Son also have roles in reestablishing a trauma survivor’s relationship with God. Though important, they are beyond the scope of this project.

³⁰ Harrower, *God of All Comfort*, 190.

Conclusion

In this chapter the necessity of shalom in human flourishing and the Holy Spirit's role in creating, maintaining, and restoring shalom were established. Shalom existed in creation before the fall, some shalom exists now, and shalom will be restored to fullness after the second coming of Christ and the restoration of heaven and earth. Shalom promotes health in individuals' hearts, bodies, and relationships.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

This thesis has argued that the Holy Spirit fuels for the traumatized. Trauma violates the image of God, damaging the survivor's heart, body, and relationships. The effects of trauma linger with a victim well past the traumatic event, making healing especially difficult. Trauma changes how sufferers think and feel, how their bodies function, and how they relate to others. It affects the whole person; therefore the healing process is long and arduous. But, the Triune God offers hope for healing.

Hope is a necessary component in the healing of trauma survivors. Hope allows victim to imagine a good and flourishing life post-trauma. For Christians, hope is not based in optimism or an inner strength to overcome. Hope for the Christian is based primarily in God and his promises. The Holy Spirit, as the third person of the Triune God, has a role in fueling hope for sufferers.

The Holy Spirit's recreative work in regenerating, sealing, indwelling, sanctifying, resurrecting, and glorifying fuels hope for believers who have experienced trauma. Each if these works of the Spirit heals survivors restoring healthy and whole lives, restoring their hearts, bodies, and relationships to be as they were designed.

The Holy Spirit produces hope for trauma victims in his work in the past, present, and the future. His role in recreation is grounded by his role in creation. He works now as the power of God sanctifying people and sustaining order. He will work in the future to restore all things and reestablish perfect shalom.

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis argues that the Holy Spirit fuels hope for the traumatized through regenerating, regenerating, sealing, indwelling, sanctifying, resurrecting, and glorifying believers, and producing shalom. I argue that the Holy Spirit works through these actions to heal the mind and heart, body, and relationships of individuals producing a response of genuine hopefulness in Christian trauma survivors. The introduction sets up the issue of trauma and the need for more theological resources that address the topic.

Chapter 2 presents relevant components of human personhood: the heart and mind, the body, and relationality. It presents all of these in the framework of the image of God. This chapter also surveys trauma, its violation of the image of God, and its effects on the components of human person hood.

Chapter 3 surveys the works of the Holy Spirit in creation and recreation and how they produce hope for Christians. In chapter 4, I show that the Holy Spirit produces shalom in individuals and in communities, and how shalom impacts hope in the wake of trauma.

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